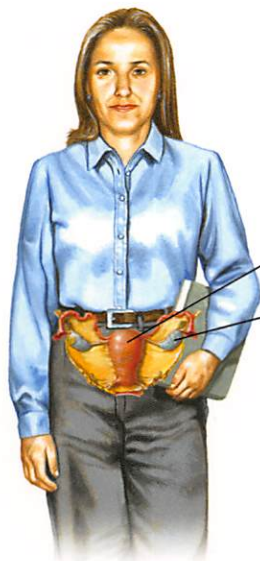


MANAGING YOUR MENOPAUSE

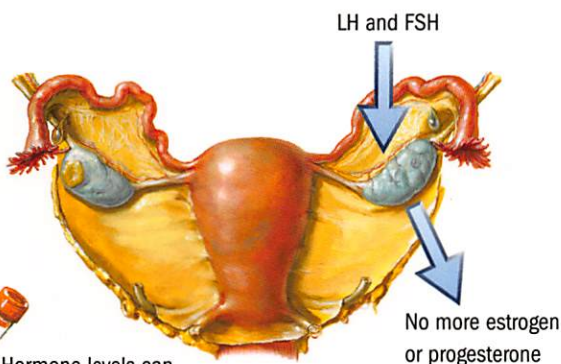


Menopause is a natural stage in a woman's life that usually begins about age 50. Take time to understand your body changes and focus on good health and fitness so that you can enjoy a long, active life.

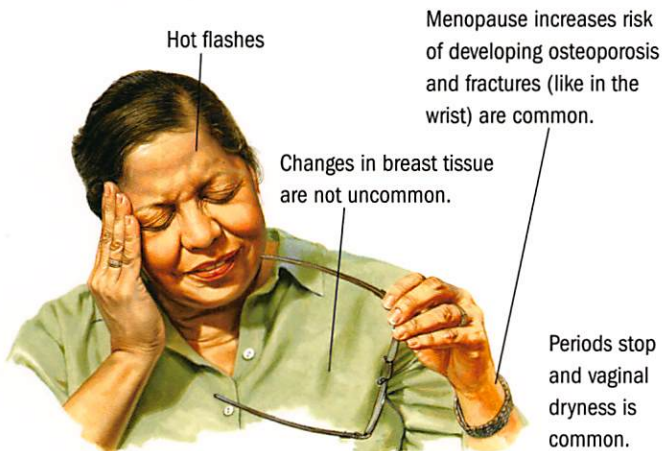
Uterus

Ovary

LH and FSH hormones from your brain send messages to ovaries telling them to make the hormones estrogen and progesterone. At menopause, ovaries stop producing estrogen and progesterone. LH and FSH levels become higher when the ovaries stop responding.



Hormone levels can be measured in blood samples.



Hot flashes

Changes in breast tissue are not uncommon.

Menopause increases risk of developing osteoporosis and fractures (like in the wrist) are common.

Periods stop and vaginal dryness is common.

Hormone alterations cause changes throughout the body. The major change is that periods stop.

What Is Menopause?

Menopause is the time in a woman's life when menstrual periods have stopped for at least 1 year. It is often called the change of life. Menopause is not an illness.

Periods become irregular and stop because ovaries stop producing hormones, and hormone levels change. Hormones are chemicals in the body that control certain body functions. The hormone estrogen in women helps control the menstrual cycle. As a woman ages, the amount of estrogen decreases.

Most women go through menopause at about age 50 or 51. Sometimes menopause happens earlier (at 40 years), and sometimes later (at 60 years).

What Are the Symptoms of Menopause?

The most common symptoms are hot flashes and end of periods. Hot flashes can be very mild (feeling a little warmth in the face) to very severe (becoming red in the face and sweating excessively). A hot flash only lasts a few minutes. Hot flashes can disturb sleep, so women may feel very tired during the day.

Other symptoms include vaginal dryness, vaginal sensitivity, pain during intercourse, bladder control problems, weight gain, loss of sex drive (libido), and mood swings.

How Is Menopause Diagnosed?

Hot flashes and the end of periods for about 6 months mean that menopause is occurring.

Blood tests for follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) levels can be done to find out whether ovaries are slowing down or no longer working.