



# What to Expect During Menopause

## What is menopause?

- Menopause is a natural part of the reproductive life cycle, marking the end of fertility.
- It generally happens 1 year following your final menstrual period, starting at about age 51.

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

- Every person experiences menopause differently.
- Initially, you may have irregular periods with a heavier flow, your period may last longer, or you may start missing periods. You may also start to experience hot flashes, which can happen for 4 to 8 years before your final period.
- Some people may have few to no menopausal symptoms. Others may have symptoms that can significantly interfere with their life.
- Fortunately, there are effective treatments.

## What are the symptoms of menopause?

Some common symptoms include:

- Hot flashes (sudden feeling of warmth in face/chest).
- Vaginal symptoms such as feeling dry or itchy, or burning.
- Reduced sex drive.
- Repeated urinary tract infections.
- Changes in mood.
- Depression.
- Memory decline.
- Joint and muscle pain.

Talk to your health care professional if you are having symptoms that interfere with your life.

Treatment options include medications and making some changes that may help to improve your symptoms.

## Tips To Help With Menopause Symptoms

If you smoke, aim to stop.



Manage life stress.

Ask about strategies for help/support when feeling overwhelmed, if needed.



Keep active.

- Aim for 30 min (or more) of aerobic activity/day.
- Some type of strengthening exercise 2-3 times/week.
- Stretching exercises 10 mins/day; try for twice a week.



Eat a well-balanced diet.

Limit spicy foods, hot drinks, and the amount of alcohol you consume.



## Resources For More Information

- **Menopause: Should I Use Hormone Therapy? Decision Aid. Healthwise. My Health Alberta.**  
<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/Pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=aa114076&lang=en-ca>
- **MenopauseandU The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada**  
<https://www.menopauseandu.ca/>
- **Canadian Menopause Society**  
<https://www.sigmamenopause.com/consumers>

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Sources: 1) Canadian Menopause Society. *Pocket Guide: Menopause Management—A practical tool for healthcare professionals.* 2019; 2) North American Menopause Society. *Menopause 101: A primer for the perimenopausal.* 2021. This handout was designed with images from Flaticon.com



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