



# Menopause

## What is menopause?

Menopause is your final period. You know you've reached menopause if you have not had your period for 12 months.

## When does menopause happen?

Most women reach menopause between the ages of 45 and 55. In Australia, the average age for women to reach menopause is 51 to 52. Some women might reach menopause as late as 60. Menopause can happen naturally, or it may happen early – for example, if you have an operation to remove your ovaries.

## What causes menopause?

Menopause happens when you have no eggs left. This means you do not ovulate or have periods. Menopause can also happen due to surgery or cancer treatment.

## Your hormones

As you approach menopause, your hormones (e.g. oestrogen and progesterone) go up and down. These changes can lead to different symptoms.

## Symptoms of menopause

Many women experience symptoms before reaching menopause. Everyone is different and symptoms can vary, depending on things like your stage of life and general health and wellbeing.

Common physical symptoms include:

- hot flushes and night sweats
- sleep problems and tiredness
- headaches
- aches and pains
- dry vagina
- sore breasts.

Common emotional symptoms include:

- mood changes
- forgetfulness
- anxiety.

## How to manage menopause

There are many ways to help manage menopausal symptoms.

### Practical tips

You can:

- eat healthy food and drink lots of water
- do regular exercise
- use a hand fan or water spray when you feel hot
- wear layered clothing and take clothes off when you feel hot
- go to relaxation classes like yoga and meditation.

### Therapies and medicines

You can reduce menopausal symptoms with:

- menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) – this is the most effective therapy for many symptoms
- other medicines, such as antidepressants, which can reduce hot flushes and sweating
- cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) – to help manage your symptoms and emotional wellbeing
- natural therapies.

Ask your doctor about the risks and benefits of these therapies and medicines.

## When to see your doctor

You should see your doctor if:

- you are worried about your periods
- your symptoms stop you from doing things you normally do
- your symptoms affect your eating, sleeping and enjoyment of activities.

Your doctor might refer you to a specialist, for example, a gynaecologist, psychologist or dietitian.

**For more information, resources and references visit [jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause](https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause)**



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Disclaimer: This information does not replace medical advice. If you are worried about your health, talk to your doctor or healthcare team.

We write health information for people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We use the term 'women', but we acknowledge that this term is not inclusive of all people who may use our content.

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