

Menopause

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Menopause usually begins somewhere between the ages of 38 and 58, with 51 being the average age. Technically menopause means stopping having monthly bleeding (periods or menstruation). It marks the end of your fertility and is accompanied by significant hormonal changes.

Except where menopause occurs due to surgery, (hysterectomy or removal of the ovaries) it is a gradual process rather than an abrupt change. The beginning phase is called 'peri-menopause', where periods become less frequent and some other menopausal signs can appear.

If you are uncertain as to whether changes in your body are caused by the onset of menopause or something else, your doctor can do blood tests that check your hormone levels and can provide a clear answer.

Future of research

An HIV Menopause Clinic has been established at St Miriam's Hospital, Providence, USA, which is very encouraging and should result in more being known about how women with HIV manage menopause and if there are any particular issues that arise.

Living with menopausal symptoms

- Dress lightly and in layers.
Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods.
- Practice slow, deep breathing whenever a hot flush starts to come on. (Try taking 6 breaths per minute).
- Consider seeing an acupuncturist.
- Use relaxation techniques like yoga, tai chi, or meditation.
- Eat soy foods.
- Perform pelvic floor exercises daily to strengthen the muscles of your vagina and pelvis.
- Use water-based lubricants during sexual intercourse.
- Talk to other positive women about their experience and about the strategies they found useful.

- [Key Issues](#) [1]
- [Hormone Replacement Therapy](#) [2]
- [Alternatives to HRT](#) [3]

[Looking after yourself](#) [4][up](#) [Key Issues](#) [>](#) [1]

- [ANET resources](#)
- [Positive women](#)
- [Sex and relationships](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/treat-yourself-right/menopause/key-issues>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/treat-yourself-right/menopause/hormone-replacement-therapy>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/treat-yourself-right/menopause/alternatives-to-hrt>

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/treat-yourself-right/pregnancy/looking-after-yourself>

[5] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/treat-yourself-right>