



EASY  
READ

# 'Women'

keep healthy during the

# menopause



Health and  
Social Care



Public Health  
Agency

# What is in this booklet?

To help you understand the messages in this booklet, you may need a carer or friend to read it with you.

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# What is the menopause?



The menopause is a normal process that all women go through as they get older.



Some people call it 'the change of life'.



Women's ovaries stop producing a hormone called oestrogen.



Women's periods come less often and then will stop.



This usually happens between the age of 45 – 55.



Menopause can happen at a much younger age for some women.



Women with a learning disability can go through menopause about 5 years earlier than other women.



# How will I know if I am going through Menopause?



The main sign is changes to the normal cycle of your periods such as...

Periods might be light and only last 2-3 days

or

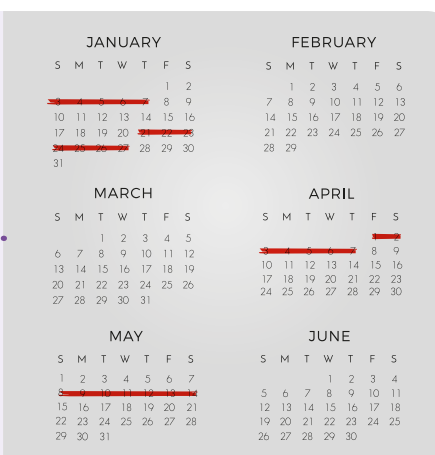
they might be heavy and last 5-7 days. Keep a record.



Periods might come every 2-3 weeks

or

you might not have any period for a few months at a time.



Periods will then stop altogether.



# Signs

MENOPAUSE



**Hot Flashes:**  
short, sudden heat around the face,  
neck and chest, which can make your  
face go red and your body sweat.



**You may have headaches more often.**



**You can find it hard to get to sleep  
which may make you tired and  
cross the next day.**



**Night Sweats:**  
happen at night when you are in  
bed. Your nightwear and sheets may  
become wet and need to be changed.





# Signs

MENOPAUSE



You may notice a change in your mood such as being:

**Sad and tearful.**



**Angry.**



**Forgetful.**



**You may find it hard to concentrate.**



# Some women also notice that...



They put on weight.



Have infections of the kidneys or the bladder more often.



Feel sore and itchy in the genital area (private parts).



Have stiffness, aches and pains throughout the body.



Have a reduced interest in sex.



Bones break more easily (brittle bones).



# How to manage your hot flushes



**Avoid what makes your hot flushes worse, such as spicy food, alcohol or hot drinks.**



**Drink 6 – 8 glasses of water or cold drinks per day.**



**Turn the heating down.**



**Dress in layers, these are easy to remove when you get very warm.**



**Wear light clothing.**





# How to manage your night sweats



**Wear light night wear.**



**Keep the bedroom cool at night.**



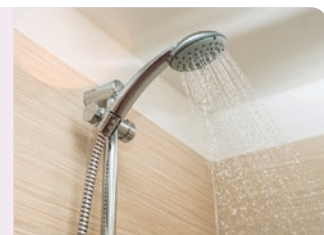
**Use cotton bed sheets on the bed.**



**Use a light duvet or blanket.**



**You may need to shower more often.**



# What can I do to stay healthy?



**Eat a healthy diet and keep to a healthy weight.**



**Do not smoke.**



**Learn to relax.**



**Keep a positive attitude.**



# Exercise is important

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**Exercise keeps your bones healthy.**



**Dancing helps you to feel good and have fun.**



**Walking helps you get fresh air and vitamin D from sunshine.**



**Swimming helps to exercise the whole body.**



**Exercise helps you to sleep better.**



# What foods are good to eat?



Have 6-8 drinks per day that have water in them.  
But not too much tea or coffee.



Eat foods rich in calcium  
to keep your bones healthy.



And eat a healthy diet.



# These foods are not as good for your health

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**Fried or spicy foods.**



**Too much salt or crisps.**



**Too much sweet food.**



**Fizzy drinks and alcohol.**





# You may need to see your doctor for advice



Most women are able to manage the symptoms without the help of their doctor.



However if menopause symptoms are affecting you every day, see your doctor.



## The Doctor may;

Ask about your periods and any other symptoms you have. Such as hot flushes or night sweats.



Give you advice and support regarding your mood.



Make sure you have had your annual health check.



# Other treatments available

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If your symptoms are severe your doctor may suggest:

**HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy)**



**Tablets to help you sleep better**



**Tablets to help improve your mood**



# A checklist to help me know if I am going through the menopause



You might find it helps to show this list to your doctor (your carer may help you with this).

<p><b>There's a change to my monthly periods</b></p>	<p>✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>X NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><b>My periods have become very light</b></p>	<p>✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>X NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><b>My periods have become very heavy</b></p>	<p>✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>X NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><b>My periods have stopped</b></p>	<p>✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>X NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><b>I have noticed a change in my mood – sad or angry</b></p>	<p>✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>X NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p><b>I am not sleeping very well at night</b></p>	<p>✓ YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>X NO <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

# A checklist to help me know if I am going through the menopause



You might find it helps to show this list to your doctor (your carer may help you with this).

I am having hot flushes

✓ YES

☐

X NO

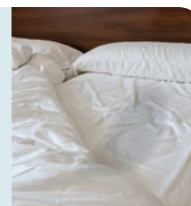
☐

I am having night sweats

✓ YES

☐

X NO

☐

I am getting headaches

✓ YES

☐

X NO

☐

I have put on a lot of weight

✓ YES

☐

X NO

☐

I feel itchy and sore in my genital area (private parts)

✓ YES

☐

X NO

☐

# Where to get help

Talk to:

**A family member.**



**Your carer or keyworker.**



**If your symptoms are severe contact the nurse or doctor who will explain what treatments you could have.**



**They will also talk to you about a healthy lifestyle and how to look after your mental health.**



**The doctor may refer you to the menopause clinic at the hospital.**





This booklet was designed by Brea Crothers and Marie Loughran (Health Facilitators for adults with a learning disability in the SHSCT) with the help of women with a learning disability, Consultant and GP Medical Practitioners, Health and Social Care Colleagues from other Trusts in N. Ireland as well as the PHA and the HSCB.

