

Menopause is a typical life-cycle event in women. It is the time when you stop having periods and are no longer able to conceive a baby. While menopause can be uncomfortable, it's also an opportunity for women to learn more about themselves and have a positive outlook on life after menopause.

## Menopause Can Last a Long Time

If you're going through menopause, it can seem like your symptoms will never end. But don't worry—the process usually lasts up to seven years, and each woman experiences it differently. Some women have hot flashes only occasionally, while others experience them regularly over several years. If you think you might be going through menopause, talk with your doctor about what to expect and when to start treatment for hot flashes if needed.

## Not All of the Symptoms Are Bad

Chances are, you've heard many negative things about [menopause symptoms](#). You've probably also heard that it's a time when you'll feel miserable and out of control. But for many women, this phase brings positive changes and opportunities. You may be able to do things that were out of reach before: travel more freely, spend more quality time with your children or grandchildren, and pursue new hobbies or interests—the possibilities are endless. As you approach menopause and beyond into the postmenopausal years, don't let fear keep you from enjoying the journey's ups and downs.

## There Are Relief Options

Menopause is a natural decline in hormone levels that occurs as you enter your 50s. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is a treatment that replaces the hormones that are lacking during menopause, which can help to relieve some of the symptoms. The NHS recommends it to women with severe symptoms who have not responded to other treatments like medication or lifestyle changes. Many over-the-counter products are available to help with hot flashes, night sweats, and low libido. These include herbal remedies such as black cohosh and red clover extract; estrogen creams and gels; non-hormonal vaginal lubricants; vitamin C tablets; calcium supplements; peppermint oil capsules; chaste berry extracts, etcetera... but you should always check with your GP before trying any new medication on its own. You can also talk about your symptoms with other people going through the same thing - whether they're friends at work or family members who've been there before.

## It Might Affect Your Sex Life

You might experience a change in your sexual desire, arousal, and pleasure. If you have vaginal dryness, it can be difficult to become aroused—you may find yourself unable to lubricate enough to have intercourse or even feel comfortable inserting a tampon. For some women with menopause-related changes in their sex lives, the problem is low libido (or no interest at all). But for others, it's difficulty reaching orgasm. For example, you may notice that orgasms are less intense than they once were. Orgasms can disappear entirely during the years leading up to menopause and the first few years after menopause begins—and then reappear at some point later on (usually between ages 50 and 60). You may find that certain activities make it easier for you to get stimulated sexually (such as masturbation) but harder for you to reach an orgasm through partner sex alone or couple's play without additional stimulation from toys like vibrators.

## It Changes Your Fertility

As you age and your hormone levels change, your fertility also changes. You may have difficulty getting pregnant or becoming pregnant but then miscarry. The older you are when you have your first child, the higher the risk of miscarriage. However, it's hard to predict when exactly menopause will happen for any woman—it could be at 40 or 50 years old or even later in life (by which point there's a much lower chance that you'll want children). If you're over 35 and not ready to have kids, it might be worth looking into other options, such as freezing your eggs or using donor sperm instead of relying on natural conception with an aging body.

## Conclusion

If you're going through menopause, there are some things you need to know. The most important one is that it won't last forever. And while it can be challenging, there are treatments and lifestyle changes that can help make life more manageable.

Steady Run