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Women's health

A spotlight on the menopause and
breast health



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Our Clinical team at Doctor Care Anywhere have put together advice and tips for dealing with the menopause.

Menopause is a significant phase for women, typically starting around age 51, with perimenopausal symptoms beginning as early as the late 30s.

Given that women live into their 80s on average, they spend about a third of their lives in postmenopause.

Despite frequent discussions around periods and pregnancy, menopause is only now becoming widely talked about.

3.5 million women

have considered quitting a job due to menopause and menstrual health symptoms

* aon.com/unitedkingdom/employee-benefits/resources/articles/womens-health-how-employers-can-support.jsp

What do we need to know about the menopause?

The menopause is split into 3 phases; perimenopause, menopause and postmenopause.



Perimenopause

Perimenopause is the transition from regular ovulation to the final period, marked by a gradual decline in estrogen as ovarian follicles decrease. This phase usually starts around age 47 but can begin as early as the late 30s, lasting about four years.



Menopause

Menopause is defined as going one full year without a period, typically occurring around age 51 but can happen in the mid-40s. After this, a woman is considered postmenopausal.

Menopause symptoms

Oestrogen receptors are present throughout the body, so fluctuations in oestrogen levels during perimenopause and menopause can impact every organ.

As ovulation declines and hormone levels fluctuate, various symptoms arise.



Brain

- Mood swings
- Brain fog
- Irritability
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty concentrating



Cardiovascular

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Palpitations
- Cold flashes



Muscles & bones

- Sore joints
- Muscle aches
- Brittle bones



Sexual health

- Vaginal dryness
- Urinary tract infections



Bowels

- Bloating
- Constipation

However, menopause shouldn't be associated with just a gender or age issue. You may know people who are being affected by the menopause indirectly, such as spouses, significant others, close family members or even colleagues of individuals going through the menopause.

1 in 2 women will develop osteoporosis as a long-term consequence of the menopause.



Treatments for the menopause

The safest way to take oestrogen is through the skin (transdermal), via a patch, gel, or spray, as it avoids increased clot risks since it bypasses liver metabolism.

Body identical progesterone, like Utrogestan (made from yams), is also considered safe.

A 2018 review showed no increased breast cancer risk after 5 years of using transdermal estrogen and Utrogestan, with recent updates extending this safety to 7 years.



Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

Body identical hormones, available through prescription, are licensed forms of HRT that mimic the body's natural hormones once in the bloodstream. These are different from bioidentical hormones, which are unregulated and not recommended.



Lifestyle changes an alternative to HRT



The gut is home to trillions of microorganisms, oestrogen fluctuations during menopause impact the microbiome. Beneficial microbes called equol producers are more prevalent in women with high-fibre diets.



A diverse diet of fruits and vegetables provides essential compounds for hormonal health, mood regulation, cardiovascular health, and the immune system.



Soy plays a key role in binding to oestrogen receptors in the bones to reduce osteoporosis as well as hot flushes.

Soy contains all nine essential amino acids to help symptoms.



Resistance exercises like weight training, yoga, Pilates, and Tai Chi are critical for maintaining bone health.

Bone mass declines from age 40, with density decreasing 10% in the first 4 years of the menopause.

Understand your hormones at home

Through our partnership with Medichecks, you can access simple at-home tests that reveal key insights into your hormone health with 15% off.

From fertility to overall wellbeing, these checks give you clear results and empower you to take control of your next steps.

[Access tests here](#)

The Importance of being “Breast Aware”

Taking care of your breast health is an important part of overall wellbeing. Being “breast aware” simply means getting to know what’s normal for you, so you can spot any changes quickly and take action if needed.

What to look out for

Breast changes don’t always mean something serious, but it’s important to stay alert.

Key things to check for include:

- Lumps or thickened tissue in the breast or underarm.
- Changes in size, shape, or appearance.
- Skin changes such as puckering, dimpling, redness, or rash
- Nipple changes like retraction, movement, or unusual discharge.
- Persistent pain or discomfort in the breast or armpit.

Building a routine

- **Check regularly:** Feel your breasts at different times in your cycle, as they naturally change throughout the month.
- **Look in the mirror:** Raise your arms and look for visible differences in shape or skin texture.
- **In the shower or bath:** Use soapy hands to check for lumps or changes across the whole breast area, including the collarbone and armpits.

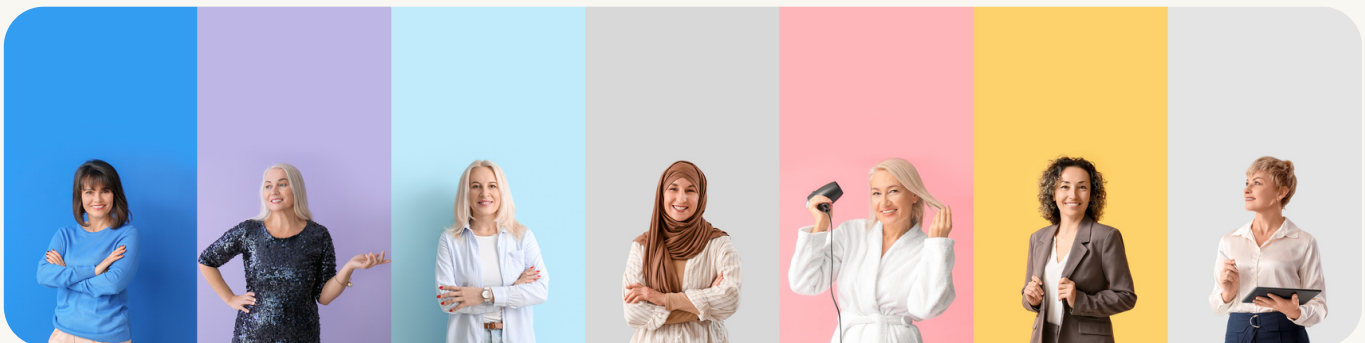


Understanding how breasts naturally change

It's important to remember that breasts don't always stay the same throughout life. Hormones, age, and lifestyle factors can all influence how they look and feel. Knowing these natural changes helps you distinguish what's normal for you.

Common natural changes:

- **Menstrual cycle:** Breasts may feel tender, lumpy, or swollen before your period due to hormone shifts.
- **Pregnancy and breastfeeding:** Breasts often grow fuller and more sensitive, with changes to the nipples and veins becoming more visible.
- **Menopause:** After periods stop, breasts may become softer or less dense as hormone levels fall.
- **Lifestyle influences:** Weight changes, exercise, and even some medications can affect the feel and appearance of your breasts.



Peace of mind with Scan.com

While NHS breast screening is usually offered from age 50, many women want reassurance earlier.

Through Scan.com, you can choose to book a private mammogram from the age of 40, giving you greater peace of mind and the opportunity to spot changes even sooner.

[Book your scan here](#)

What can Doctor Care Anywhere do for you?



Prescriptions

It's up to you how and where you get your prescription. Delivered straight to your home or work, or pick up your medication from your local pharmacy.



Consultations

Up to 20-minute-long appointments, by video or phone, giving you time to discuss the right outcome for you.



Appointments

With GPs, Mental Health Practitioners, Physiotherapists and ACPs available 24/7, so there's no need to take time off work to attend a consultation.



Referrals & medical records

Download and share your private referrals and fit notes. Access your appointment notes whenever you need to, with seamless access to tests, scans, and mental health services.

We're here if you need us

If you'd like to talk through any womens health concerns, your risk factors, or anything else covered here, our team is on hand to help.

