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Menopause

A Guide for Patients/Families



This brochure has been produced to give you information about Menopause. It is designed to respond to the questions most frequently asked by patients.



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Menopause

Menopause is an important time in a woman's life. It is the medical term for the end of a woman's menstrual periods. It is a natural part of aging, and occurs when the ovaries stop making hormones called estrogens.

What is the Age of Menopause?

Natural menopause is recognised as having occurred when there have been 12 consecutive months of amenorrhea, generally in women over 47 years of age. Menopause also occur when ovaries are surgically removed or stop functioning.

What are the Symptoms of Menopause?

- Menopause is linked to some uncomfortable symptoms in many women.
- Hot and cold flushes, sudden intense waves of heat and sweating.
- Night sweats.
- Disturbed sleep.
- Mood changes(increased anxiety, irritability, depression, poor memory)
- Irregular periods before menopause.
- Urinary frequency and urgency to pass urine.
- Urinary incontinence (leakage of urine or inability to control urinary flow).
- Pain during sexual intercourse due to vaginal dryness
- Dryness and wrinkling of skin.
- Indigestion and constipation.
- Fragile, dry and rough hair.

Are There Any Long-term Side Effects of Menopause?

YES, following are long-term side effects

- **Osteoporosis:**
It refers to thinning of the bones. The bones become weaker and can break easily. Bones of the spine, wrists, and hips are most prone to fracture. Consuming enough calcium in your diet can strengthen your bones. You may need to take calcium supplements (1000 milligrammes



per day before menopause and 1500 milligrammes per day after menopause). Regular weight-bearing exercise, like walking, may also help to prevent osteoporosis.

- **Increased risk of heart disease :**

Hormone replacement therapy should not be used for primary prevention of coronary heart disease.

- **Mood disorders:**

Hormone replacement therapy should not be used for treating major depression and generalised anxiety disorder.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will These Symptoms Last For The Rest Of My Life?

No, the symptoms of menopause will last for a relatively shorter time. Eating the right food, exercising, and making other positive lifestyle *changes can help a woman feel great and live a long healthy life after menopause.* If symptoms are troublesome you should consult your doctor.

Is a Change in Sexual Desire Normal After Menopause?

Sexual desire lessens during the time of menopause, the cause is physical because of lower hormone levels, and sex may become uncomfortable or painful.

Since I Began Menopause, I've Had an Embarrassing Problem - Urine Leaks When I Laugh Or Cough.

Some women have problems with bladder control after menopause begins. This happens because the muscles that surround the bladder and hold the urine inside become weaker.

Simple exercises - known as Kegel exercises - can strengthen these muscles. To perform a Kegel exercise contract the pelvic muscles as if trying to tighten or close the vaginal opening (just the way you hold the urge of passing urine). Hold the contraction for a count of five and then relax. Wait a couple of seconds and repeat at least 50 times a day.





Even Though My Eating Habits Have Not Changed, I've Gained Weight Recently. Is That Linked To Menopause?

It may be. The body's metabolism changes during and after menopause. Everyone's metabolism begins to slow during the early to mid-30s.

I'm Worried That My Memory Has Become Weak. What's Happening?

Many menopausal women have problems with short-term memory - like forgetting the location of car keys or eyeglasses, skipping *appointments they didn't remember, or losing the end of a thought* when speaking or writing. These may be due to a busy lifestyle and/or stress at home or work.

How Will Menopause Affect My Daily Activities And Lifestyle?

It all depends on you. Menopause is a natural part of life, not a disease or a health crisis. However, menopause may occur when many other changes are happening in your life. For instance, your children may be marrying or leaving home. That's why it is probably more helpful to think of how your daily activities and lifestyle will affect menopause.

I Have Heard A Lot About The Benefits Of Conventional Hormone Replacement Therapy (Hrt). Do You Think I Am A Suitable Candidate For Hrt?

HRT should not be used without consulting a gynaecologist as current literature does not favour its use for long-term benefits. It carries the risk of breast cancer, stroke and Coronary Heart Disease. Besides conventional HRT, other types of HRT are available but always consult your gynaecologist for evaluation before starting HRT.

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