

Menopause

What is Perimenopause and Menopause?

Perimenopause:

This is the transitional period before menopause when estrogen levels start to decrease. It typically starts in a woman's 40s but can begin in the 30s. It can last from one to ten years, with an average duration of four to six years.

Symptoms include irregular periods, hot flashes, mood swings, and sleep disturbances

Menopause:

Menopause is officially diagnosed when you have gone 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period. The average age for menopause in Australia is 51 to 52.

Symptoms include persistent hot flashes, vaginal dryness, weight gain, and sleep issues

Understanding Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and Supportive Supplements

HRT can help alleviate symptoms like hot flashes, night sweats, and vaginal discomfort by replacing estrogen and progesterone. It is most beneficial when started within 10 years of menopause onset. It can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and improve overall health. Always discuss with your healthcare provider to weigh the benefits and risks.

Topical Estrogen: Topical estrogen, such as vaginal creams, has a lower risk profile and is effective for local symptoms like vaginal dryness and discomfort. It has minimal systemic absorption, reducing the risk of side effects.

Supportive Supplements

Supplements like black cohosh, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, calcium, phytoestrogens, maca root, probiotics, B vitamins, magnesium, L-theanine, and turmeric can help manage various symptoms of perimenopause and menopause.

Common Changes and Why They Occur

Hormonal Fluctuations: Decreasing estrogen levels cause symptoms like hot flashes, night sweats, and irregular periods.

Physical Changes: Weight gain, changes in skin elasticity, and bone density loss are common.

Emotional Changes: Mood swings, anxiety, and depression can occur due to hormonal imbalances.

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Lifestyle and Dietary Adjustments

Diet: A balanced diet rich in calcium, vitamin D, and phytoestrogens can help manage symptoms. The Mediterranean diet, which includes lean proteins, whole grains, and plenty of fruits and vegetables, is highly recommended. Focus: Ensure adequate fibre intake and limit added sugars to less than 25g per day to reduce visceral fat.

Exercise: Regular cardiovascular and weight-bearing exercises can help maintain a healthy weight, improve mood, and strengthen bones.

Avoid Smoking and Limit Alcohol: Smoking can lead to early menopause, and excessive alcohol consumption is linked to increased breast cancer risk.

Informing Family and Friends

Communication: Openly discussing your experiences with family and friends can provide emotional support and understanding.

Education: Sharing information about menopause can help your loved ones understand what you're going through and how they can support you.

Mental Health Support

Seek Help: If you experience sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts, it's crucial to seek professional help. Mental health support can include therapy, support groups, and medication if necessary.

Self-Care: Practices like yoga, meditation, and mindfulness can help manage stress and improve mental well-being.

Remember, every woman's experience with perimenopause and menopause is unique. It's important to find what works best for you and to seek support when needed. You're not alone in this journey. 🌸

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