

FACTSHEET

What is the menopause?

“Menopause is the permanent end of menstruation and fertility, defined as occurring 12 months after your last period”

This is the clinical definition of the Menopause but it really doesn't tell the whole story. Menopause is not a one-off event and changes can start occurring in your body many years before you reach this stage. Menopause is a normal, natural event signaling the end of fertility and the beginning of a new and potentially rewarding time in our lives.

There is a huge amount of negativity surrounding the word menopause and we want to change this. Menopause is not a disease that has to have medical intervention, there will be times when this is needed and we'll cover this later in this booklet.

Although at times it may not feel like it, our bodies are perfectly designed for purpose and this transition is a completely natural phase we will all go through. There will be many signs and symptoms that changes are happening with our body and this is the time for us to sit up and listen to what is going on with our own bodies.

Menopause can be managed through lifestyle changes in many cases. That is not to say that it is wrong to take HRT, for some women this is the right decision and we'll cover this later.

What we eat, how we move our body and managing our emotions can have an amazing impact on how we transition through this period of our lives.

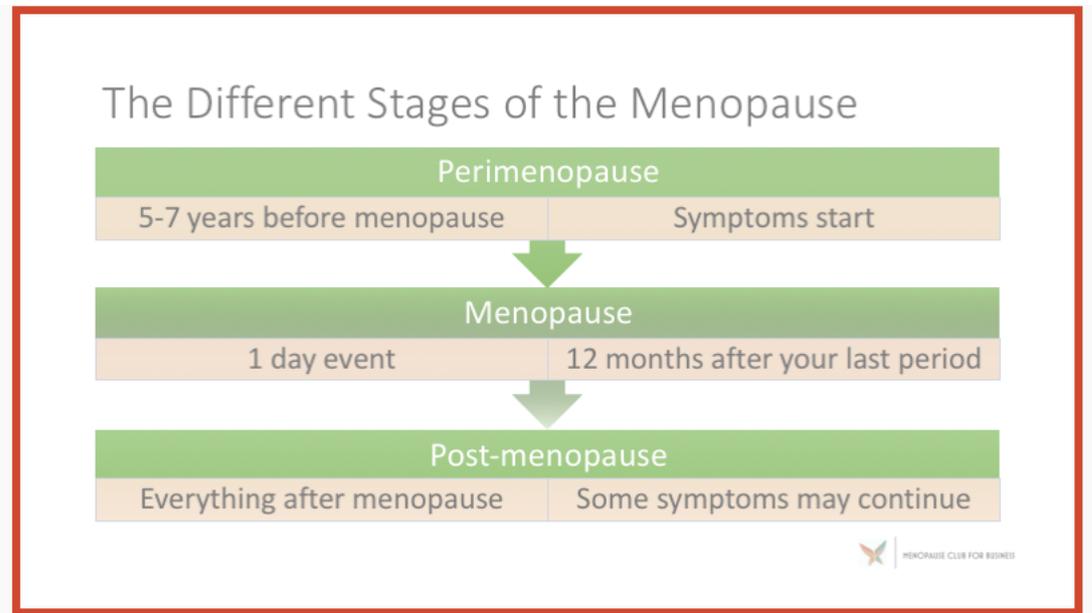
We want you to think about the Menopause as a chance to set yourself free. It's about the start of the rest of your life. The chance to put in place all the changes you should have made or wanted to make but not had the time. NOW is the time for action.



Stages of the Menopause

The word menopause means your last menstrual period. The menopause occurs when your ovaries stop producing eggs and as a result the levels of your hormones called oestrogen and progesterone fall.

A woman is referred to as being menopausal when her last menstrual period was one year ago.



Perimenopause

The term perimenopause is often used as this is the time in which you experience menopausal symptoms but are still having periods. These periods may be more irregular and light or even heavier or more frequent than they used to be.

The hormones oestrogen and progesterone work together to regulate your menstrual cycle and the production of eggs. During your perimenopause, the levels of these hormones fluctuate greatly and it is often the imbalance of these hormones which leads to symptoms of the menopause occurring.

Oestrogen affects several different systems in your body; your brain, skin, bones, heart and vagina so low levels can affect all of these parts of your body.

The average age of the menopause in the UK is 51 years, however this can be earlier for some women.

Symptoms of the perimenopause often start at around 45 years of age.