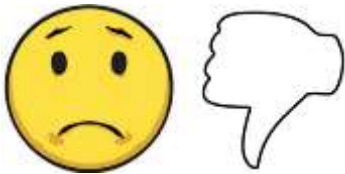


Section 2

Signs and symptoms of menopause



Symptom is the word we use to describe how people feel when they are unwell.



Most women will have symptoms of menopause. Many women have early symptoms when they are still having periods.



Symptoms of menopause can start months or even years before your periods stop. They can last for years after.



If you go through the menopause because of surgical or medical treatments, you are likely to have symptoms of menopause much more quickly.

What to expect



The first sign of the menopause is usually a change in your periods. You may start having lighter or heavier periods.



When you have your periods may also change. You may have one every two or three weeks, or you may not have one for months at a time. Eventually, you will stop having periods altogether.



All women experience the menopause differently. But some common symptoms are helpful to look out for. Many women are not ready for the different symptoms and how bad they can be.

Common symptoms of menopause



Common symptoms of the menopause include:

- Anxiety



- changes in mood - like feeling down or being easily annoyed



- changes in skin like dryness, oiliness or spots



- difficulty sleeping – this may make you feel tired and annoyed during the day



- pain during sex



- feeling like you do not know who you are anymore



- losing your hair



- headaches or migraines



- hot flashes – short, sudden feelings of heat, usually in the face, neck and chest, which can make your skin red and sweaty



- having more facial hair



- stiff joints, aches and pains



- loss of self confidence



- night sweats – hot flushes that happen at night



- heartbeats that suddenly become more noticeable



- problems with memory, concentration and brain fog



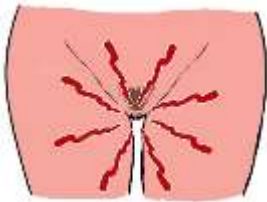
- urine infections that keep coming back



- not wanting to have sex



- Tinnitus which is an annoying ringing in the ear



- vaginal dryness and pain.



Menopause can also mean you are more likely to develop problems like osteoporosis (weak bones) or heart disease.



You can speak to someone at your GP practice about your symptoms and ask if they are the menopause. You can also say if you would prefer to see a female health professional.

Support managing your symptoms



Some symptoms of menopause can be hard to live with and you may need support from people around you. Menopause Cafes can be a helpful place to talk to other people about menopause.



Speak to your GP if:

- you are worried about your symptoms
- you have symptoms of the menopause before 45 years of age.

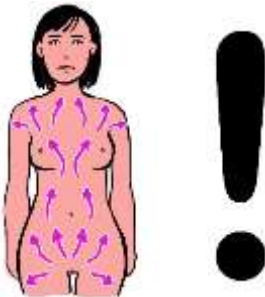


Your GP can usually say if you are menopausal based on your symptoms. You might get a blood test to measure your hormones if you are aged 45 or younger.

Menopause and mental health



Many women have symptoms of anxiety, loss of confidence and other symptoms that affect their mental health.



These symptoms happen because of the changes happening to your body. They can have a big impact on your life.



Sometimes these symptoms are not recognised as menopause symptoms. If you know what to expect, it can help you manage the symptoms.