# Denise Asks Awkward Questions – Don’t Spray Your Va-jay-jay

**Denise:** Hello everybody. I'm comedian Denise Scott and welcome to Denise Asks Awkward Questions with Jean Hailes. Today's guest is the clinical director of Jean Hailes, Dr. Liz Farrell. She has qualifications I can't even pronounce, but let's just say she is brilliant. And she has been a world leader in women's health for over 40 years. Alright, it's time to get awkward!

Kiara from Kalgoorlie in West Australia writes, "I still get my period, so I know I'm not going through menopause, but I feel like I'm going crazy. My mood swings all over the place and sometimes I want to break things. This can't be normal."

**Liz:** Kiara, we don't know how old you are, but it sounds like you are going through the perimenopause. And that's that transition time before your periods stop where your hormones go crazy. And your moods are going up and down and that's because your hormones are going up and down. And the hormones affect brain chemistry as well as whatever else is going on in our body. So it is normal, but you can get some help for it. So go and talk to your GP about having some help with your perimenopause symptoms.

**Denise:** Has perimenopause always been a term in use or is that a newish term?

**Liz:** Well, it's been around as long as I've been in the menopause area, and that's since the early eighties. But it's now become much more popular and out there in the media courtesy of a few celebrities like, um, who's that woman that Rod Stewart's married to?

**Denise:** Oh, here we go.

**Liz:** I've got a menopausal memory loss at the moment. I can't remember her name.

**Denise:** I can see her, I can see... Penny Lancaster!

**Liz:** That's her. So I think because it's become much more out there, the term has being used a lot more. In medical terms it means from when the periods start to become irregular, till a year after the periods have stopped. But some women can have regular periods up until their final one, and it depends on whether Kiara fits into that group.

But, even though, if you were having regular periods, Kiara, you've got symptoms of the perimenopause. If you are in your mid to late forties or early fifties.

**Denise:** Grace from Davenport in Tasmania asks, "I sprayed my va-jay-jay with some perfume before I went on a date and it stung like hell and caused a rash. What can I use to clean and freshen up down there?"

**Liz:** Well, Grace, I'd call it your vulva and not your va-jay-jay. Let's get real.

The answer is that the vulval skin is like a baby's bottom. You need to treat it with great care and not spray it, not scrub it. And the important thing is not to use soap, not to use any feminine products, and it's best to wash your vulva with plain old water, or you can use a soap substitute.

**Denise:** I'm sitting here gobsmacked. I didn't know about the soap.

**Liz:** So what I suggest, Grace, is that you have a look on the Jean Hailes website because we have a vulval booklet. And in that it has a section on looking after your vulva and what are no-nos. So it talks about using cotton undies, using white toilet paper, no soap, no G-strings, all those things to look after your vulva. And how to keep it, it's not about keeping it clean actually, because it cleans itself. So you don't use any spray on it because it's like a baby's bottom, it is such sensitive skin. Beautiful skin. Treat it with care.

**Denise:** All right. That's it for today. If I'm not here and you have more questions, go to Denise Asks Awkward Questions - jeanhailes.org au. Bye everybody.

Information about Jean Hailes for Women’s Health

Jean Hailes for Women's Health is a national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the health of all women, girls and gender-diverse people. For free, evidence-based and easy-to-understand health information, visit [www.jeanhailes.org.au](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au).

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