

Women’s Health Week – “Hello hormones” info sheet

Hello hormones – Menopause!

What is Menopause?

Menopause is marked by the ending of menstruation for women, the ovaries no longer release an egg (ovulation). Post menopause can be diagnosed when a women or person with a uterus has not had a period for 12 months.

The average age for natural menopause, that is menopause occurring with age, is 45 – 55 for Australian women. Other causes of menopause, which occur before the age of natural menopause, include some medication such as chemotherapy and surgical removal of the ovaries (no eggs to be released).



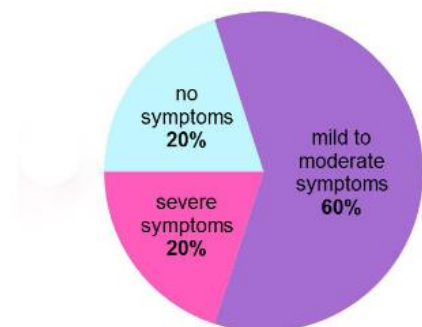
Stages of Menopause

Menopause can be categorised into 3 stages, perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause.



The symptoms of menopause are felt differently by all women. The severity of symptoms relates to how they impact the individual women and daily life tasks.

20% of women report no symptoms of menopause, 60% describe mild to moderate symptoms and 20% experience severe symptoms.



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Impact of Menopause on Vulval and Vaginal health

During the natural aging process the levels of estrogen in the female body starts to decline, these levels further decline during the menopause process. This causes the tissues lining the vulva, vagina, and urethra (where your urine comes from) to become thin, dry, and fragile.

This thinning, drying and fragility of the tissues can lead to vaginal irritation and painful sex, issues passing urine and urinary tract infections.

What can you do?

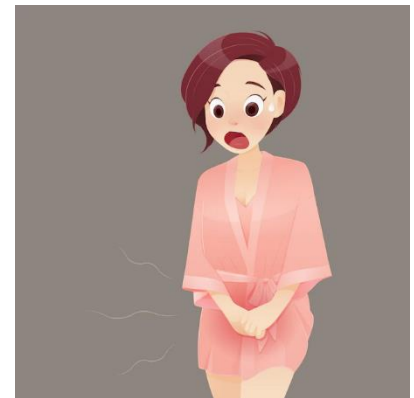
- Use a fragrance and flavour free personal lubricant during sexual intercourse
- Avoid vulval and vaginal irritants
- Chat to your doctor about hormone replacement therapy
- Discuss any urinary symptoms with your doctor or Continence Nurse

Vulval and vaginal care

The tissues of the vulva and vagina are very delicate. Irritation is common but mostly avoidable. Symptoms of irritation may include, itchy, burning, breaks in the skin barrier, rash, a vaginal odour, or discharge. There are several irritants that are known to cause irritation to the tissues of the vagina and vulval and should be avoided. The vagina is self-cleaning, no special products are required.

Irritants to avoid:

- Soaps, shower gels and bubble baths, feminine hygiene product
- Cleansing wipes (for example, baby wipes)
- Scented or coloured toilet paper
- Daily use of panty liners; limit use of pads and panty liners to periods
- Perfumed products
- Tea tree oil and other disinfectants
- Fabric softeners
- Douches
- Black underwear, some people may have a dye allergy



If you are struggling with symptoms of Menopause or vulval or vaginal irritation, please chat to your doctor or Women's Health Nurse

Thank you for growing your knowledge about women's health with us this week. If you require further information, please contact our Women's Health Nurse on 5551 18455