



# Understanding Menopause

## HORMONES & THE PHASES EXPLAINED

Understand the phases of menopause and go-to tips and tricks for managing symptoms.



THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE. INDIVIDUALS IN GOOD HEALTH, THOSE WITH HEALTH CONCERNS, OR THOSE AWARE OF ANY MEDICAL CONDITIONS OR PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS SHOULD ALWAYS CONSULT A PHYSICIAN BEFORE STARTING ANY EATING OR EXERCISE PROGRAM.

# INTRODUCTION TO MENOPAUSE

Let's Talk About What's Really Happening in Your Body...

First things first - menopause isn't something to "fix," and you're definitely not broken!

Menopause is a completely natural transition that every woman goes through, just like puberty was at the other end of your reproductive years. Think of it as your body's way of shifting gears into a new phase of life.

Here's the thing, though - nobody really prepares us for this journey! You might be experiencing symptoms and wondering, "Is this normal?" or "When will this end?" The truth is, menopause isn't just one event that happens overnight. It's actually a process that unfolds over several years, and understanding where you are in that process can be incredibly empowering.

Knowledge is power, and when you understand what's happening hormonally, you can work WITH your body instead of feeling like you're fighting against it.

You'll know why you might be feeling a certain way, what to expect, and most importantly, what you can do to support yourself through each phase.

Let's break down the hormonal changes and three phases of menopause so you can figure out where you are in your journey and what comes next. Remember, every woman's experience is unique, but having this roadmap can help you navigate with more confidence and less confusion.





# Hormonal Changes

## EXPLAINED

Now that you understand this is a natural transition, let's dive into what's actually happening with your hormones during this journey.





# HORMONAL CHANGES EXPLAINED

## What are 'hormones'

...chemicals made by living cells that influence the development, growth, sex, etc. of an animal and are carried around the body in the blood.

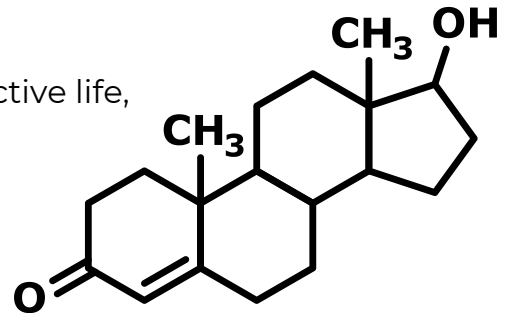
While there are multiple hormones we should focus on during the menopause transition, the two main players you hear about most are **estrogen** and **progesterone**.

But here's what's important to understand - these hormonal changes affect every woman differently, which is why your menopause experience might be completely different from your friend's or sister's.

Think of your hormones as a carefully choreographed dance team that's been performing the same routine for decades - and now they're learning completely new steps!

### Estrogen - The Leading Lady:

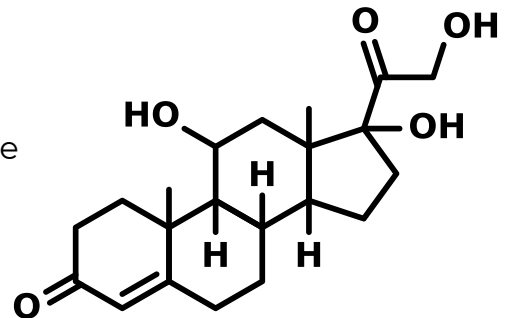
Estrogen has been running the show for your entire reproductive life, and now it's gradually stepping back. This hormone doesn't just control your periods - it affects your brain, bones, heart, skin, and so much more.



As estrogen levels decline and fluctuate, you might notice changes in mood, sleep, temperature regulation (hello, hot flashes!), and even how your body stores fat. Some women feel these changes intensely, while others barely notice them.

### Progesterone - The Calming Influence:

Progesterone is often called the "calming hormone" because it has a soothing effect on your nervous system. It's usually the first to start declining during perimenopause, which is why you might notice sleep issues, anxiety, or mood changes before your periods even become irregular.



For some women, this creates significant sleep disruption, while others maintain good sleep throughout their transition.

# HORMONAL CHANGES CONTINUED...

**But Wait, There's More:** While estrogen and progesterone get most of the attention, other hormones play important supporting roles during menopause:

**Testosterone - The Energy Driver:** Yes, women have testosterone too! It's your energy, motivation, and libido hormone. Testosterone levels also decline during menopause, which can affect your drive, muscle mass, and overall zest for life.

**The Domino Effect:** When your sex hormones start changing, it can affect other hormones in your body too. Your thyroid might need some extra support, your cortisol (stress hormone) might become more reactive, and insulin sensitivity can change. This is why menopause can feel like it affects everything - because hormonally, it kind of does!

**Why Every Woman's Experience is Different:** Your unique hormonal blueprint, genetics, lifestyle, stress levels, and overall health all influence how these changes affect you. Some women sail through with minimal symptoms, others have a more challenging journey, and most fall somewhere in between. There's no "right" way to experience menopause - there's only YOUR way.

**How These Hormonal Changes Create Symptoms:** Here's the important connection to understand - every symptom you experience during menopause is your body's way of responding to these hormonal fluctuations and declines. When estrogen drops, it affects your body's temperature regulation system, which is why you get hot flashes. When progesterone declines, your nervous system loses its natural calming influence, which can lead to sleep issues and anxiety. When testosterone decreases, your energy and motivation can take a hit.

**These aren't random symptoms happening to you - they're your body's logical responses to significant hormonal changes.** Knowing this connection helps you realise that what you're experiencing makes complete sense given what's happening hormonally.

**The Good News?** Understanding these changes helps explain why you might be feeling different, and more importantly, it shows you that there are specific ways to support each of these hormonal shifts through nutrition, movement, stress management, and lifestyle choices.



# Perimenopause

## “THE TRANSITION”

### PHASE



The information provided in this document is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Please consult with your physician or a qualified healthcare provider before beginning any exercise, nutrition, or wellness program, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. The content presented here is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Any decisions you make regarding your health and well-being based on the information provided in this document are at your own risk.

# PERIMENOPAUSE - THE TRANSITION

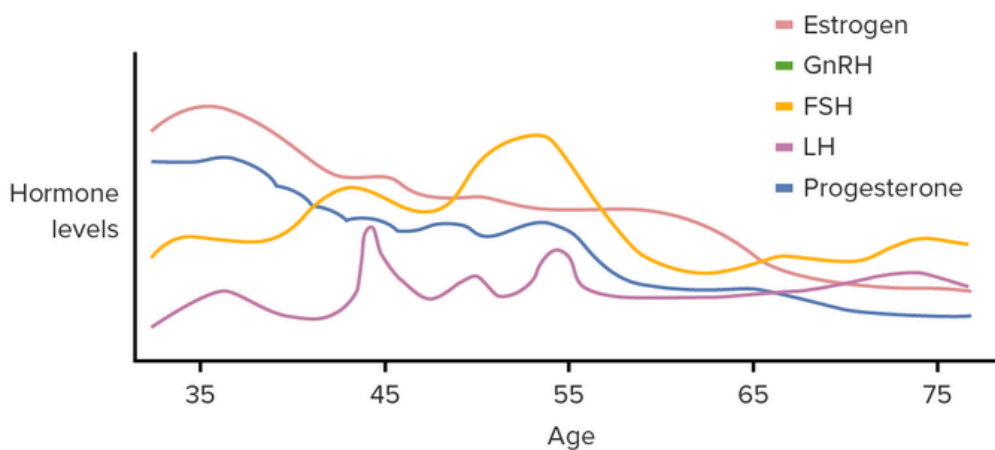
**What It Is:** Perimenopause literally means "around menopause" - think of it as the opening act before the main event. This is when your ovaries start winding down their hormone production, but they're not quite ready to retire yet. It's like your hormones are doing a slow dance instead of their usual predictable routine.

## When It Happens:

- Usually starts in your 40s (but can begin in late 30s)
- Lasts anywhere from 2-10 years (average is 4-5 years)
- Ends when you reach menopause

**What's Going On Hormonally:** Your hormone production is becoming more unpredictable. Some months, your ovaries might pump out normal levels of estrogen and progesterone; other months, they might barely produce any. This hormonal roller coaster is why this stage can feel so chaotic - your hormones are literally figuring things out as they go!

Hormones leading up to, during, and after menopause



[image source](#)

## Common symptoms

Irregular periods (shorter, longer, heavier, lighter, skipped months) | Hot flashes and night sweats | Sleep disruptions  
Mood swings or increased irritability | Decreased sex drive  
Brain fog or forgetfulness | Bladder control issues  
Vaginal Dryness | Changes in your metabolism or weight

**The Real Talk:** Perimenopause can honestly feel like the most confusing phase because you never know what to expect! One month, you feel totally normal, the next you're wondering if aliens took over your body. This is completely normal, even though it doesn't feel normal at all.



# Menopause

## **“THE MILESTONE”**

### PHASE



The information provided in this document is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Please consult with your physician or a qualified healthcare provider before beginning any exercise, nutrition, or wellness program, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. The content presented here is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Any decisions you make regarding your health and well-being based on the information provided in this document are at your own risk.



# MENOPAUSE - THE MILESTONE

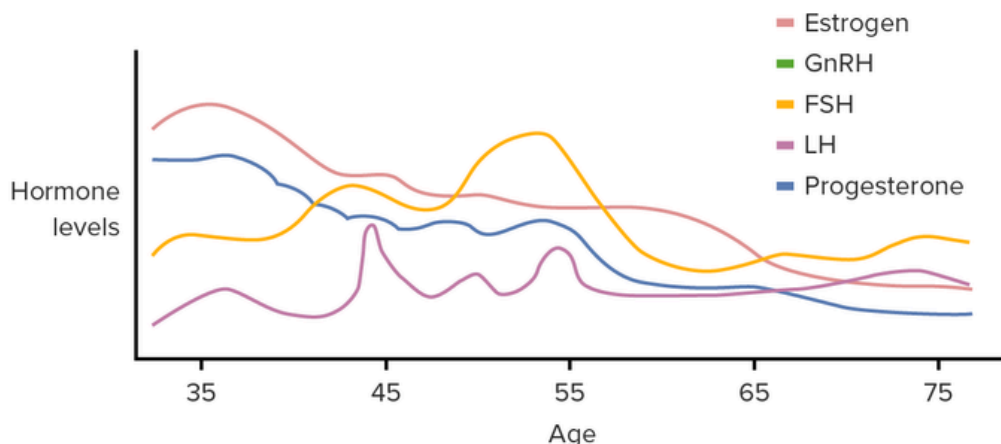
**What It Is:** Menopause is technically just one day - the day that marks 12 consecutive months without a period. It's when your ovaries have completed their shift into this new phase! Once you hit this milestone, you're no longer in perimenopause; you're officially menopausal.

## When It Happens:

- The average age in the UK is 51 ([Data Source](#))
- It can happen anywhere from the late 40s to the mid-50s
- Surgical menopause (hysterectomy) can happen at any age
- Early menopause is before age 40

**What's Going On Hormonally:** Your ovaries have significantly reduced their estrogen and progesterone production because your egg reserve has become depleted. Think of it like turning down the volume on these hormones to a very low level. They don't disappear completely (your adrenal glands and fat tissue still make small amounts), but the levels are much lower than in your reproductive years.

Hormones leading up to, during, and after menopause



[image source](#)

**The Real Talk:** Reaching menopause can feel like a relief because at least now you KNOW what's happening! No more wondering "Am I or aren't I?" You've crossed the finish line of your reproductive years, and that's actually something to acknowledge and honor.

This is also an important time to focus on your long-term health - things like bone density, heart health, and metabolism become even more important to support as your hormones settle into their new levels.



# Postmenopause

## “THE NEXT CHAPTER”

PHASE



The information provided in this document is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Please consult with your physician or a qualified healthcare provider before beginning any exercise, nutrition, or wellness program, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition. The content presented here is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Any decisions you make regarding your health and well-being based on the information provided in this document are at your own risk.

# POSTMENOPAUSE- THE NEXT CHAPTER

**What It Is:** Postmenopause is everything that comes after you've officially reached menopause. This is your new normal - think of it as settling into the next chapter of your life. Your hormones have found their new baseline, and your body is adapting to this hormonal landscape.

## When It Happens:

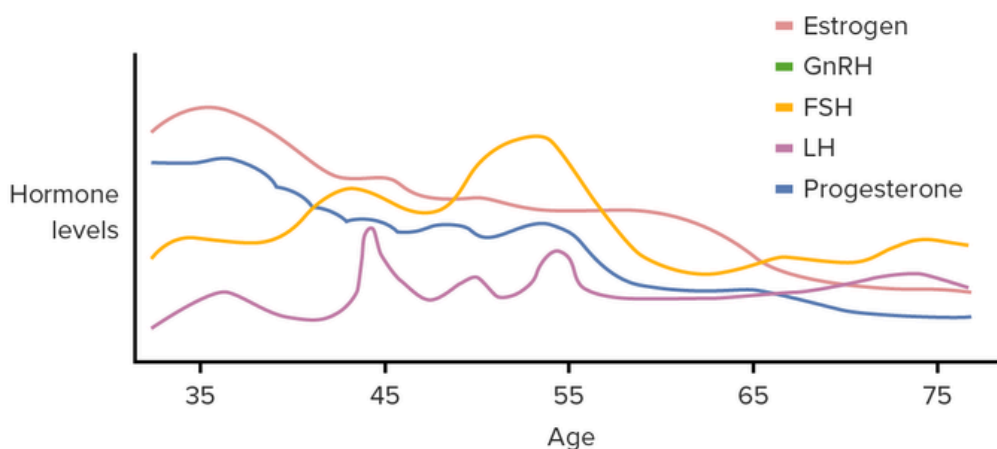
- Begins the day after you've been officially menopausal for 12 months
- Lasts for the rest of your life

**What's Going On Hormonally:** Your hormone levels have stabilized at their new, lower levels. While estrogen and progesterone remain low, your body starts adapting to function with these levels. Other hormones like testosterone, thyroid hormones, and cortisol become more important players in how you feel day-to-day.

## What You Might Experience:

- Many menopause symptoms start to ease up
- Hot flashes may continue, but often become less frequent
- Sleep patterns may improve
- Mood often stabilizes
- Long-term health considerations become more important (bone health, heart health)
- Many women report feeling more settled and confident

Hormones leading up to, during, and after menopause



[image source](#)

**The Real Talk:** This phase brings both challenges and opportunities. Your body is learning to function with different hormone levels, which means staying proactive about your health becomes more important than ever. At the same time, many women appreciate the predictability after years of hormonal ups and downs.

# KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER

**Your Journey is Unique:** These phases are general guidelines, but your experience might be completely different from your sister's, your friend's, or even what you expected. Some women sail through with minimal symptoms, others have a rockier ride. Both experiences are completely normal!

**Symptoms Can Overlap:** You might experience symptoms from multiple phases at once, or symptoms might come and go. Hormones don't read textbooks - they do their own thing!

**You Have More Control Than You Think:** While you can't stop the natural aging process, you have tremendous power to influence how you feel through nutrition, movement, stress management, and lifestyle choices.

**It's Not All Downhill:** Despite what you might have heard, menopause doesn't mean your best years are behind you. Many women report feeling more confident, clear about their priorities, and free to pursue what truly matters to them in this phase of life.

**Support Matters:** Whether it's working with healthcare providers, joining support groups, or working with a coach who understands this transition, you don't have to navigate this alone!

**Remember:** Understanding where you are in this journey helps you make informed decisions about your health and well-being. You're not just surviving menopause - you're learning to thrive through it and beyond!

