

Hormone Changes During Menopause

Menopause is not a sudden change. During the months or years before menopause (perimenopause), your ovaries start to run out of eggs. Your body makes less estrogen and progesterone. This may bring on symptoms, such as hot flashes. You've reached menopause when you have not had a period for 1 year. From that point on, you are in menopause.

Perimenopause

In the years leading up to menopause, your ovaries make less estrogen. You release fewer eggs and your periods become less regular.

Symptoms you may have:

- Heavier or lighter periods
- Longer or shorter time between periods
- Hot flashes
- Mood swings or depression
- Night sweats
- Insomnia
- Vaginal dryness. This may make sex uncomfortable or painful.
- Urinary changes, such as incontinence or urinating more often
- Migraine headaches
- Joint pain

Postmenopause

After menopause, you make very little estrogen. As a result, the uterine lining doesn't thicken, and your periods have ended.

Symptoms you may have

- No periods
- Vaginal dryness, which may make intercourse uncomfortable or painful
- Hot flashes
- Mood swings or depression
- Night sweats
- Insomnia
- Urinary changes, such as incontinence and urinating more often
- Joint pain
- Memory loss or trouble concentrating

Surgical menopause

Menopause occurs if you have your uterus removed. But symptoms of menopause happen only if the ovaries are also removed. This causes a quick drop in the amount of estrogen and progesterone. This drop causes sudden and severe symptoms.

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