

The menopause itself is defined as having occurred when someone has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for people reaching menopause naturally and not using hormonal contraception). However, some people can also have a menopause induced as a result of surgery or medical treatments, such as chemotherapy or pelvic radiation therapy. Not everyone will experience symptoms during the perimenopause but the links above offering support to those who do should help improve their experience.

These natural symptoms are associated with a lack of oestrogen but can have adverse impact. This information includes those who are peri-menopausal or menopausal, but the term 'menopause' will be used throughout. Evidence shows that some people may not feel comfortable discussing menopause related health problems, and the potential impact these can have on their work for example.

Symptoms of the Menopause How long menopausal symptoms can last can vary greatly: on average they will last for around 4 years after a person stops having periods, although some people can experience them for much longer. Not everyone will notice or experience a symptom, but research shows that approximately 75% of people do experience some symptoms, of which 25% could be classed as severe. Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including but not limited to:

- mood changes
- memory and concentration loss
- headaches
- panic attacks
- heavy or light periods
- no or infrequent periods
- anxiety
- loss of confidence
- sleep difficulties
- hot flushes or excessive sweating
- joint and muscle stiffness, and
- out of character behaviour, for example uncharacteristic emotional responses

Speak to a GP or Nurse Prescriber if you need support and advice.

Further Information

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines explain how your GP will determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer you. You can find out more information by using the following link <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/About-this-information>.

- The National Health Service provides an overview of menopause. You can find more at <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Menopause/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.
- Menopause information. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists offer further information in a dedicated area of their website at: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>.
- Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) information and support on very early menopause. You can find out more at <https://www.daisynetwork.org.uk>.
- Information on hysterectomy. This provides an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy. Further details can be found at <https://www.hysterectomyassociation.org.uk>
- Menopause matters www.menopausematters.co.uk
- The British Menopause Society www.thebms.org.uk