

Navigating Mental Health During Menopause



What Is Menopause?

Menopause is a natural part of the aging process that occurs in women (assigned female at birth), typically during the 40s – 50s age range when reproductive hormones begin declining. Menopause is diagnosed after 12 months without a menstrual period, bleeding, or spotting, at which point a woman can no longer become pregnant.

The transition to menopause is called perimenopause and typically lasts between two and eight years. During this time, a woman's ovaries gradually produce less estrogen, a hormone that plays a key role in the reproductive system. Women often experience **physical symptoms** beginning in this stage (and continuing throughout menopause/postmenopause), including:

Hot flashes: A sudden flare of warmth in the face, neck, or chest.

Changes to monthly periods: Periods may be lighter or heavier than usual, and their frequency may change.

Trouble sleeping: Hot flashes, mood changes, and medications used to treat symptoms associated with menopause can impact sleep.

Lower sex drive: Declining estrogen levels may reduce desire for sex, contribute to vaginal dryness, and make it more difficult to be aroused.

Consult your primary care provider if you experience menopause symptoms that bother you or affect your quality of life.





Who Does Menopause Impact?

Menopause can directly impact cisgender women, transgender men, non-binary people, and intersex people. However, partners, family members, friends, and colleagues may also be affected by the experiences of menopausal women.

- **Partners** may feel anxious about the woman's well-being or unsure how to best provide support. Because of hormonal changes occurring throughout the stages of menopause, partners may also experience changes in sexual intimacy.
- **Children** witnessing mood swings or other shifts in behavior due to menopausal symptoms may feel confused or experience a disruption in daily routines.
- **Friends** who provide strong social bonds can be a welcome source of support during this often difficult period. However, experiencing changes may impact the nature of friendly interactions, and menopausal symptoms could limit one's ability to engage in routine activities with friends.
- **Colleagues**, apart from well-being concerns, may need to cover tasks for a colleague experiencing menopause if their symptoms require time off from work.



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How Does Menopause Impact Mental Health?

In addition to physical symptoms, menopause is often emotionally challenging. This transition can take a toll on a woman's mental health, with effects being temporary or lasting years. Common emotional symptoms include:

Mood changes

Hormonal imbalances can lead to mood swings and changes in affect, such as frequent irritability or anger.

Anxiety or nervousness

Women experiencing menopause may become notably anxious or nervous in response to real or perceived threats, or uncertain about the future.

Depression

The [incidence of depression doubles during this time](#), and women who have had depression in the past are more likely to see a resurgence in symptoms.

Cognitive effects

Forgetfulness, lack of concentration, or “brain fog” are common symptoms of menopause.

Low self-esteem

Women may question their self-worth or identity as it relates to womanhood or sexuality during this transition. Noticeable physical symptoms (such as hot flashes) can also cause feelings of self-consciousness if they occur in social settings or are perceived to be noticed by others.

Consult a mental health provider if any of these emotional symptoms are significantly impacting your quality of life.



How to Maintain Your Well-Being During Menopause

Stay active

Adding physical activity to your daily routine helps you fight the negative symptoms of menopause by improving your mood and boosting energy levels. Exercise can also slow bone loss and help with weight maintenance after menopause. Find self-guided Modern Health content with tips for healthy routines [here](#).

Maintain a healthy diet

Hormonal changes throughout the stages of menopause can majorly impact your health. A balanced diet provides essential nutrients to support your body and mind during this time. Find self-guided Modern Health content for eating healthy [here](#).

Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Regular mindfulness can help counteract emotional symptoms of menopause, as it's been shown to reduce anxiety and stress, prevent and treat depression, and boost cognition. Get started with [mindfulness](#) and [meditation](#) today!

Seek support

Don't hesitate to lean on your friends and family while dealing with challenges related to menopause. Nurturing your relationships and community bonds has lasting well-being benefits that lead to better health and happiness. Talk to your primary care doctor if your physical symptoms impact your daily life, and seek [one-on-one care](#) with a Modern Health provider if you require support for emotional symptoms.



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How Modern Health Can Help

Self-Guided Digital Resources

With Modern Health, you can access digital resources on-demand, 24/7, with self-serve care options you can use at your own pace. These resources include educational programs, guided meditations, and courses, including our:

- [Menopause and Mental Health meditation](#)
- [Supporting Team Members Experiencing Menopause meditation](#)
- [4 Steps to Creating a Menopause-Friendly Workplace meditation](#)
- [Supporting Women's Mental Health program](#)

Circles

Circles are live and pre-recorded group sessions led by Modern Health providers. You will walk away from each session with skills to navigate challenges that may impact you at work, at home, or in your relationships. Circles help you proactively improve mental health, and you have unlimited access. We host recurring and pre-recorded Circles on topics that support women's mental health. Check out our [Circles page](#) to sign up for a session!

Try these pre-recorded Circles:

- [Supporting Women's Mental Health](#)
- [Movement for Mental Wellness](#)
- [Stress and Burnout: A Beginner's Guide](#)

One-On-One Care

Modern Health can match you with certified providers trained in evidence-based methods to support your unique needs. Modern Health's network includes providers specializing in addressing women's mental health. Additionally, appointments are primarily held virtually through the Modern Health app. You can access care anywhere with a secure online connection and some privacy.

Get matched with a provider today!



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