

# Menopause Resource Guide

**Menopause:** The process in which females cease having their periods for 12 consecutive months.

**Timing:** All females will experience menopause at some point in life; some people may start in their early 40s, and others may experience this in their 60s, with most falling somewhere in between. Perimenopause is the time that leads up to menopause; it may still be possible to become pregnant at this time; however, you may not ovulate monthly.

**Experience:** Each person's experience with menopause will be uniquely different. Some people may notice significant changes in their day-to-day lives, and others may not be as affected or even notice. Depending on how you start menopause (starting gradually vs. immediately due to surgery/other medical reasons) can also impact how you experience this time of change in life. You may potentially experience:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Night sweats
- Hot flashes
- Vaginal dryness
- Changes in sexual health and or libido
- Irregular periods or changes in periods
- Changes in mood (anxiety, irritability, depression) and memory

**Support:** Culturally, society has not always embraced, openly discussed, or supported women as they go through this time in their lives. And yet, this is a very important time, and there is no reason not to speak openly and engage in support if needed.

- **Emotional support:** While friends and family may offer some support, consider also reaching out to a neutral third party, such as a counselor or therapist, for emotional support if you are feeling overwhelmed.
- **Diet and exercise** have been shown to lessen the vasomotor (hot flashes, night sweats, heart palpitations, and blood pressure changes) symptoms of perimenopause.
- **Mindfulness** and **meditation** can also help with mood-related issues.
- **Contact your doctor with any abnormal bleeding:**
  - o If you are having any irregularities with heavy bleeding prior to menopause.
  - o If you have ANY bleeding that appears after the year of your periods ending (post-menopausal bleeding)
- **Contact your doctor for support** for physical, mood, or memory changes. Your PCP can explore potential ways to alleviate symptoms using medications and other interventions for symptoms such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, difficulty sleeping, sweating, insomnia as well as mood-related issues.

## Resources:

### Websites

- [WebMD](#) – Menopause Resource Center
- [WebMD](#) - All About Menopause and Perimenopause
- [OASH Office of Women's Health](#) - Menopause

### Books

- [The North American Menopause Society](#) – Menopause Guidebook, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition

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For help translating or understanding this, please call (800) 635-9233. (TTY dial 711)