

Menopause

DEFINED

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Menopause can often be confusing. We've broken down the key terms associated with menopause to help you grasp this phase of life more clearly.

Perimenopause: The transitional phase before menopause, marked by hormonal fluctuations and irregular menstrual cycles.

Menopause: The point at which a woman has not had a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months, indicating the end of fertility.

Estrogen: Primary female sex hormone responsible for the development and regulation of the female reproductive system, including menstruation and secondary sexual characteristics.

Progesterone: Another female sex hormone that plays a crucial role in regulating the menstrual cycle, preparing the uterus for pregnancy, and maintaining pregnancy.

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI): Formerly known as premature menopause or early menopause, POI refers to the loss of normal ovarian function before the age of 40, leading to infertility and hormonal imbalances.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): A hormonal disorder characterized by enlarged ovaries with small cysts on the outer edges, often leading to irregular periods, excess androgen levels, and difficulties with fertility.

Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH): A hormone produced by the pituitary gland that stimulates the growth of ovarian follicles and plays a crucial role in the menstrual cycle.

Luteinizing Hormone (LH): Another hormone produced by the pituitary gland that triggers ovulation and plays a role in the menstrual cycle.

Osteoporosis: A condition characterized by weakened bones, increasing the risk of fractures, commonly associated with menopause due to declining estrogen levels.

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When we are educated, we are better able to make informed choices that affect our overall well-being.

Endometriosis: A disorder in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus, causing pelvic pain, infertility, and other symptoms.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT): Also known as Menopause Hormone Therapy (MHT). Treatment to relieve symptoms of menopause by supplementing the body with estrogen, progesterone, or both hormones.

Bioidentical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT): A form of HRT that uses hormones derived from plant sources that are structurally identical to those produced by the human body.

Vaginal Atrophy: Thinning, drying, and inflammation of the vaginal walls due to declining estrogen levels, often resulting in discomfort, pain during intercourse, and increased risk of infection.

Dyspareunia: Painful intercourse, often associated with conditions such as vaginal dryness, pelvic floor dysfunction, or psychological factors.

Pelvic Organ Prolapse: A condition in which pelvic organs, such as the bladder, uterus, or rectum, protrude into the vaginal canal due to weakened pelvic floor muscles.

Endometrial Hyperplasia: A condition characterized by the abnormal thickening of the lining of the uterus, often caused by excess estrogen without sufficient progesterone.

Hysterectomy: Surgical removal of the uterus, sometimes performed to treat conditions such as uterine fibroids, endometriosis, or certain cancers.

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Women's bodies experience many changes over their lifetime.

Oophorectomy: The surgical removal of one or both ovaries. This procedure may be performed for various reasons, including the treatment of ovarian cancer, endometriosis, ovarian cysts, or as a preventive measure for women at high risk of ovarian cancer

Osteoporosis: A condition characterized by weakened and brittle bones, increasing the risk of fractures, particularly in postmenopausal women due to decreased estrogen levels.

Osteopenia: A precursor to osteoporosis, characterized by lower than normal bone density but not yet meeting the criteria for osteoporosis, often considered a warning sign of bone health issues.

Hormone Replacement Therapy Options:

Transdermal: This refers to a method of administering hormones through the skin, typically via patches or gels, allowing for absorption directly into the bloodstream.

Pellets: These are small, solid hormone implants inserted under the skin, usually in the buttocks or abdomen, which gradually release hormones over time to maintain hormonal balance. *Pellets are not FDA approved or regulated.*

Oral: This method involves taking hormones in pill form, which are absorbed through the digestive system before entering the bloodstream.

Topical: This involves applying hormone creams or gels directly to the skin, where they are absorbed into the bloodstream through the skin's surface.

Injection: Hormones can also be administered via injection, where a needle is used to deliver the hormones directly into the muscle or fatty tissue, allowing for rapid absorption into the bloodstream.