

There are a lot of changes associated with a deficit of hormones. For your health and well-being, it is an informed and smart choice to supplement your hormones at a baseline level to allow you to have a healthy, happy fulfilled life post 50.

Peri-Menopause can last up to 10 years. This stage ends when a woman has not had a menstrual cycle for a full 12 months. At this point, you have reached menopause and entered the post-menopause phase of your life – but symptoms can persist for 7 - 15 years.

Check your current symptoms against the list below. If you'd like to discuss any of your symptoms or concerns further, please do not hesitate to book a consultation.

36 Symptoms of Peri-Menopause and Menopause

Common Symptoms

- 1) Hot flushes/flushes and night sweats are as a result of oestrogen fluctuations and gradual decline which disturbs your body's thermostat.
- 2) Irregular Periods, heavy periods and flooding due to falling progesterone levels.
- 3) Oops moments passing urine involuntarily.
- 4) Mood swings are defined as rapidly changing moods. The decline in oestrogen and other hormones occurring during perimenopause directly affects the neurotransmitters in your brain.
- 5) Loss of libido is affected by fluctuating and declining hormones. Vaginal dryness making sex painful. Loss of sensation and reduction in your ability to orgasm is often due to a drop in testosterone levels and not due to your relationship.

Physical Changes

- 1) Fatigue sometimes referred to as "crashing fatigue" is defined as a sudden overwhelming feeling of reduced energy levels, weakness and exhaustion. Although this can strike in perimenopause, most women experience it post-menopause. Falling hormone levels have a detrimental effect on Thyroid function. If you have been to see your GP and had thyroid function tests that have come back in the normal range your crashing fatigue may be due to a drop in your hormones. Dr Victoria can test for your full female hormone profile and a full thyroid profile including T3.
- 2) Weight gain is one of the most distressing symptoms of menopause. Often referred to as "middle aged spread", this is caused by changing hormone levels. Even those women who have never had a weight problem may find it difficult to manage their weight at this change in life. Dr Victoria can help by balancing your hormones and putting you on a weight loss plan that suits your aims.

- 3) Insomnia and other associated sleep problems are one of the most distressing symptoms of menopause. US statistics show that the rate of insomnia rises at a rate of 40% during the transitional phase of perimenopause through to post-menopause. Insomnia exacerbates other menopause symptoms such as mood swings, heart palpitations and hot flushes.
- 4) Heart palpitations are reported by many women in perimenopause. Heart palpitations, irregular heartbeat or pounding pulse episodes can sometimes be accompanied by hot flushes and night sweats or stress and anxiety.
- 5) Bladder incontinence can occur due to declining oestrogen levels. Oestrogen is responsible for keeping the bladder lining, the urethra and the pelvic region healthy. Reduced oestrogen causes the pelvic muscles to become weaker. This in turn causes interstitial cystitis an often reoccurring, painful bladder condition. Dr Victoria can prescribe a hormone cream to apply to the uro-genital area to improve the strength of the skin in the pelvic area.
- 6) Allergies may be associated with hormonal changes taking place at perimenopause. Fluctuating hormones put pressure on your adrenal glands, this extra work can lead to adrenal fatigue, which can make you more susceptible to allergies. Dr Victoria offers adrenal fatigue and hormone Dutch test and food sensitivity tests.
- 7) Bloating is a common symptom related to an increase in water retention and/or intestinal gas caused by fluctuating hormones.
- 8) Brittle nails and thinning hair in menopause are increased by hormonal changes weakening the keratin layer.
- 9) Skin thinning causes accelerated ageing by causing sagging and lines. We offer arrange of solutions from active skin care, lasers, injectable through to non-surgical face lifting treatments.
- 10) Dizziness though often overlooked is quite a common symptom. Fluctuating oestrogen and progesterone, both play a part. Oestrogen affects the nerves in your body so if lower levels are supplied to the brain this can cause dizziness.
- 11) Hair loss, when the female hormones decline hair thins and becomes drier frizzier and brittle. Dr Victoria can prescribe hormonal hair tonic that encourages hair growth and improves your hairs condition. We also offer PRP treatments to maintain hair or grow more hair.
- 12) Osteoporosis becomes more prevalent post-menopause. The breakdown of bone outpaces the building of new bone due to the decline in the female hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. This is a serious condition which can lead to severe health problems.

Psychological Changes

- 1) Anxiety is a common symptom caused by falling Progesterone levels. Progesterone is the calm hormone that reduces anxiety and aids deep sleep. This is often one of the first signs of hormonal change from your early 40's. Only natural progesterone works for anxiety, synthetics often make you feel worse and the coil does not address this issue.

- 2) Concentration difficulties may occur during perimenopause. Oestrogen has many positive effects on the brain, therefore, a decline in oestrogen leads to a decrease in cognitive function, which can lead to concentration difficulties and dementia.
- 3) Depression is most likely to hit during perimenopause. Between 8% and 15% of women experience some level of depression due to constantly changing hormone levels.
- 4) Irritability is a common complaint of both perimenopause and postmenopausal women due to the emotional and physical effects of the transition towards menopause and the years following.
- 5) Memory loss, “brain fog” is a common complaint of women in perimenopause. It is reported that this symptom is most acute during the early period of post menopause.
- 6) Panic attacks – women are twice as likely to experience panic disorder than men and most frequently during PMS, pregnancy and menopause. Medical experts have concluded that hormone imbalance is most typically the underlying cause.

Pains

- 1) Fibrocystic Breast Disease/Condition (breast pain) is the result of hormonal changes. It can occur at any age with a peak incidence between 30-50 years, covering both childbearing and peri-menopause
- 2) Hormonal headaches in the peri-menopausal stage can trigger an increase in migraine attacks due to fluctuating hormone levels.
- 3) Joint pain is due to the joints getting less oestrogen. Oestrogen positively affects joints by keeping inflammation under control, therefore, as oestrogen levels decline during perimenopause, pain is often the result. Progesterone is a natural diuretic and reduces fluid retention in your joints so reducing joint pain.
- 4) Burning mouth syndrome usually affects women postmenopause. Oestrogen plays a role in the formulation of saliva, therefore, once oestrogen levels decrease, researchers believe this can cause burning mouth.
- 5) Digestive problems in perimenopause are caused by hormonal imbalances which has an effect on gas, constipation, IBS and bloating.
- 6) Oral Health problems can become more prevalent post menopause and is associated with both declining oestrogen and the natural ageing process. It is important that you are aware of the symptoms and causes.
- 7) Electric shock sensation is one the less common symptoms of menopause. There is a range of sensations and although it can happen at any time, it is known to occur immediately before a hot flush.
- 8) Itching is caused due to declining oestrogen. As oestrogen plays a key role in maintaining healthy skin this decline can cause skin to become itchy, dry/crawly.

- 9) Muscle pain and tension is experienced by many women in perimenopause. For no apparent reason women can experience painful, sore and tense muscles, tendons and bones. As muscles, tendons and bones all have oestrogen receptors, they become weaker due to a lack of oestrogen and falling testosterone.
- 10) Tingling extremities (cold hands and feet), is categorised by numbness and pins and needles sensations in the extremities. In menopause, it presents due to hormone shifts affecting the nervous system.

Less Common Symptoms of Menopause

- 1) Asthma – there is a connection between low oestrogen levels and asthma, although to date studies remain conflicted. It is known that when oestrogen levels fluctuate and drop significantly this may cause inflammation in the airways.
- 2) Dry eye syndrome can occur due to declining hormone levels, which can affect the ocular tissues and the tear composition made by your eyes. Common symptoms include light sensitivity, dryness, blurred vision and burning/sandy/gritty feelings. Contrary to that, if you are experiencing teary eyes this can also be a sign that you eyes are trying to make up for a lack of moisture.
- 3) Dry mouth syndrome occurs when there is not enough saliva in your mouth. Fluctuating and changing hormone levels often leave peri menopausal and post menopausal women with a continual feeling of dry mouth.
- 4) Hair growth, mainly unwanted facial hair may occur during perimenopause due to the male androgen, testosterone. Prior to perimenopause the male hormone testosterone is suppressed by the female hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. When the female hormones start to fluctuate the balance shifts resulting in excess testosterone which causes facial hair.
- 5) Restless leg syndrome has an association with menopause, but is not caused by it. It is known that oestrogen helps our muscles to relax, therefore, as low oestrogen levels can impede the absorption of oestrogen into muscles this can cause RLS symptoms.
- 6) Tinnitus (ringing in the ears) is one of the lesser reported symptoms of menopause. Although more research needs to be carried out on this subject, there is evidence to support that fluctuating hormones and hormone replacement therapy HRT can cause or worsen tinnitus.