

Menopause

The Basics.

Menopause is technically defined as the day of your very last period. Sounds wonderful, right? I mean, who hasn't tried to dodge an inconvenient bleed (skipping placebos on the Pill to be period-free while poolside in Bali, anyone?) In your twenties, you'd be popping the champagne at the thought of no more periods. But then fast forward a bit, you hop on the metaphorical bus to menopause...and suddenly wonder if it's the bus ride to hell.

I'm here to tell you it might be both.

There are 3 main stages to "the menopause." Why? Because in society we like to do things in threes.

Perimenopause

Perimenopause is when your hormones start to fluctuate and gradually decline until you officially hit menopause. It typically kicks in around age 45 and generally lasts for 7.4 years (but can be up to 10, if you're lucky... or not).

This is when women tend to experience the most symptoms (over 35 different symptoms, mind you, but no one can land on the exact number).

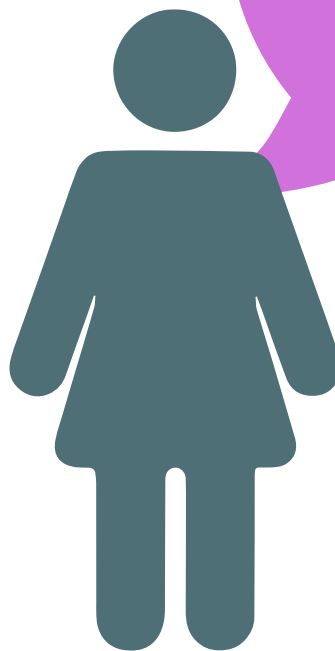
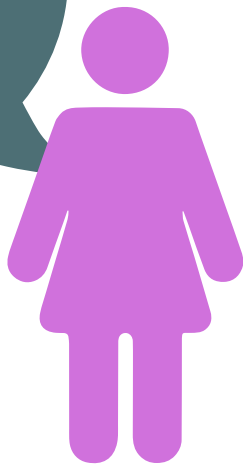
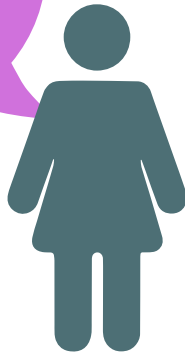
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Like I mentioned before – the day of your last period. That's it!

Post menopause

But wait, it's not quite over. Post-menopause is the phase after the last day of your last period. Symptoms may linger, but relief is on the horizon (so I'm told, but stick with me on my journey and be the first to find out).





When do I join the club?

No more periods. Bliss, right? Now you can pay off your home loan sooner by directing your monthly period-care spend to your mortgage.

45 is the average age that women enter perimenopause, but for some, it's as early as 40. Any younger and it's called premature menopause, or premature ovarian insufficiency (POI). Even though I'm an overachiever, this is one race I'd like to stay with the pack.

And the lucky number? It's 51; the average age when a woman officially hits menopause.

“ 51 is the average age when a woman officially hits menopause ”

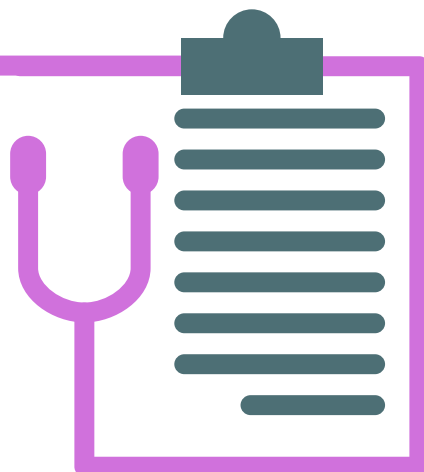
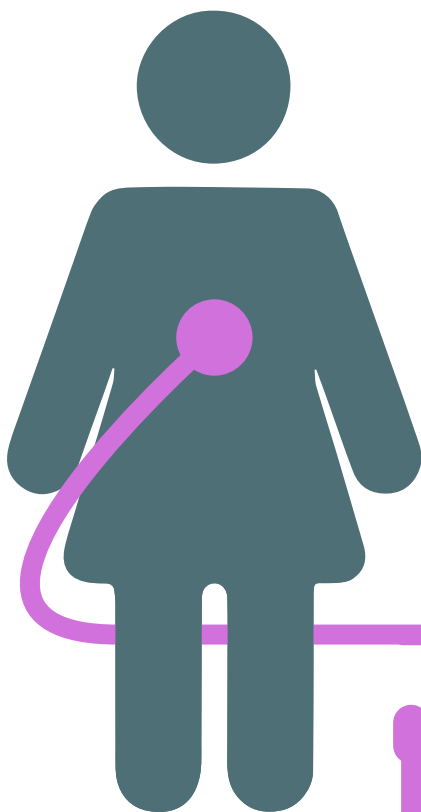
Am I in the club yet?

There's no definitive "test" (don't be fooled by the "pee on a stick" test) and the diagnosis is usually based on symptoms and context.

You're likely to be in perimenopause if you're over 35 and experience three of the **typical menopause symptoms** (check out my [Menopause Symptoms](#) guide for a comprehensive read 'em and weep list):

- ✓ The onset of heavy and/or longer flow periods
- ✓ Shorter menstrual cycles
- ✓ Increased menstrual cramps
- ✓ Onset of sore or swollen breasts
- ✓ Onset of sleep disturbances
- ✓ Night sweats
- ✓ New or increased migraines
- ✓ New or increased premenstrual mood swings
- ✓ Unexplained weight gain (particularly around the belly)

It's no wonder so many women are diagnosed retrospectively.



“ The diagnosis is usually based on symptoms and context ”

Menopause is inevitable for anyone with ovaries, but your experience is totally unique. The bottom line? You're in charge when it comes to finding your solutions. It's time to tune into your body.

Want to dive deeper? Grab a copy of my [Menopause Facts](#) and [Menopause Symptoms](#) for more insights, and my [3-Step Plan For Navigating Menopause](#) here.

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