

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PERIMENOPAUSE

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What Is Perimenopause?

Perimenopause is also called “menopause transition”. It happens before menopause and the final menstrual period. Since women start menopause at different ages, perimenopause can occur at different times in a woman's life. It can last many years for some women.

What Are the Signs?

Perimenopause can be different for each woman. Some women may have many symptoms and others may have none at all. Some of the most common symptoms include:

- Irregular menstrual bleeding
 - Light or infrequent bleeding or “spotting”
 - Unpredictable and heavy menstrual bleeding
 - Different length of menstrual cycles than in the past
- Hot flashes
- Night sweats
- Sleep problems
- Mood changes
- Vaginal dryness
- Changes in sexual desire

How Is It Diagnosed?

There is no test to diagnose perimenopause. Your doctor will discuss your medical history, any symptoms you are having, and medicines you are taking.

Your doctor will want to make sure your symptoms are not caused by something else.

Some doctors may order a blood test to check for hormone levels, but this test is generally not needed.

How Is It Treated?

Treatment will depend on your symptoms. There are different medicine options, including hormone therapies, and nonmedicine options.

- Contraceptive dose hormone therapy is often preferred as it treats abnormal bleeding, hotflashes, and nightsweats in addition to protecting against unplanned pregnancy.
- Low dose hormone therapy is usually preferred after menopause.
- Antidepressants or other medicines are nonhormonal options to control hot flashes and night sweats.
- Nonmedical options, like exercise and yoga, can help with sleep problems.



Hormone therapies can increase the risk for blood clots, and other serious conditions. Talk to your doctor about the possible risks and benefits of treatment options to decide what is best for you.

Questions for My Doctor

- Can I get pregnant during perimenopause, even if I don't have a regular period?
- Are hormonal therapies safe? What are the risks?
- When will the hot flashes and night sweats stop? Is there anything I can do to stop the hot flashes?
- I'm in such a bad mood and tired all the time. Why?
- How long will perimenopause last? When will I start menopause?
- What else can I expect during perimenopause?
- How will perimenopause affect my sex life?

Bottom Line

Perimenopause happens before menopause and the final menstrual period.

Some of the most common symptoms are irregular menstrual bleeding, hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, and sleep problems.

Perimenopause can be diagnosed after discussing your symptoms and medical history with a doctor.

There are many options for treating symptoms of perimenopause, including

- Hormonal and nonhormonal medicines
- Exercise and yoga
- You may want to consider birth control options for preventing unwanted pregnancy during perimenopause.

For More Information

WomensHealth.gov:

www.womenshealth.gov/menopause/menopause-basics/index.html#b

National Institute on Aging:

www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/menopause-time-change/introduction-menopause

Medline Plus:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/spring13/articles/spring13pg14.html



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