



NAVIGATING PERIMENOPAUSE

A guide to help you get clued up and feel confident through
your midlife transition



THE BASICS...

Perimenopause is a natural stage in a woman's life that marks the transition from reproductive years to menopause. Although it can be a challenging and sometimes confusing time, understanding the physical and emotional changes associated with perimenopause is crucial. In this blog post, we will explore the key aspects of perimenopause, including its definition, symptoms, duration, and strategies for managing this transformative phase.

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DEFINITION

What is Perimenopause?

PRO TIP: Start using a menstrual cycle tracking app to help you monitor your cycle and symptoms

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause, typically starting in a woman's 40s but sometimes occurring earlier. It is characterised by hormonal fluctuations and irregular menstrual cycles, as the ovaries gradually produce fewer reproductive hormones. Additionally, various cells that are sensitive to the hormone Estrogen start to become desensitised.

On average, perimenopause lasts about four years. Still, the duration can vary from woman to woman (up to 12 years in some women). A great way to think about perimenopause is like a 'second puberty'. The brain and body are trying to deal with changing hormones as it moves from its reproductive years to its non-reproductive phase (the exact opposite of what occurred at puberty!)



SYMPTOMS

"Is it all in my head?" Signs + Symptoms

Perimenopause brings about a wide range of symptoms, both physical and emotional. While every woman's experience is unique, some common symptoms include:

Irregular periods: Menstrual cycles may become shorter or longer, and bleeding may be lighter or heavier than usual.

Hot flashes and night sweats: Sudden feelings of intense heat, often accompanied by sweating and flushing.

Sleep disturbances: Insomnia or disrupted sleep patterns can affect overall well-being.

Mood changes: Hormonal fluctuations can contribute to mood swings, irritability, and increased anxiety or depression.

Vaginal dryness: Decreased estrogen levels may lead to vaginal dryness, discomfort during intercourse, and an increased risk of urinary tract infections.

Changes in libido: Some women may experience decreased sexual desire during perimenopause.

Urinary Incontinence: When Estrogen levels decrease, it can affect the connective tissue. In some instances, this may result in thinning and cause more leakage.



MANAGEMENT

How to deal with the transition

PRO TIP: Women over 40 must prioritise creating and maintaining lean muscle mass during training.

Although perimenopause may be difficult, several techniques could help ease the symptoms and enhance overall health and wellness.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle: Regular exercise (explicitly focusing on strength training), a nutrient-rich diet, and quality sleep can positively impact hormonal balance and overall health.

Manage stress: Stress can exacerbate perimenopausal symptoms. Stress-reducing activities such as meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises can be beneficial.

Stay informed: Educate yourself about perimenopause through reliable sources such as healthcare professionals, reputable websites, and educational materials.



MANAGEMENT

How to deal with the transition

PRO TIP: HIIT training or extended cardio sessions may not be best for you - ask me about this!

Seek support: Talking to friends, family, or a healthcare professional about your experiences can provide valuable support and guidance.

Menopausal Hormonal Therapy (MRT): For some women, Menopausal Hormonal Therapy (MRT) may be recommended. It's crucial to consult a healthcare provider to determine the most appropriate treatment options. Please note that this is beyond my scope of practice, but I wanted to provide information on potential options.



SUMMARY:

Perimenopause is a phase that women go through as they near menopause. It is vital for women to educate themselves about this transitional period to navigate it more effectively. It is worth noting that each woman's experience is different, and seeking support from healthcare professionals and loved ones can help make the journey easier. Armed with knowledge, self-care, and support, women can confidently embrace perimenopause and move towards a fulfilling post-reproductive phase of life.

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