

## Menopause

The menopause occurs in all women. The menopause is when a woman stops having **periods** and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally. The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51

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### What is the menopause?

The menopause is caused by a change in the balance of the body's sex hormones, which occurs as you get older. It happens when your ovaries stop producing as much of the hormone oestrogen and no longer release an egg each month.

Premature or early menopause can occur at any age but usually in your 40s, and in many cases there's no clear cause.

The menopause can occur when the ovaries spontaneously fail to produce the hormone oestrogen; when the ovaries fail due to specific treatment such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy; or when the ovaries are removed, often at the time of a hysterectomy.

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### At what age does the menopause happen?

The average age of the natural menopause is 51 years old, but it can occur much earlier or later.

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### Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms of the menopause can last for a few months or for many years. Some of them are as follows:

- hot flushes

- night sweats
  - vaginal dryness (including [discomfort during sex](#))
  - difficulty sleeping
  - [low mood](#) or [anxiety](#)
  - reduced sex drive or libido
  - difficulty with memory or concentrating
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## Peri-Menopause

Peri-Menopause is the time when your body naturally transitions toward menopause. Women start perimenopause at different ages. You may notice signs of progression toward menopause, such as menstrual irregularity, sometime in your 40s. But some women notice changes as early as their mid-30s.

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## Early Menopause

Early Menopause occurs before the age of 45 and is also known as premature menopause. This affects 1% of women.

Women with early or premature menopause have an increased risk of [osteoporosis](#), so they are generally advised to take hormone replacement therapy (HRT) until they reach the average age of the menopause, to control symptoms and protect the bones.

There are a small proportion of women affected in their 20s or 30s. The [Daisy Network](#) Premature Menopause Support Group is a registered charity for women who have experienced a premature menopause.

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## Testing

It's worth talking to a GP if you have menopausal symptoms that are troubling you or if you're experiencing symptoms of the menopause before 45 years of age.

They can usually confirm whether you're menopausal based on your symptoms, but a [blood test](#) to measure your hormone levels may be carried out.

There are also home testing kits you can purchase from pharmacy and supermarkets.

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## Treatment

Your GP can offer treatments and suggest lifestyle changes if you have severe menopausal symptoms that interfere with your day-to-day life.

These include:

- [hormone replacement therapy \(HRT\)](#) ? tablets, skin patches, gels and implants that relieve menopausal symptoms by replacing oestrogen
- vaginal oestrogen creams, lubricants or moisturisers for vaginal dryness
- [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#) ? a type of talking therapy that can help with low mood and anxiety
- [eating a healthy, balanced diet and exercising regularly](#) ? [maintaining a healthy weight](#) and [staying fit and strong](#) can improve some menopausal symptoms and avoid [osteoporosis](#).

## Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

The main benefit of HRT is that it can help relieve most of the menopausal symptoms, such as those listed above. Many of these symptoms pass after a few years, but they can be unpleasant and taking HRT can offer relief for many women. It can also help prevent weakening of the bones (osteoporosis), which is more common after the menopause.

There are [risks to taking HRT](#) and there are medical conditions that mean you cannot take HRT as the risk is too great.

From 1st April 2023 women who usually pay for their HRT prescriptions will be able to get an annual HRT Prepayment certificate. The certificate is valid for 12 months, can be used against any [listed HRT prescription item\(s\)](#) that are licensed for the treatment of menopause. This 12 month certificate is the same cost as just two single prescription charges.

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## Complementary Therapy

There are several complementary medicines and therapies which are said to be

helpful in the treatment of menopausal symptoms, including:

- aromatherapy
- homeopathy
- yoga
- relaxation techniques

You can find out more about these in our sections on [Complementary therapies](#) and [Fitness](#).

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## Other Useful Information

- [Menopause Matters Women's Health Concern \(WHC\)](#)
  - [NHS.UK](#)
  - [Menopause friendly accredited organisations and employers](#)
  - [Menopause support in the workplace \(bma.org.uk\)](#)
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## Other Useful Organisations

- [The Patient Information Centre](#) offers a range of [resources](#) including;
  - medical conditions
  - procedures and treatments
  - details about self help and support groups
  - information about complaints procedures
  - copies of leaflets
- [Healthtalk.org](#)
- [NHS 111](#) is the new telephone service which has replaced NHS Direct. You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time.
- [NHS.UK](#) is a website providing health and medical advice, an online symptom checker and a facility for searching for services near you.

- [Menopause and the workplace | NHS Employers](#)

**Please note** - The content on this website is provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional. If you are feeling unwell, make an appointment to see your GP or contact [NHS 111](#). In an emergency, dial **999**.

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## Useful Organisations

### **Patient Information Centre ? Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)**

**Website:** [www.cntw.nhs.uk](http://www.cntw.nhs.uk)

**Telephone:** 0191 246 7288

**Address:** St Nicholas Hospital, NE3 3XT

### **Daisy Network**

**Email:** [info@daisynetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@daisynetwork.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.daisynetwork.org](http://www.daisynetwork.org)

**Telephone:** 0191 246 7288

### **healthtalk.org**

**Email:** [info@healthtalkonline.org](mailto:info@healthtalkonline.org)

**Website:** [www.healthtalk.org](http://www.healthtalk.org)

**Telephone:** 0191 246 7288

### **Women's Health Concern (WHC)**

**Website:** [www.womens-health-concern.org](http://www.womens-health-concern.org)

**Telephone:** 0191 246 7288

## **Menopause Matters**

**Website:** [www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 0191 246 7288

## **NHS 111**

**Website:** [www.nhs.uk/111](http://www.nhs.uk/111)

**Telephone:** 0191 246 7288

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## **Related Articles**

[Introduction to Complementary Therapies](#)

[Osteoporosis](#)

[Urgent medical help from NHS 111](#)

[Benefits of being physically active](#)

[Fitness Activities](#)

[Swimming Pools in Newcastle](#)