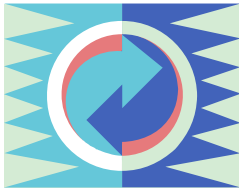


The Types of Menopause



In this book, we'll be talking mostly about natural menopause, which is—by far—the most common type of menopause experienced by women. But some women have a form of menopause brought on by other factors. Often, these types of menopause occur much earlier than a natural menopause. Some women even describe them as an “instant menopause,” because there is no real transition period into them.

Surgical or Premature Menopause

This type of menopause occurs when a woman has changes in her estrogen levels that are unrelated to the normal changes of aging. It is often called premature menopause because it tends to occur earlier than usual, sometimes even in young adulthood.

Surgical menopause occurs when a woman has her ovaries surgically removed for some kind of medical reason. Typical medical causes can include ovarian cancer or endometriosis, a chronic inflammation of the female sex organs.

This type of menopause is also called “induced menopause.” It might also occur if the ovaries were damaged by chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Whatever the root cause, when your ovaries are not working or have been removed, your estrogen levels will fall. And, that triggers the same changes in your body that a natural menopause would.

Premature ovarian failure sometimes occurs for unknown reasons. In these cases, your ovaries just stop making estrogen and testosterone. This can be a permanent change, though it doesn't have to be.

Either way, the drop in hormones will trigger menopausal symptoms and changes. If it happens before a woman reaches the age of 40, it is considered to be premature menopause.

FACT OR FICTION?

Men can go through a type of menopause too.

Technically speaking, men cannot go through menopause, simply because they do not have periods in the first place.

However, men can go through mid-life changes that may have similar symptoms and challenges.

See your bonus report, *Discovering the Truth About Male Menopause*, for more information.

Natural Menopause



Natural menopause is the most common type of menopause and is the result of the normal changes that occur in women as their bodies age.

Menopause is a cycle in the every-changing process we call life. Although we often think of menopause as an event, in reality it is a process. It can last for years, and it evolves and changes over time.

You can expect to pass through 4 stages of reproductive functioning, as you get older. And, since every woman is different, the descriptions that follow should be used only as guidelines. Your experience may be different.

STAGE 1: PREMENOPAUSE

“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.”

Some people think premenopause is your whole life until you enter menopause. But, to be more accurate, this is the period when you are having normal reproductive function, in other words, your childbearing years.

The term is sometimes used interchangeably with the terms perimenopause or premature menopause, but they are not the same. Premenopause begins when a woman’s ovulation function is fully mature, usually in the early 20s. It lasts until the symptoms of menopause begin, during the process known as perimenopause, usually in the late 40s or early 50s.

STAGE 2: PERIMENOPAUSE

“For me, I do not feel my changes have been negative ones, or that I have lost ‘me’, in many ways I feel that now I have found ‘me’!”

Perimenopause is what most women think of as menopause. It occurs as your body’s reproductive function begins to wind down and your childbearing years are ending. It can be defined as the transition period between regular reproductive function (premenopause) and the halting of reproductive function (menopause). Another way to think about perimenopause is that it is your body’s way of preparing for menopause.

This stage generally hits in the late 40s/early 50s and lasts for 2 to 4 years, though for some women, it lasts only a few months. It encompasses both the period before your periods stop for good and a year or 2 afterwards. There is

no way to know how long it will last for you OR how long it will take you to get all the way through it.

During perimenopause, your body is making less and less estrogen and other sex hormones, which can put them out of balance. Your body is slowly losing the ability to become pregnant, though it is still possible to get pregnant during this time.

At this time, your body is going through a number of physical and emotional changes. This is when you can expect to have the full onslaught of menopausal symptoms and see the most changes in your life.

For example, your periods start to skip and may even stop for a while and then restart. You may have hot flashes, night sweats, and mood swings. You might begin to have trouble sleeping. Vaginal dryness can start to play havoc with your sex life.

One thing that can help you figure out what's going on with your body is to start keeping a calendar. This can help you start to see patterns that point to the start of the transition to menopause. Track when you have your periods and how heavy the flow is, the symptoms you have, and when they start, stop, or get worse.

It is fairly common for a woman to have a mixture of long, slow, and regular menstrual cycles during perimenopause. You may also want to log any treatments you use. This kind of record keeping can give you valuable insight into how to cope with and manage your symptoms over the long term.

Remember, each woman's perimenopausal experience is unique. And just because you may be having severe symptoms today, it doesn't mean they will continue forever, or even for many years. Besides, there are many steps you can take to manage your symptoms, which we'll cover in some detail later in this eBook.

One thing to keep in mind is that not all changes in a middle-aged woman's body can necessarily be blamed on menopause. For instance, it is normal to have changes in your usual flow during your periods. However, if you have any of the following symptoms, it could be a sign that there is something else going on. Talk to your doctor if:

- ▶▶ the bleeding is very heavy or comes with clots
- ▶▶ the bleeding lasts longer than 7 days
- ▶▶ you have spotting or bleeding between periods

**FACT OR FICTION:
Perimenopause Feels a Lot
Like Severe PMS**

This statement is true. In fact, some of the earliest symptoms of perimenopause can be similar to those some women have with PMS (premenstrual syndrome). That can make it hard for you to know at first if it's just more PMS or if you're starting to go through the change.

▶▶ you're bleeding from the vagina after sex

Possible causes of these types of abnormal bleeding could include hormonal imbalances, birth control pills, pregnancy, fibroids, blood clotting problems or cancer. But only your doctor can tell you for sure what is going on, so it's important to talk with him or her if you are having any of these symptoms.

STAGE 3: MENOPAUSE

"I told my sister I wanted a menopause shower/party to celebrate this milestone in my life. We came up with some great gift ideas, anything to make this time seem special and positive, rather than mournful and negative."

Menopause is actually the medical term for your final menstrual period. Of course, with the irregularity you've been having, you won't know it's your final period at first. But once it has been a full 12 months since you last had a period of any kind, then you can pinpoint the date of your menopause as the date of that last period.

So, unlike premenopause or perimenopause, menopause is not a period of time. Indeed, it is a single moment in time, and you are not even able to celebrate (or mourn) it until a full year later.

Once you reach menopause, your childbearing years are officially over. Your levels of estrogen and the other sex hormones will be stable—more or less—for the rest of your life, barring other medical issues.

STAGE 4: POSTMENOPAUSE

*"Now, at almost two years since my last period, I'm beginning to feel decent, even pretty good, *most* days. In fact, one day last week, I felt so terrific and was in such a great mood that I wonder...Could this have been meno-zest?"*

Postmenopause is that glorious period you might think of as freedom...

Recognize the freedom you know have from the hassle of menstruating. And, what about the freedom from the challenging symptoms of menopause? Right there, are 2 great reasons to celebrate that you survived until this point!

It's also important to remember that pregnancy is no longer possible, now that you are no longer menstruating. It's true that this change in status

FACT OR FICTION: Sex is Worry-Free Once You Reach Postmenopause

This is false. Being postmenopausal provides no protection from sexually transmitted diseases, so you still need to pick your sexual partners with care and to use protection as needed.

may affect how you view yourself as a woman and your role in your family and in the world. But being a woman has never been only about the ability to conceive. There are many more facets to who you are than that.

And, let's not forget that now you may be able to be more spontaneous and sensual—after all, there's no need to worry about becoming pregnant because you were carried away in the moment. That's not to say you shouldn't practice safe sex.

Postmenopause lasts for the rest of your life, following the official date you reached menopause. Most symptoms will have disappeared—or at least greatly lessened—by this stage. However, a few, such as vaginal dryness or changes in sex drive, may persist throughout the rest of your life.

Those Pesky Menopause Symptoms



“I hate this fogginess... can't pinpoint what's bugging me.”

One of the main reasons menopause has gotten such a “bad rap” is because of its many annoying symptoms. The reason for these symptoms is easily defined... it all stems from an imbalance in your female sex hormones.

Some of the most common shared experiences for generations of women who were going through the change of life have been the hot flashes and mood swings. But what many of us never knew until we entered our own menopausal years was there are so many other symptoms that occur throughout menopause.

Changes in your hormone levels can cause a wide variety of symptoms. Some last a few months, while others may last years or longer. Some women are bothered greatly by the symptoms of menopause. Others have very few complaints.

The “Official” List of Symptoms

Project-AWARE*, a wonderful web site you can read more about in our [Resources](#) section, has put together a list of 35 common symptoms of menopause, which you'll find on the next page. They used 3 criteria in evaluating symptoms for inclusion on this list. Each symptom must have met at least the first condition and at least one of the others.

► Numerous women must have reported having this symptom.

- ▶▶ The symptom was cyclical in nature.
- ▶▶ Treatments for hormone imbalances offer at least partial relief for the symptom.

* For more information, see Project-AWARE.org at this web address:

<http://www.project-aware.org/Experience/symptoms.shtml>

Fast Facts: The 35 Common Symptoms of Menopause *

- ▶▶ Hot flashes, flushes, night sweats and/or cold flashes or a clammy feeling
- ▶▶ Irregular heartbeat
- ▶▶ Irritability
- ▶▶ Mood swings, sudden tears
- ▶▶ Trouble sleeping through the night (with or without night sweats)
- ▶▶ Irregular menstrual periods; shorter, lighter periods; heavier periods, flooding; phantom periods, shorter cycles, longer cycles
- ▶▶ Loss of interest in sex (for some, sex is even repulsive)
- ▶▶ Dry vagina, which can cause pain during sexual intercourse
- ▶▶ Crushing fatigue
- ▶▶ Anxiety, feeling ill at ease
- ▶▶ Feelings of dread, apprehension, doom
- ▶▶ Difficulty concentrating, disorientation, mental confusion
- ▶▶ Disturbing memory lapses
- ▶▶ Loss of bladder muscle tone, leading to urinary Incontinence, especially with sneezing or laughing
- ▶▶ Itchy, crawly skin (feels like ants crawling under your skin)
- ▶▶ Aching, sore joints, muscles and tendons
- ▶▶ Increased tension in muscles
- ▶▶ Breast tenderness
- ▶▶ Increase or decrease in headaches from what is usual for you
- ▶▶ Gastrointestinal distress, indigestion, flatulence, gas pain, nausea
- ▶▶ Sudden bouts of bloat
- ▶▶ Depression, often related to feeling an intense loss of self and an inability to cope
- ▶▶ Worsening of existing health problems
- ▶▶ Increase in allergies
- ▶▶ Weight gain, often around the waist and thighs—"middle-age spread"
- ▶▶ Loss of thinning of hair on your head, pubic area, or whole body, with an increase in facial hair
- ▶▶ Dizziness, light-headedness, losing your balance
- ▶▶ Changes in body odor
- ▶▶ Electric shock sensation under the skin and in the head, often a warning sign of a hot flash
- ▶▶ Tingling in the arms and legs
- ▶▶ Increase in bleeding gums and other gum problems
- ▶▶ Burning tongue, burning roof of mouth, bad taste in mouth, change in breath odor

[CLICK HERE TO GO TO HOW TO CONQUER MENOPAUSE NOW](#)