

Menopause

What is menopause?

Menopause is your final period. You know you've reached menopause if you have not had your period for 12 months.

When does menopause happen?

Most women reach menopause between the ages of 45 and 55. In Australia, the average age for women to reach menopause is 51 to 52. Some women might reach menopause as late as 60. Menopause can happen naturally or early (for example, if you have an operation to remove your ovaries).

What causes menopause?

Menopause happens when you have no eggs left. This means you do not ovulate or have periods.

Your hormones

As you approach menopause, your hormones (e.g. oestrogen and progesterone) go up and down. These changes can lead to different symptoms.

Symptoms of menopause

Many women experience symptoms before reaching menopause. Everyone is different and symptoms can vary depending on your health, lifestyle, cultural background and family history. Common symptoms include:

- hot flushes and night sweats
- mood changes
- forgetfulness
- headaches
- sore breasts
- aches and pains
- dry vagina
- reduced sex drive
- itchy skin
- weight gain
- tiredness.



How to manage menopause

There are many ways to help manage menopausal symptoms.

Practical tips

You can:

- eat healthy food and drink lots of water
- do regular exercise
- use a hand fan or water spray when you feel hot
- wear layered clothing and take clothes off when you feel hot
- go to relaxation classes like yoga and meditation.

Therapies and medicines

You can reduce menopausal symptoms with:

- menopause hormone therapy (MHT) – this is the most effective therapy for many symptoms
- cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)
- other medications, such as antidepressants, which can reduce hot flushes and sweating
- natural therapies.

Ask your doctor about the risks and benefits of these therapies.

When to see your doctor

You should see your doctor if:

- you are worried about your periods
- your symptoms stop you from doing things you normally do
- your symptoms affect your eating, sleeping and enjoyment of activities.

Depending on your symptoms, you can also see a specialist. For example, a gynaecologist, psychologist, endocrinologist or dietitian.

For more information, visit jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause

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This fact sheet is designed to be informative and educational. It is not intended to provide specific medical advice or replace advice from your medical practitioner.

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Jean Hailes for Women's Health takes a broad and inclusive approach to the topic of women's health. This fact sheet generally uses the terms 'women' and 'girls'. These terms are intended to include women with diverse sexualities, intersex women and women with a transgender experience.

Jean Hailes
FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH

Phone 03 9453 8999
jeanhailes.org.au