



Saint Mary's Managed Clinical Service
Division of Gynaecology

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

WHAT IS THE MENOPAUSE?

Menopause is when monthly periods stop because of the reduction and loss of ovarian reproductive function. This is when the ovaries stop producing eggs leading to the decrease in levels of the hormones oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone.

In the UK the average age of the menopause is 51, however it can occur between the ages of 45 and 55 years of age. The average age can differ slightly depending on ethnicity. If you are Afro-Caribbean, the average age is 49. If you are South Asian the average age is 46 - 47 years.

Peri menopause: this is when you may first notice menopausal symptoms, it usually starts with irregular periods (which can last 4-5 years). Contraception is advised as ovulation (production of an egg) is still possible even when having irregular periods. You will be classed as Perimenopausal until 12 months after your last monthly period.

Menopause: means the last menstrual period. Periods stop because the low levels of oestrogen and progesterone do not stimulate the lining of the womb (endometrium) in the normal cycle. Menopause can happen naturally or for other reasons such as surgery to remove the ovaries or the uterus, cancer treatments like chemotherapy or genetic reasons. Sometimes the reason is unknown.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF THE MENOPAUSE

- Irregular periods, no periods, heavy bleeding
- Vasomotor symptoms- hot flushes which can occur at any time and night sweats.
- Vaginal dryness and or soreness- frequency and urgency of passing urine, increase in infections such as urinary tract infections, incontinence, prolapse.
- Headaches
- Difficulty sleeping
- Mood changes- low mood, anxiety, depression, irritability, lack of energy
- Memory problems- brain fog, lack of concentration
- Joint pains- general aches and pains
- Low sex drive
- Changes in skin and hair- itchy dryer skin, brittle hair, hair loss or thinning.
- Weight gain

OTHER UNCOMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Digestive issues- bloating, changes in bowel movement
- Vertigo
- Heart palpitations
- Bleeding gums
- Weakened fingernails
- Tinnitus (ringing ears)

If you require any further information or clarification, including clarification of terminology, please do not hesitate to talk to one of the doctors or nurses, who will be happy to discuss your concerns with you.

CONTACT DETAILS



0161 276 6000: please select Option 1.



menopause.support@mft.nhs.uk

<https://www.mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/gynaecology/menopause>



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

<https://www.themenopausecharity.org/>

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>