



Harley Street at Home

MENOPAUSE

Understanding Your Menopause Body

Menopause isn't an illness. It's a natural phase of life that all women will go through in their lives. There are clinical and genetic influences that can affect when exactly this might happen, but every woman will experience change.

Your menopause experience will be unique to you, and whether or not it is different to someone else doesn't matter. What's important is that you are empowered with the knowledge to take control of your menopause journey.

Key Points

- Menopause is officially the point at which a woman has gone 12 months without a period. It signifies the end of a woman's fertile phase. The average age to go into menopause is 51, though it can be earlier or later.
- Peri menopause is the time leading up to menopause where periods may be erratic, or regular, but where hormonal fluctuations can cause a number of sometimes confusing symptoms. Peri menopause can last up to 10 years.
- Symptoms of peri menopause and menopause can be both physical and psychological. They can range from the more commonly discussed hot flushes and brain fog to less commonly attributed tinnitus, itching and digestive issues.
- Symptoms can also be indicative of other conditions, so it's important to rule these out where applicable, while being mindful of a possible diagnosis of menopause.



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- A symptom checklist can help track symptoms and understand what's different for you, and what's having the biggest impact on your life. A symptom checklist is also a great tool to help with a doctor's consultation and monitor symptoms as you go through treatment.
- Women who experience surgical or chemical menopause can experience sudden and severe symptoms. Wherever possible women should ensure an HRT specialist is part of their medical team at all stages of their treatment.
- There's no right or wrong time to speak to someone about symptoms. Reach out whenever it's right for you. You may feel like you're going mad, but chances are it's your hormones and Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) can help.
- Be kind to yourself. Be open about symptoms and how you function and feel at home and work. Most people around you will know something isn't quite right and talking about things can make you feel better.
- Allow yourself to be vulnerable and recognise when you need help. In women, the peak age for suicide is around menopause, so it's really important to ask for help and take it when it's offered.
- Once you've gone into menopause, you're there for the rest of your life, so it's worth looking at what changes you can make to help yourself, and stay healthy. Diet, exercise and relaxation are all important.
- Menopause can be a time of great reflection and for women to consider if they are leading the life they want to lead. From career changes to exploring new exercise classes for cardiovascular health, weight training or yoga, find what works for you, and more importantly, what you enjoy.



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- The good news is that some symptoms, for example brain activity, will generally improve over time, and you can find yourself feeling well again. Other symptoms however won't improve without help, for example vaginal atrophy, where HRT and/or local vaginal oestrogen products can make a significant improvement to a woman's quality of life.
- Building a menopause toolkit can help you feel better at this stage of life than you have ever done.

Useful Links

- [Menopause symptom tracker](#)
- [Building a menopause toolkit](#)

About Dr Corinne Fletcher

Dr Corinne Fletcher is an experienced GP with a long-standing special interest in women's health. She is aware of the real significance of peri menopausal and menopausal hormone changes and the debilitating symptoms that can affect women at this time. She believes that by taking a holistic, and evidence-based approach, a woman can be enabled to thrive and enjoy all aspects of her life at this time. She adopts a patient centred-approach and takes the time to tune into a woman's overall physical health and mental well-being. She is a member of the British Menopause Society and has a specialist interest in menopause, PMS, PMDD and histamine intolerance.

Dr Corinne is part of the team of Menopause Specialist GPs at [Menopause Care](#).