

Basic Facts on Menopause

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Also called Change of life, Menopause is the time in a woman's life when her period stops. It usually occurs naturally, most often after age 45. Menopause happens because the woman's ovary stops producing the hormones estrogen and progesterone.

A woman has reached menopause when she has not had a period for one year. Changes and symptoms can start several years earlier. They include

- A change in periods - shorter or longer, lighter or heavier, with more or less time in between
- Hot flashes and/or night sweats
- Trouble sleeping
- Vaginal dryness
- Mood swings
- Trouble focusing
- Less hair on head, more on face

Menopause is not a disorder. Most women do not need treatment for it. However, if symptoms are severe, medicines may help. After menopause, women are more vulnerable to bone loss and heart disease. Exercise and eating right can help keep women healthy as they age.

Try these links from to find out more:

- Menopause (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)
- Menopause: A New Beginning (North American Menopause Society) - Large PDF file
Also available in Spanish
- Menopause: One Woman's Story, Every Woman's Story (National Institute on Aging)
- Menopause: What to Expect When Your Body Is Changing (American Academy of Family Physicians)

Also available in Spanish

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