



Down
Syndrome
Ireland

Menopause Easy Read Guide



Introduction to Menopause



People with Down syndrome usually start menopause after 40.



Everyone is different. You might start menopause a bit younger or older.



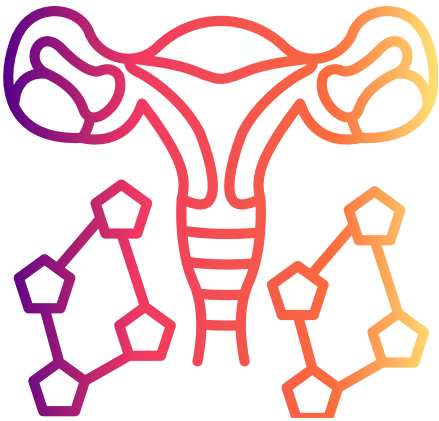
Menopause is when you stop having periods forever.



This is normal.



This happens to all people who have periods when they get older.

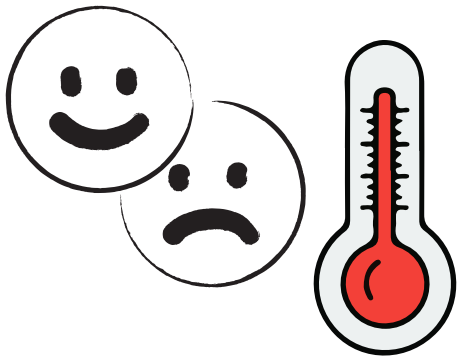


Menopause happens because of a change in hormones in your body.



Hormones help your body to work properly.

Your body makes lots of different hormones.

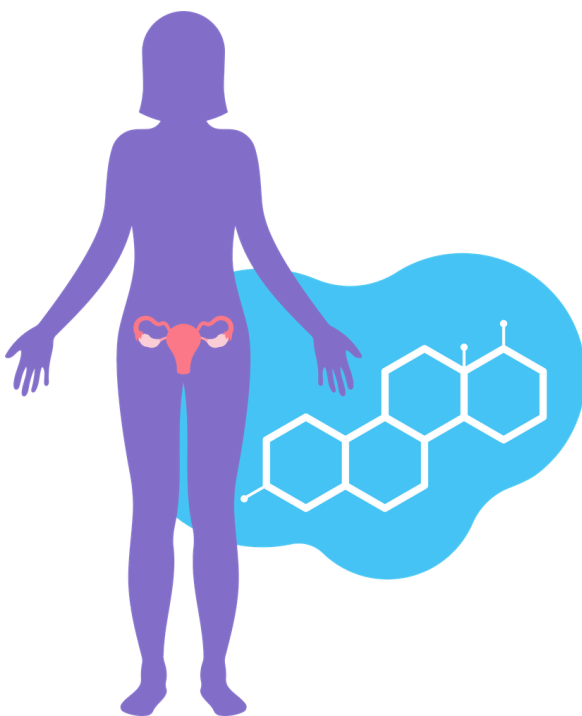


Hormones affect things like your moods, your body temperature, your sleep, and your eating habits.



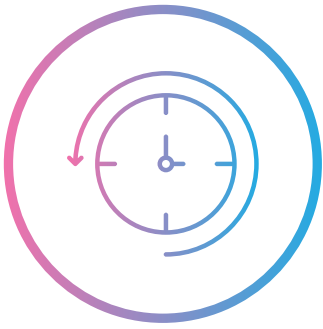
Hormones tell your periods when to start and when to stop.

Perimenopause



Menopause starts with perimenopause.

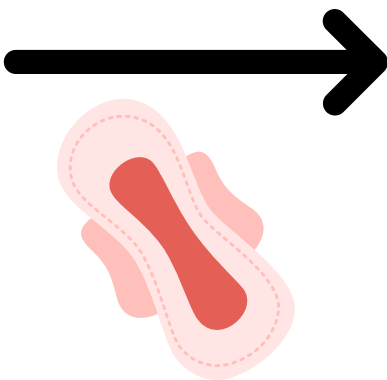
The perimenopause is when your hormones are changing, but you still get periods.



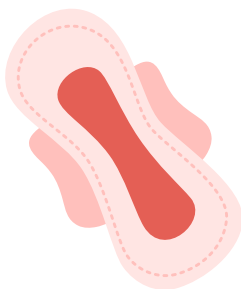
This usually happens a few years before menopause.



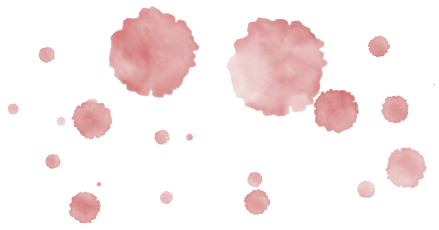
Your periods might change.



They might last longer than usual.



They might be shorter than usual.



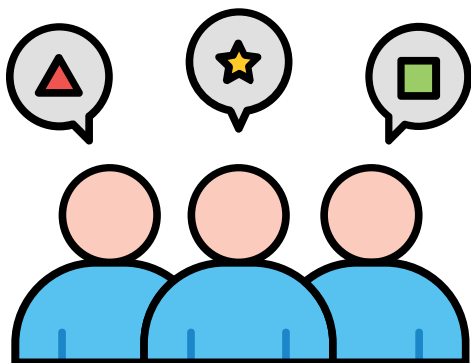
There might be more blood, or less blood.



You might not have a period every month.



It may be useful to keep a diary of when your periods happen and what they are like.



Perimenopause and menopause are different for everyone.

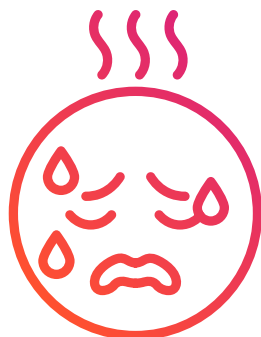
Signs you are starting Menopause



Hot Flashes



Hot flashes can happen in the day or night.



You might feel very hot and sweaty.

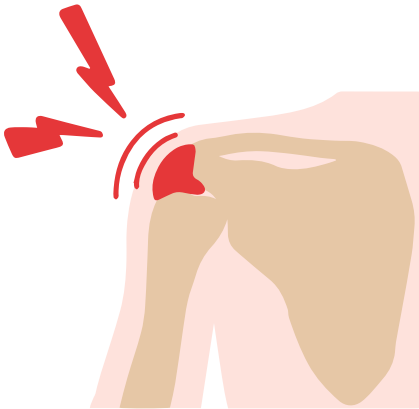


Hot flashes can happen suddenly and make you feel dizzy or sick.



Aches and Pains

Your head or body might ache.



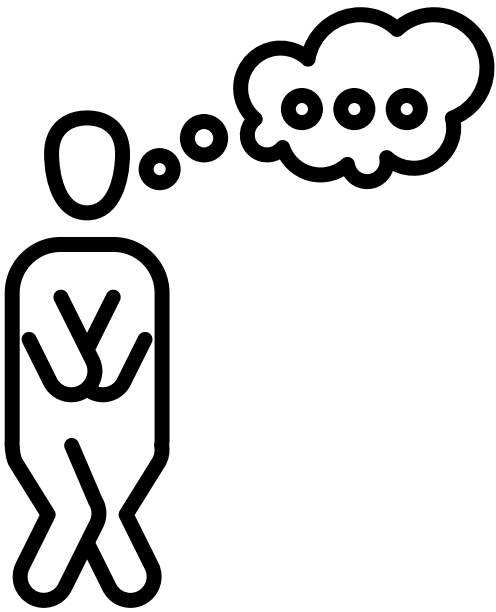
Joints like your shoulders or hands or knees might hurt.



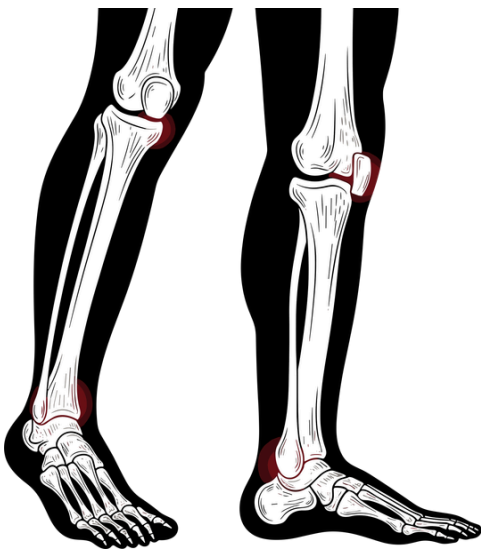
Your breasts might feel sore.



Your vagina may feel sore, dry and itchy.



You may feel pain when peeing or you may pee more often. Talk to your doctor if this happens, as urine infections can happen more often in menopause.



Your bones might get thinner. You might need bone scans to check that your bones are staying healthy.



Tiredness

You might have problems sleeping at night.



You might wake up in the night because of hot flashes.



You might wake up to go to the toilet more often.



You might feel tired during the day.

Moods



You might notice changes in how you feel.



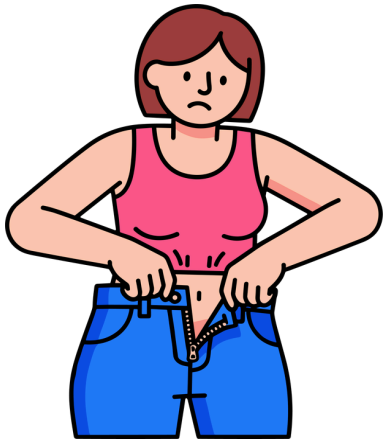
You might forget things and find it hard to concentrate.



You may feel sad, angry, tearful, forgetful, or worried.



You may feel that you do not want to have sex as often.



Weight Gain

You might put on weight and your body might look different.

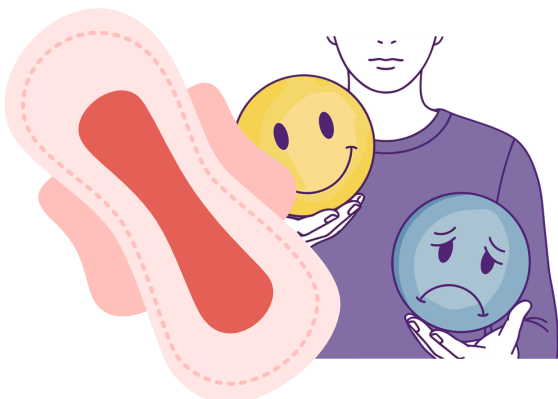


You should tell your doctor if you are having any of these issues.

When to ask for help



If you are over 35 and you notice changes in how your body is feeling.

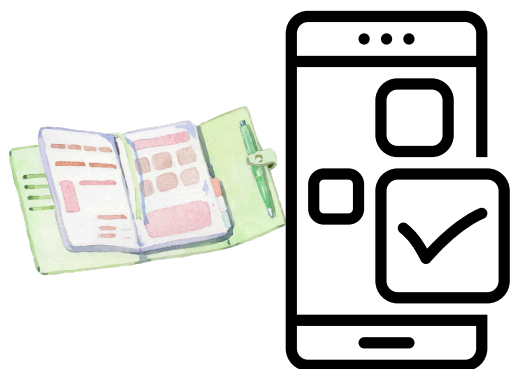


Especially if there are changes in your periods or your moods.

What to do:



Talk to someone who knows you well. This could be a family member or keyworker.



Keep a record of your periods. You could use the period diary below or an app on your phone.



Fill in the menopause symptom checklist.

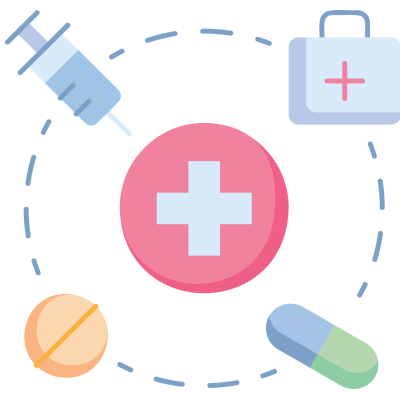


Talk to your doctor. Bring your checklist and period diary with you.



Don't worry too much!

Menopause is a normal stage of life.



There are good treatments for some of the symptoms.



You can find the period diary here.



You can find the menopause tracker here.