

Why learn more?

Learning about the body and the experiences of women helps to create a more supportive, informed, and equal world for us all, and gives girls the tools to stay healthy throughout life.

There's a lot more to know about women's health. And it doesn't have to be embarrassing or scary.



Learn more about menopause and how it affects the women in your life:

Scan or search



What's women's health Wales?



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Cymraeg. Gofynnwch i'ch nyrs ysgol.
This leaflet is also available in Welsh. Ask your school nurse.

What's menopause?



Menopause is when periods stop because of a change in hormone levels.



What's menopause?

You might have heard about menopause from members of your family or through social media.

Menopause is a normal part of a woman's life, and will (at some point!) happen to anyone who has periods. Most of the time, it affects people between the ages of 45 and 55, but in some cases, it can happen earlier. Menopause usually happens as a natural part of ageing, but it can also happen for other reasons, like surgery to remove the ovaries (oophorectomy), cancer treatments like chemotherapy, or genetics. Sometimes the cause isn't known.

Menopause means 'the last menstrual period' and is diagnosed when a woman's periods have stopped for at least 12 months. Before that, though, there's the perimenopause, which is when the hormone levels in the body can go up and down. As a result of these changing hormones, people can experience all sorts of symptoms.

Although half the population experiences menopause and perimenopause, they affect everyone differently. It can cause symptoms like hot flushes, night sweats, and changes in mood or concentration.



What are the symptoms?

Symptoms change from person to person, as everyone is different! Some people don't have very noticeable symptoms, whilst others experience very severe symptoms which have an impact on their day-to-day life.

Physical Symptoms include:

- difficulty sleeping (also known as insomnia),
- vaginal dryness,
- changes in sex drive (also known as libido),
- bladder problems, like needing to wee more often,
- hot flushes and night sweats,
- brain fog, meaning you can't think clearly and have difficulty concentrating,
- joint pains and muscle aches,
- itchy skin,
- and weight gain.

Before they stop, periods may also change, becoming heavier and closer together, or lighter and further apart.

Mental health symptoms include:

- Mood swings
- Anxiety and depression
- Tiredness

Symptoms vary in how long they last; some last for a few months, while others continue for years and need long-term treatment. Everyone's different, and that's ok. But there is also help for those who need it.



How is it treated?

There are many treatment options which can help women manage the symptoms of the menopause.

Some examples include Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), which the doctor can prescribe if needed or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), which can help people manage symptoms.

Additionally, having a healthy diet, not smoking, limiting alcohol and exercising to help keep a healthy weight are very beneficial and help to manage many of the symptoms.