

PERIMENOPAUSE 101

FACTS, FIGURES AND SYMPTOMS

IT'S  FETCH



ABOUT IT'SFETCH

It'sFetch is a digital health community on a mission to bring awareness to the most taboo topics in women's health. Our digital community serves as a safe space for women to connect on diverse topics on health and wellness and further supports that with fact-based articles.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is meant to provide you with a glimpse of what Perimenopause is and the symptoms that may occur during this time of life.

What is Perimenopause?

Perimenopause means **'around the time of menopause'**. This is a stage in a woman's life in which they begin transitioning into menopause. Symptoms can begin as early as 35 years of age and but most commonly begin in early 40s.



SYMPTOMS OF PERIMENOPAUSE

- Hot Flashes
- Weight Gain
- Irregular Periods
- Shorter, lighter Periods
- Shorter Cycles
- Loss of Interest in Sex
- Difficulty Sleeping
- Low Mood or Depression
- Decreased ability to concentrate
- Irritability
- Night Sweats
- Vaginal Dryness
- Phantom Periods
- Heavier Periods or Flooding
- Longer Cycles
- Changes in Hair Growth
- Mood Swings
- Easy Tearfulness
- Memory Problems
- Incontinence
- Age

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM MENOPAUSE?

You've heard of Menopause, but more recently the term Perimenopause has been making some headlines. In comparison to perimenopause, a woman in menopause has already experienced 12 consecutive months without a period.

While they are both part of the same transitional period of life, menopause and perimenopause can have different severity of symptoms and different symptoms overall. Treatment options can also differ depending on which stage someone is in. Know the difference between these two stages and what to expect in each.



The Stats on Perimenopause Symptoms

Every woman's health is unique. Perimenopause is no different. While every woman may experience this menopausal transition differently, there are symptoms that are quite common in this stage.

80%

of women experience hot flashes

67%

report forgetfulness, memory decline, and concentration difficulties in many studies.

23%

will experience mood swings

12%

are affected by Genitourinary syndrome of menopause

Sources:

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HOT FLASHES

Hot flashes are almost universally experienced by women during perimenopause. These hot flashes, or vasomotor symptoms, are sudden feelings of intense body heat. Your skin may redden, you may start sweating, and some women sense their hearts beating faster. The hot flash may be followed by a cold chill. When experienced at night, hot flashes can cause a period of heavy sweating - night sweats - which may disrupt your sleep. Causes of hot flashes are not fully understood, and there is no reliable way to predict when they will start or stop.

SLEEP PROBLEMS

Sleep problems are commonly reported by women during menopause. Often, women experience trouble falling asleep, trouble staying asleep, waking up often during the night and getting up too early. Women often also experience mood disorders, sleep apnea and other medical conditions with age which can affect sleep quality. Night sweats are a common culprit of sleep disruption, and a study conducted in California found that women who experienced severe hot flashes were more likely to report insomnia.

IRREGULAR PERIODS

Irregular periods are one of the first indicators that a woman may be entering perimenopause. During perimenopause, the two hormones responsible for regulating the menstrual cycle - estrogen and progesterone - are constantly changing. This hormonal state of flux can cause spotting between periods, abnormally heavy bleeding, brown or dark blood, shorter or longer cycles, missed cycles and overall irregularity.

GENITOURINARY SYNDROME OF MENOPAUSE

Over time, the vaginal lining gets thinner, dryer and less elastic due to decreasing levels of estrogen. This results in vaginal burning and itching and decreased lubrication which can make intercourse painful. The lining of the urinary tract may also thin, causing women to urinate more frequently, and make a woman more prone to vaginal and urinary tract infections.

URINARY INCONTINENCE

As estrogen levels decrease around menopause, the lining of the urethra thins. Muscles in the pelvic region also weaken with age. These two factors put women at increased risk for urinary incontinence, or the involuntary leakage of urine. There are exercises to train and strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, such as yoga and kegel exercises, to help with urinary incontinence.

BRAIN FOG

Brain fog is another common symptom that occurs alongside the hormonal and physical changes of menopause. Many women experience difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, comprehension problems, word-finding difficulties and trouble multitasking. Brain fog during menopause is often attributed to fluctuating estrogen levels, sleep disturbances -whether it is difficulty falling asleep, disrupted sleep or waking up earlier, - and stress. In most cases, brain fog is normal during this time, and studies show that more intense brain fog will subside after menopause.