

MENOPAUSE

Self-help pack

WHAT IS MENOPAUSE?

Menopause is a natural biological process that marks the end of menstruation (periods) and reproductive years in a woman's life. It is diagnosed after 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period and usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, with the average of 51 years.

STAGES OF MENOPAUSE

» Perimenopause

The transition phase leading up to menopause, which can last several years. Hormone levels fluctuate, and symptoms may begin to appear.

» Menopause

The point at which a woman has not had a menstrual period for 12 months.

» Postmenopause

The years after menopause, during which symptoms may continue but often lessen over time.



How can perimenopause & menopause impact a person's life?

Women affected by perimenopause and menopause can experience a variety of symptoms that may influence their physical health, mental well-being, and social aspects of life, including relationships and work.

How is the Menopause diagnosed?

Perimenopause and Menopause can often be diagnosed based on symptoms.

In some situations, blood tests may be helpful to rule out other conditions with similar symptoms. However, for women aged 45 and over, hormone level tests are not routinely needed to confirm perimenopause or menopause.

What are the common symptoms of the perimenopause and menopause?

Symptoms, their severity and their duration will differ between each woman. Please see the below for some of the most common symptoms.



Physical

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Palpitations
- Fatigue
- Joint pains
- Headaches
- Poor sleep
- Weight gain
- Itchy skin



Psychological

- Irritability
- Emotional
- Low mood
- Heightened anxiety
- Poor concentration or memory lapses ('brain fog')



Genital & Urinary

- Vaginal dryness
- Vaginal discomfort
- Painful sex
- Frequent urination

MANAGING SYMPTOMS

Lifestyle changes

- Eating a healthy diet
- Regular Exercise
- Aiming for a healthy weight
- Not smoking
- Limiting Alcohol
- Limiting Caffeine
- Focusing on relaxation methods e.g Yoga, Meditation etc

Medical & Therapeutic Options

- Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)
- Prescribed non-hormonal treatments
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Herbal therapies

It is important to consult your GP before starting any treatment. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), for example, may not be suitable for everyone. Your GP can help you explore your symptoms, consider your individual risk factors, and discuss the treatment options that best meet your needs and preferences.

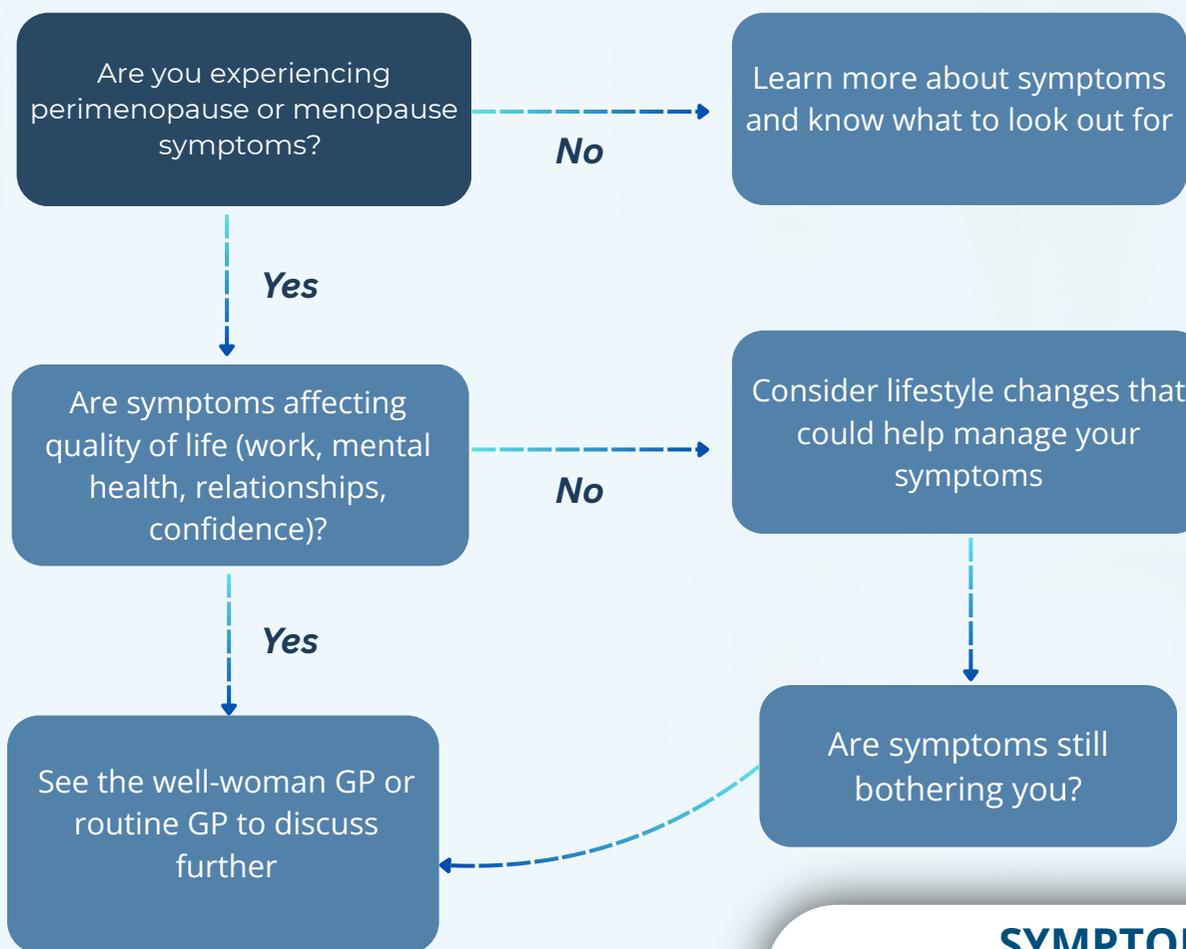
For those considering herbal therapies, some over-the-counter supplements may help manage symptoms. Look for products that carry the Traditional Herbal Registration (THR) logo, which indicates they are regulated and meet quality standards. However, please be aware that herbal supplements can cause side effects and may interact with other medications. It's always best to seek medical advice before using them.

Useful Resources

To find out more about the benefits and risks of HRT, and other ways in which you can manage symptoms, please see the below:

- <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/>
- <https://www.rcog.org.uk/for-the-public/translated-patient-information/spanish/menopause-spanish/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

SHOULD I SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE?



Routine GP

For same day appointment call 20052441 between 08:15 - 11am.

For an advanced appointment (up to 1 month in advance) call 20052441 between 11 - 3pm

Well-Woman Clinic

Call 20007842 on Fridays at 11 am or via eGov

Note: Appointments release on Friday at 11 am, for the following week

SYMPTOMS

Cognitive & Emotional



- Low mood, anxiety, irritability, poor concentration

Physical & Hormonal



- Hot flushes, night sweats
- Palpitations, tiredness, joint pain, muscle aches, weight gain

Reproduction & Urogenital



- Vaginal dryness, urine infections
- Painful intimacy
- Low sex drive
- Change in periods

Skin and sleep



- Dry/ itchy skin
- Poor sleep



HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR MY APPOINTMENT?

Keeping a log of symptoms

- Tracking your symptoms over time can help your GP understand the pattern and impact on your daily life. This makes it easier to identify suitable treatment options and monitor progress. You will find a symptom tracker at the end of this pack to help you get started.

Consider completing the pre-appointment questionnaire

- This form helps structure your discussion with the doctor and ensures important points are not missed. You can find the form on the GHA website by clicking the following:

Public Health > Adult Health > Women's Health > Menopause.

Read about treatment options in advance

- Understanding what is available can help you feel more confident when discussing what might be right for you. See the 'Useful Resources' section on page 4, for more information.

Check you are up to date with screenings

- **Smear test** - Currently dependant on age.
Every **3 years** if you are aged between 25-50.
Every **5 years** if you are aged between 50-65

*If you are not up to date with your smear test, please call **56004698 (Monday - Friday, 09:00 - 16:00)** and schedule an appointment.*

- **Mammogram** - Every **2 years** if you are aged between 40-70 years. If you are not up to date with your mammogram, please contact **20072266 (ext 2214)** or email **breastscreening@gha.gi**

SYMPTOM DIARY

You may wish to complete this symptom diary before your appointment to help you recall key details and make the most of your discussion.

	No	Sometimes	Frequently
Hot Flashes			
Night Sweats			
Palpitations			
Vaginal Dryness			
Urinary Symptoms			
Pain during/after intercourse			
Poor libido/ sex drive			
Tiredness			
Poor Concentration			

Emotional			
Irritable			
Feeling anxious/tense			
Feeling low/depressed			
Poor Sleep			
Joint Pains			
Headaches			
Dizziness			
Tinnitus			
Any other notes			