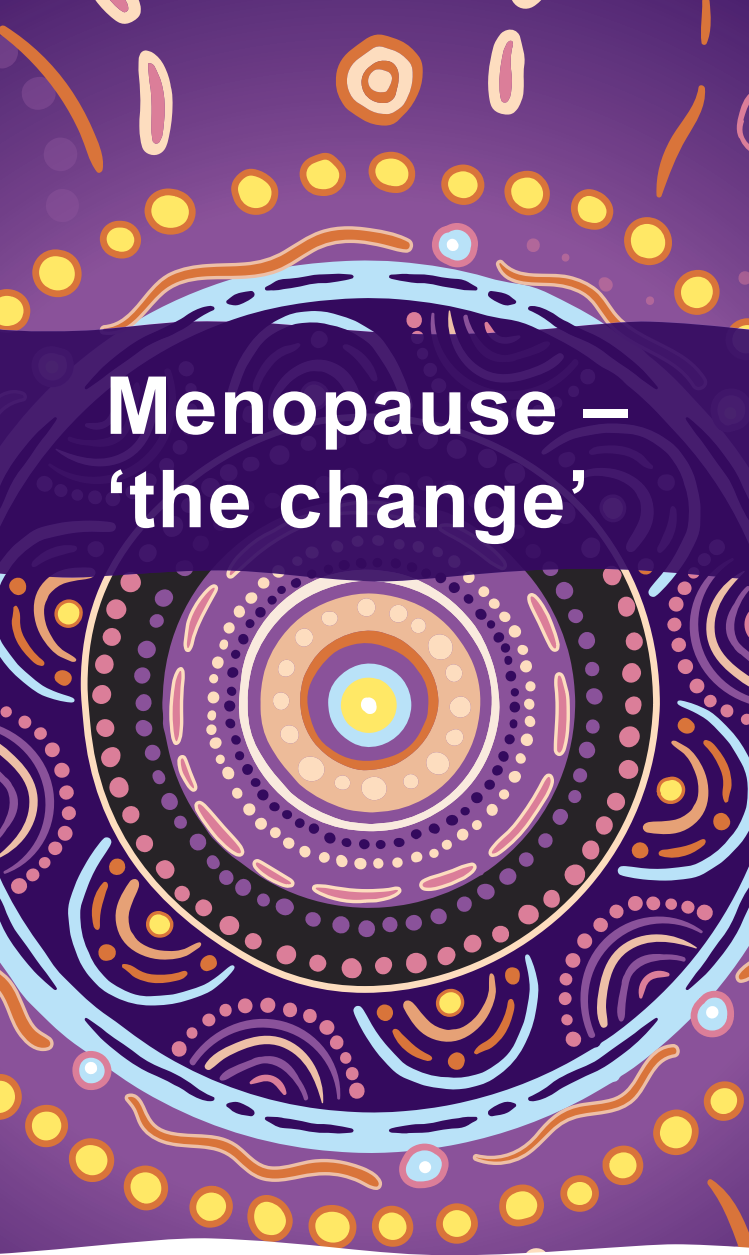




Menopause – ‘the change’

Private – only for women

 **Jean Hailes**
for Women's Health

About this booklet

Jean Hailes for Women's Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continued connection to land, waters and culture. We pay respect to Elders past and present.

This resource has been developed in consultation with Greater Western Aboriginal Health Service Penrith (NSW), Kalwun Development Corporation Ltd (Qld), Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (WA), Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation (NT), Nepean Blue Mountains LHD (NSW), and Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation (Vic.).

We would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who participated in consultations to help shape this resource.



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What is menopause?

Menopause – ‘the change’ – is a time in your life when your periods stop coming.

Menopause is a natural thing. All women go through menopause.



When does menopause happen?

You'll probably have your final period when you're between 45 and 55 years old.

You'll know that menopause has happened if you haven't had your period for 12 months.

If your periods stop before you're 45, you need to see your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker to check your health.



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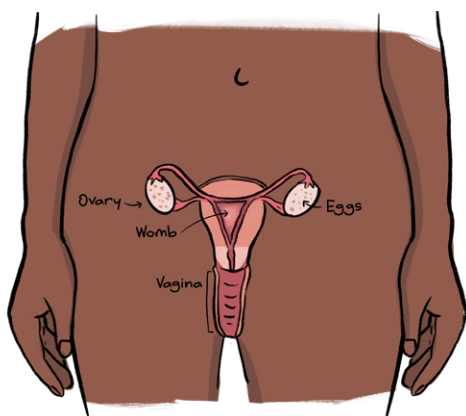
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Why does menopause happen?

You were born with lots of eggs in your body to be able to have babies.

Menopause happens when your body has no more eggs left. This means your periods will stop and you won't be able to get pregnant in the future.



Changes in periods before menopause

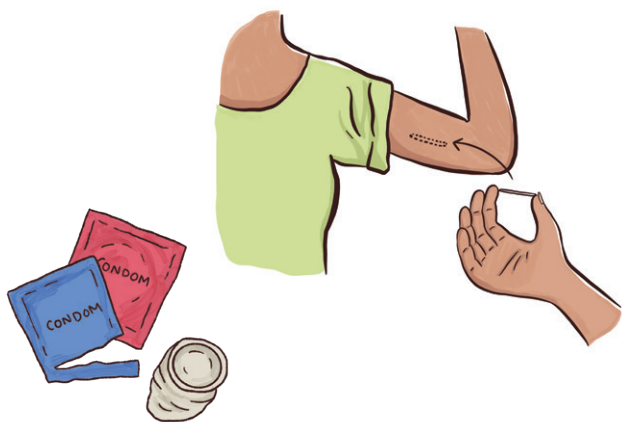
Changes in your periods can happen months or even years before they stop completely.

Your periods may come less or more often, become lighter or heavier, or be shorter or longer than before.

You can still get pregnant when you have irregular periods.

You can also get pregnant up to 2 years after your last period.

If you don't want to get pregnant, use contraception.

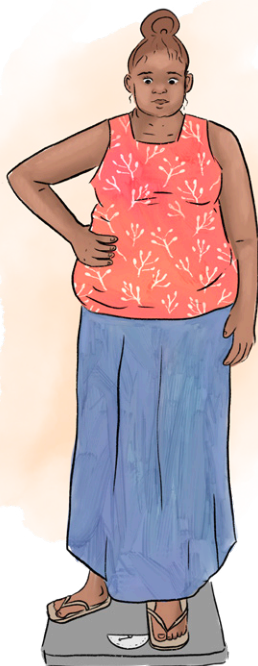


Symptoms of menopause

Around the time of menopause, you may notice changes in your body and how you feel. They are called 'symptoms of menopause'.

You may:

- have hot flushes, night sweats, a dry vagina, headaches, body aches or trouble sleeping
- feel tired, grumpy, worried or unhappy
- have trouble remembering things
- gain weight, especially around your belly.



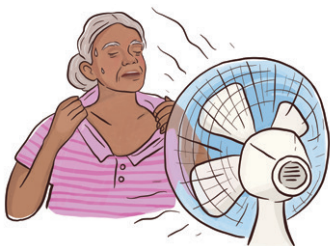
What to do

To stay healthy and feel better:

- eat healthy foods and drink lots of water
- be active every day
- avoid alcohol and try not to smoke
- get enough sleep to feel rested
- spend time with your family and friends.

To stay cool:

- use fans and air-conditioning
- wear layers of clothing that you can take off when you're hot
- have cold drinks.



What to do

If menopause is bothering you or you're worried about your health, talk to a doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker. There are different treatments and medicines to help you feel better.



After menopause

Your health changes after menopause. For example, you have a higher risk of:

- heart disease
(heart attack, stroke)
- osteoporosis (weak bones)
- type 2 diabetes (too much sugar in your blood).

It's even more important to look after yourself after menopause.



After menopause

To stay well, you can:

- eat healthy foods and try to keep a healthy weight
- be active to help your bones stay strong
- limit alcohol and try not to smoke
- have your free 715 health check every year
- have regular cervical, breast and bowel cancer screening.



Remember

- Menopause is a natural stage of life.
- If it's hard for you to deal with menopause, talk to your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker.
- It's important to stay healthy during and after menopause.

About the artwork

The artwork and illustrations are by Coolamon Creative – a 100% Aboriginal-owned-and-operated creative services agency based in Alice Springs.



“This contemporary artwork represents being at peace amongst change. There are women talking together at the centre, with the yellow dots representing peace around them. It also shows the surrounding elements of environment, the empty waterholes, full waterholes, tracks, flowers, which represents the always changing land, just like our own bodies are always changing. The blue represents water and connecting people to peace.”

– Samantha Campbell, Graphic Designer & Illustrator, Coolamon Creative.

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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we recognise that people who identify differently may use our content.

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