



# Menopause

## Information for partners

When your partner goes through menopause, different hormonal changes will affect their body, health, energy levels and mood. They may also have different emotions about coming to the end of their reproductive years.

While every woman's experience is different, it's a good idea to learn about menopause and related symptoms so you can support your partner through this time.

### What is menopause?

Menopause is a woman's final menstrual period. It's a normal and healthy part of ageing.

A woman has reached menopause when they haven't had a period for 12 months.

Menopause usually happens between 45 and 55 years of age, but it can happen earlier or later. Menopause can happen earlier for different reasons (e.g. cancer treatment or surgery).

### What is perimenopause?

Perimenopause is the lead-up to menopause. Perimenopause usually starts when a woman is in her 40s. On average, it lasts four to six years, but it can last anywhere from one to 10 years. It's common for women to have physical and emotional symptoms during perimenopause.

### What happens at menopause?

During the menopause transition, the levels of female hormones oestrogen and progesterone decline, and the ovaries stop releasing eggs. Your partner can still get pregnant during perimenopause, but not after menopause.

All women experience menopause differently. Some have very few symptoms and others have more severe symptoms that affect their daily life.

### Physical symptoms

Your partner may experience a range of physical symptoms around the time of menopause, including:

- hot flushes and night sweats
- sleep problems
- headaches
- aches and pains
- dry vagina
- sore breasts.

### Emotional symptoms

Your partner may also experience different emotional symptoms, such as:

- mood changes
- forgetfulness
- anxiety.

## Mood and menopause

One aspect of menopause that you might notice in your partner is mood changes. This is caused by changes in hormone levels (e.g. oestrogen). It's common for women to feel irritable or angry, have a low mood, or even feel depressed or anxious.

You may feel that leaving your partner alone to deal with this is the best approach, but it's important to support them during this time.

## Sex and menopause

Women may have a lower sexual desire (libido) around menopause. This could be due to many things, including lifestyle and family stresses, changing hormone levels, vaginal dryness (which can cause discomfort during sex), lowered mood and fatigue.

These changes may make your partner feel anxious about having sex. You can encourage them to take time for themselves (e.g. yoga, relaxation or meditation classes). This may help them to feel relaxed and lift their mood. You can also explore the option of couples counselling if needed.

## Tips to support your partner

There are many things you can do to help your partner through the menopause transition. For example:

- listen and be supportive
- ask your partner to help you understand their symptoms
- keep an open mind about why your partner may be acting differently
- be patient when it comes to sex – and find other ways to be intimate
- go with your partner to medical appointments or counselling.

**For more information, resources and references, visit [jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause](https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause)**

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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 acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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