



# Be Well

## Women's Health - Menopause

### What is menopause?

Menopause is when a woman's menstrual cycle ceases, thus depleting her estrogen levels. As a natural, life transition, it is important we talk openly about it menopause so that women know what expect throughout the different phases, and how to address varying physical, mental, and emotional symptoms that come with it.

### Stages of Menopause

The age in which menopause begins to occur is different for every woman. Most women see symptoms of menopause beginning from ages 45 – 55. However, some women have been on the opposite side of that median. Menopause can start for some women in their early 30's and other's in their early to mid 60's. With that, women enter three stages during this hormonal transition: premenopausal/perimenopausal, menopausal and postmenopausal. See below for typical symptoms.

<b>Pre-Perimenopause</b> 3-5 years prior to menopause	<b>Menopause</b>	<b>Post-menopaus</b> After 12 consecutive months of not having a period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast tenderness</li> <li>• Worsening of premenstrual syndrome (PMS)</li> <li>• Irregular periods or skipping periods</li> <li>• Periods that are heavier or lighter than usual</li> <li>• Hot flashes</li> <li>• Difficulty urinating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot flashes</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances-insomnia</li> <li>• Night sweats</li> <li>• No period not caused by illness</li> <li>• Mood changes—irritability, depression, anxiety</li> <li>• Vaginal dryness or discomfort during sexual intercourse</li> <li>• Urinary issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair dryness/thinning</li> <li>• Rapid weight gain</li> <li>• Decreased libido</li> <li>• Joint and muscle pains</li> <li>• Memory lapses</li> <li>• Mood irregularities/depression</li> </ul>



# Women's Health Continued...

## What to Do?

While there is no way to avoid any of the stages of menopause, understanding the medical history of women in your family can prove to be beneficial. In addition to this, focusing on a diet that will supplement vitamin and mineral loss that accompanies a depletion of estrogen is helpful for menopausal women.

### Vitamin B-6

Vitamin B-6 aids in production of serotonin. A hormone that is released in the brain to help regulate our moods, vitamin B-6 has shown to improve depressive symptoms. It also helps to boost energy that may be lost during the three stages of menopause.

### Vitamin D

Technically a hormone, vitamin D is crucial for the synthesis of calcium, for bone construction and restoration. As women age, they tend to lose bone mass. A diet rich in vitamin D, or a supplement, can offer help for women that may be experiencing bone loss.

### Vitamin E

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that fights against free radicals from air, food and other potential pollutants. These free radicals can promote stress on the cells within the body. This stress can manifest as weight mismanagement, depression and even certain cancers. Vitamin E for menopausal women would be truly beneficial to relieve oxidative stresses such as weight gain and depressive symptoms.

The bottom line is, menopause causes a major shift in women's bodies, emotions and minds. While this shift is quite natural, it is not easy. Exercising regularly, taking time to connect with loved ones and consuming healthful, whole foods are some of the best ways to ease the transition.

**Check out below** some foods and activities that would be most helpful during this transition!



### Sources:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15224-menopause-perimenopause-and-postmenopause>

<http://menopause.northwestern.edu/content/stages-menopause>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4890704/pdf/nihms789275.pdf>

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-menopause>