



Supporting someone through perimenopause and menopause



Partners, family and friends play an important role in supporting their loved one through perimenopause and menopause.

What is perimenopause and menopause

The 'menopause transition' includes perimenopause and menopause.

Menopause is a woman's final period. Perimenopause is the time leading up to and just after menopause.

In perimenopause, the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, which are produced by a person's ovaries, fluctuate until menopause. This causes periods to change (become irregular, heavier or lighter), and many women start experiencing symptoms.

Some people will reach menopause due to some cancer treatments, or surgery that removes both ovaries.

A person might experience a combination of physical, emotional or mental health symptoms, or no symptoms at all. Common symptoms include:

- hot flushes and night sweats
- brain fog
- trouble sleeping
- joint and muscle pain

- low mood and mood changes
- anxiety
- dry or itchy skin
- vaginal dryness and irritation
- urinary (wee/bladder) problems
- loss of interest in sex
- increased belly fat.

About 1 in 2 women report having mild menopause-related symptoms. Around 1 in 4 have symptoms severe enough to affect their daily life.

Being supportive to someone who may be experiencing these symptoms can make a big difference.

Things you can do to support

Supporting doesn't need to be complicated. Small actions can make a big difference. Below are some ideas that may be helpful.

Learn about perimenopause and menopause

Knowing what to expect, including what symptoms can be experienced, can help reduce misunderstandings. Visit [health.gov.au/perimenopause](https://www.health.gov.au/perimenopause) for more information.

Listen and talk openly

Ask open questions like “How are you feeling?” and “What would help today?” Sometimes listening is more helpful than advice.

Be flexible and considerate

Symptoms such as fatigue, sensitivity to heat or poor sleep can affect daily routines. Adjust plans when needed and check in about what feels manageable.

Help with everyday tasks

Offering to take on some of the tasks or chores your loved one does every day can help to ease daily stress.

Avoid jokes of dismissive comments

Be mindful not to make light of your loved one's symptoms. Even well intended humour can feel invalidating.

Support medical care

Encourage your loved one to talk with their doctor if symptoms are affecting their daily life. Offer to make an appointment or go along for support if they want company.

Be patient about intimacy

Changes in libido (sexual desire) or physical comfort are common in the menopause transition. Reassure your partner that these changes are normal and explore other ways to maintain closeness.

Pregnancy is still possible during perimenopause. If you and your partner don't want to become pregnant, consider contraception at least until your partner reaches the end of perimenopause (12 months after their final period).

More information and support

Visit health.gov.au/perimenopause for more information on perimenopause and menopause, including real stories, resources, and information in a range of languages.

The menopause transition can be a challenging time in life. If you and your loved one are looking for more support with your relationship or mental health, you can talk to your health professional. Information on how to find a health professional is at health.gov.au/perimenopause/find-a-doctor

You may also find the services below helpful:

- **Relationships Australia** provides counselling for individuals, partners and families. Call 1300 364 277.
- **Beyond Blue** provides tools has resources on mental health and delivers a support line. Call 1300 22 4636.
- **Lifeline** provides 24/7 crisis support. Call 13 11 14.



Everyone experiences
perimenopause and
menopause differently.

For more information, visit
health.gov.au/perimenopause

