

Join the conversation

Finding out the facts about menopause



Menopause isn't often talked about. 1.3 million people in the U.S. become menopausal each year, and it's time to erase the negative associations and take back the word. We're here to support you through the menopause journey. And we'll give you easy-to-understand information about this life stage.

Understanding the natural menopausal cycle

There are three stages of this. The journey is unique to every person, but generally begins between the ages of 45 and 55. It lasts seven years on average.

Perimenopause is the time before your menstrual cycle stops. It's when you start having symptoms.

Menopause begins when you haven't had your period for the past twelve months. This is a time to manage your symptoms and focus on preventive care.

Postmenopause is the last stage, when symptoms start to become mild or disappear completely and you haven't had your period for more than a year.

Perimenopause includes the years leading up to menopause and is when estrogen levels start to decrease. Estrogen is the hormone that protects your:



Heart



Brain



Bones, muscles and joints



Skin and hair

The menopausal transition can feel overwhelming, but educating yourself and talking to your provider can help with any precautions and preparations. There are over 34 symptoms people may experience. The most common include:



Change in/irregular periods



Muscle tension and aches



Sleep loss/insomnia



Weight gain



Anxiety or irritability



Hot flashes

Your provider may do some tests to make sure your health changes are due to menopause. **It's still possible to get pregnant during perimenopause**, so be sure to talk to your provider about options.

Understanding the changes and symptoms

During the menopausal cycle, your body may go through changes and experience symptoms. Estrogen will significantly decrease as your ovaries produce less estrogen. This could lead to more serious conditions.

Also, people who've had cancer or certain surgeries may be more likely to have an earlier onset of menopause. Transgender or non-binary people may also experience changes and symptoms in different ways.

Be empowered to discuss any questions or concerns with your provider.

What can I ask my provider?

To help prepare, keep notes about how you're feeling day to day. Write down any health changes you notice, and any questions you want to ask. We want you to be prepared and feel comfortable asking the questions. Here is a list you might consider:

- How do I know if I'm starting perimenopause?
- What can I do to help relieve my symptoms, both at home and throughout the work day?
- What screenings are important for me to get?
- What lifestyle changes can help?
- Am I a candidate for hormone replacement therapy?
- How can I help my spouse or family understand what I'm going through?
- What options are available if I experience anxiety or depression?

You might want to learn your family's history with menopause. Knowing when your direct relatives first had symptoms can help your provider determine if you're starting this journey.

Knowing your options

Depending on your symptoms, your primary care physician or obstetrician/gynecologist may recommend more support for things like mental health and nutrition.

You could save time and money looking for in-network care, like with in-network provider Gennev or through services at MinuteClinic® locations, which include virtual care.

Just log in at [Aetna.com](https://www.aetna.com) to learn more. Or call the number on the back of your member ID card.

Additional resources

Find out more about menopause from these resources:

Menopause.org

The North American Menopause Society

SWHR.org

The Society for Women's Health Research

Make sure to see your provider for annual wellness exams. And be empowered to ask questions, so you feel good and confident about this stage in your life.

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