

Physical Menopause Symptoms

Body odour

What is happening?

The hormone begins to fluctuate, and this impacts our body's ability to regulate body temperature. This causes us to sweat more. Bacteria then forms, which leads to an increase in odour

How to help

Wear layers that can be removed as needed. Wear clothing that allows the skin to breathe, i.e., cotton. Ensure that you maintain good hygiene and change or wash your clothes regularly. Stay hydrated and avoid alcohol, spices, sugary foods, and smoking.

Breast changes

What is happening?

Breast tissue is responsive to changing hormones and it can cause breast tenderness as well as swelling, lumps, or pain..

How to help

Cut down on caffeine and ensure you have a balanced diet. If your breasts are very swollen, try a gentle massage.

Difficulty sleeping

What is happening?

As your levels of oestrogen and progesterone decline, this can have a knock-on effect on sleep quality. With the addition of dealing with night sweats, needing the toilet, and feeling anxious, it is no wonder sleep is affected.

How to help

Establish a healthy bedtime routine. Getting up at the same time each day helps. Stop clock-watching as this increases the pressure to fall back to sleep. Don't lie in bed awake, get up and do something relaxing until you feel tired again. Leave a bad night's sleep behind you and focus on the day ahead.

Digestive issues

What is happening?

Gas and bloating are common issues due to digestion slowing as we age. IBS is more common in women as they reach mid-life. This is due to hormone changes that affect the right levels of bile and water in the body. When they fluctuate, our bodies store more water, which leads to bloating. We also start to digest fat differently, which can cause gas.

How to help

Chew your food thoroughly. This will stimulate your stomach to produce enzymes, aiding the digestion process. Stay hydrated. Water is essential for aiding with the digestion process. Regular exercise can help reduce stress and keep your digestion moving. Learn your trigger foods that cause digestion issues. Avoid alcohol and smoking.

Physical Menopause Symtoms

Dizziness

What is happening?

Rapid fluctuations in oestrogen and progesterone can cause dizziness due to the effect they have on circulation and blood pressure. It can also be caused by anxiety or panic attacks

How to help

Keep hydrated, especially during menopause when fluctuating hormones can change the body's ability to retain water. Don't stand up too quickly; no sudden head movements. Take regular exercise; try a gentle walk and include some deep breathing.

Dry mouth & eyes

What is happening?

A decline in oestrogen levels can cause a dry mouth and eyes, which can affect the body's ability to control fluid levels and this affects the moisture in mucous membranes.

How to help

Drink plenty of fluids and avoid foods that dry your mouth out when you eat them, like bread or crackers. Chewing gum can help stimulate the salivary glands and moisten the mouth. Blink as this helps distribute tears across the eye.

Dry & itchy skin

What is happening?

As oestrogen levels drop, so does the production of natural oils that keep skin moisturised. The lack of collagen and natural oils can cause the skin to become thin and itchy..

How to help

Avoid hot baths or showers; they will strip your skin of essential oils. Use fragrance-free products and find a good moisturiser. Nourish the skin from the inside by including Omega-3 fatty acids in your diet.

Headaches

What is happening?

Fluctuating hormones can cause headaches due to how they affect the brain and blood vessels. Oestrogen causes blood vessels to dilate, whereas progesterone causes them to constrict.

How to help

Eat regular, nutritious meals that include healthy fats, complex carbs, and lean protein. Magnesium is an important mineral for brain health. Avoid triggers such as caffeine, alcohol, and smoking.

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Heart palpitations

What is happening?

Reduced oestrogen levels can cause overstimulation of the heart, and decreased blood flow can result in an abnormal heart rhythm.

How to help

Limit any stimulates this may also include over the counter medications, make sure you read the labels. Reset your heartbeat by taking a few minutes to breath slowing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Hot flushes & night sweats

What is happening?

Changing levels of oestrogen have a direct effect on our hypothalamus. This is an area of the brain that is responsible for controlling our body temperature. Our bodies start to sweat to try and cool us down.

How to help

Keep your bedroom cool, wear natural fabrics and have bedding made out of cotton. Try looser fitting clothes and opt for layers so that you can remove clothing when you feel hot. Keep a fan nearby and avoid triggers such as alcohol, caffeine, spicy foods, and stress

Increased allergies

What is happening?

Changes to our hormones and a fluctuation in oestrogen lead to an increase in histamine and we can become more sensitive to allergies. Our immune systems are also often compromised, and we can start to act differently towards allergens that didn't used to bother us

How to help

Drink more water to increase hydration and consume an adequate amount of protein. This is crucial for supporting the immune system. Try and figure out what your triggers are so that you can try to avoid them.

Irregular periods

What is happening?

As your hormones fluctuate and decline, your periods will start to become irregular. This symptom is usually one of the first indications that your periods may be long or short, heavy or light, or that you may skip a period or that the time between them becomes longer..

How to help

Make sure that you are eating a balanced diet that is full of macronutrients. Regular exercise, like yoga and pilates, is meant to help with period pains and boost your mood. Try to reduce stress to help balance the hormones.

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What is happening?

Our joints have oestrogen receptors in them, and when oestrogen declines, it can affect our joints and muscles. Inflammation, dehydration, and weight gain can also contribute to this. It is harder to retain muscle as we get older.

Muscle & joint pain

How to help

Losing weight and improving sleep are vital. Practise exercise techniques that can support your muscles and joints and focus on strengthening your core. This will take the stress off your knees and ankles. Keep hydrated and reduce stress.

What is happening?

Teeth and gums are extremely susceptible to hormonal changes. This can lead to symptoms like dry mouth, sore gums, burning or painful mouth

Oral problems

How to help

Maintain strict oral hygiene and avoid alcohol, smoking, and sugary foods. Keep hydrated and have regular check-ups with your dentist

What is happening?

As oestrogen declines, there is an increased risk of bone strength and thinning, which eventually can lead to osteoporosis. Women have a much higher risk of getting osteoporosis as our bones are generally smaller, thinner, and we have less bone mass.

Osteoporosis

How to help

To prevent osteoporosis, incorporate strength training exercises into your fitness regime. Eat calcium-rich foods or alternatives to support your bones. Vitamin D is also important for supporting bone health as the body uses it to absorb calcium.

What is happening?

As oestrogen and progesterone decline, our hair starts to thin and grow more slowly. Our hair follicles also shrink, and this leads to hair loss.

Thinning hair

How to help

Treat hair gently when brushing or styling. Keep hydrated, reduce stress, and eat well. Eat nutrients that can reduce hair loss, such as protein and omega-3 fatty acids. Vitamins A, B, C, and D, as well as minerals such as zinc, iron, copper, selenium, calcium, and magnesium

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Tinnitus

What is happening?

Tinnitus does increase with age. However, hormone fluctuations can also cause these horrible sounds or noises in our ears.

How to help

Identify your triggers and keep a journal to help determine what might be causing them. Use white noise, as silence makes tinnitus more noticeable. Mindfulness and medication can help reduce tinnitus.

Tiredness

What is happening?

Fluctuating hormones are what cause fatigue, tiredness, and lack of energy, which have a negative effect on our moods. When oestrogen fluctuates, it can upset the balance of stress hormones, and when adrenaline surges in the body, it can leave you feeling more fatigued.

How to help

Learn to calm your body and mind. Deep breathing can help when you need to just take a few minutes to focus. Make time for yourself each day and establish a good bedtime routine. A diet is key to ensuring you have the correct nutrients to keep you healthy.

Urinary problems

What is happening?

This is due to muscles weakening in your bladder and urethra. As oestrogen declines, the overall strength of the muscles does too, as these muscles are dependent on balanced oestrogen levels

How to help

Reduce caffeine and alcohol as these can be stimulators of the bladder muscle and can cause urgency. But it is important not to restrict fluid, and that is counterproductive. Do exercises to strengthen your pelvic floor. This will help support the bladder.

Weight gain

What is happening?

The production of oestrogen and progesterone shifts, which causes a redistribution of fat around your waistline. Aging reduces your calorie burning capacity, and a reduction in oestrogen can often result in increased belly fat.

How to help

Eating a plant-based or Mediterranean diet can help, as this supplies the body with the right mix of healthy fats, fibre, vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. Meal timing is important as it is involved in weight control, regulating glucose levels and better sleep. Regular exercise is also very important for controlling weight.

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What is happening?

This is caused by a decrease in oestrogen production, which makes vaginal tissues thinner, drier, less elastic, and more fragile.

Vaginal dryness

How to help

Wear cotton underwear and remember to do pelvic floor exercises. Ensure you are well-hydrated and avoid perfumed detergents and soaps.

What is happening?

There are unpleasant side effects to fluctuating hormone levels. Oestrogen triggers the production of collagen and natural skin oil to keep the skin hydrated and glowing. As this hormone declines, the skin becomes drier and thinner. Drier skin is itchy.

Vaginal itching/ burning

How to help

Wear breathable fabrics like cotton, use an unscented shower gel or soap and clean gently around this area. Increase your intake of Omega-3 essential fatty acids. This will add moisture and natural oils to your skin and tissues.