WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MENOPAUSE

What is menopause?

• Menopause is a natural process that results in the end of menstrual periods.
• Most women have their last period at about age 52.
• Menopause can occur early if a woman smokes, has her ovaries removed, or has had chemotherapy or radiation.

How can I tell if I have reached menopause?

• If you haven’t had a period in 12 months and are in your 50s, you have probably reached menopause.
• Hot flashes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness are the most common symptoms of menopause. These are caused by changes in hormones that happen with menopause.
• During menopause, some women have mood changes, trouble sleeping, pain, or memory problems but these symptoms may not be because of hormone changes.

Should I have laboratory tests for menopause?

• Laboratory tests are not usually needed for menopause.
• Your doctor might measure follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) level and do other tests to be sure that menopause is causing your symptoms, especially in younger women with menopause-like symptoms.

Should I have treatment for my symptoms?

Usually, the symptoms of menopause go away over time without treatment, but some women have them for years. These things can help women with symptoms:
• Don’t drink a lot of alcohol or smoke
• Exercise and eat healthy
• Use vaginal creams and lubricants

For More Information

Web Sites with Information on Menopause:

www.menopause.org
The North American Menopause Society
National Library of Medicine, MedlinePlus