

Why Does My ADHD Feel Worse in Perimenopause?

You're not imagining it. Many women notice their ADHD symptoms feel harder to manage during perimenopause — and there are real reasons for it. ♥



Midlife is a new chapter, not an ending ♥

Same Brave You A Brighter Tomorrow ♥

What's happening?

Perimenopause is a time of hormonal change, and these changes can affect brain systems involved in attention, motivation, mood, memory and emotional regulation. For many women with ADHD, this can make symptoms feel more intense, more noticeable and harder to manage, even if things felt more stable before.

Same brain.
New hormonal landscape.
Different challenges.
Still you. ♥

This isn't a sign that you're doing something wrong — it's a sign that your brain is responding to real changes. ♥

Possible contributing factors

These factors can interact, making ADHD symptoms feel more challenging during perimenopause.

1 Estrogen changes and dopamine



Estrogen helps regulate dopamine, a key neurotransmitter involved in motivation, reward, focus and mood. As estrogen fluctuates and gradually declines, dopamine signalling may be less efficient, which can make ADHD symptoms more noticeable.

2 Sleep disruption



Hormonal changes can lead to poorer sleep, night waking and earlier waking. Less restful sleep can affect attention, memory, emotional regulation and your ability to cope with daily demands.

3 Increased stress load



Midlife often brings a lot — work, caregiving, changing relationships, health concerns and more. Higher stress can increase ADHD symptoms and make it harder to manage emotions, focus and follow through.

4 Executive functioning strain



When you're juggling many responsibilities and dealing with hormonal changes, the mental load can feel heavier. Planning, prioritizing, organization and follow-through may feel more difficult, even for things that used to feel manageable.

5 Emotional sensitivity



Hormonal shifts can influence mood and emotional regulation. You may feel more irritable, anxious, overwhelmed or reactive, which can amplify the emotional side of ADHD.

6 Burnout



Years of masking, over-functioning and holding everything together can lead to exhaustion. can reduce your resilience, making burnout more likely and symptoms feel harder to manage.

What can help

There's no one-size-fits-all approach, but these strategies can make a meaningful difference:



Use external reminders
Lists, alarms, visual cues



Simplify routines
Fewer steps, less friction



Regular meals with protein
Helps support energy, focus and mood



Movement that feels good
Even gentle activity can boost mood and dopamine



Support better sleep
Consistent routines, calmer evenings, sleep-friendly habits



Be kind to yourself
Less self-criticism, more self-compassion



Get support
A counsellor, coach or informed health professional can help



You are not lazy and you are not failing.
Your brain may need different support in this season.
You are still capable, valuable and enough — exactly as you are.