



Australian Government

Everyone experiences **perimenopause**  
and **menopause** differently.



# Perimenopause and menopause

Easy Read version

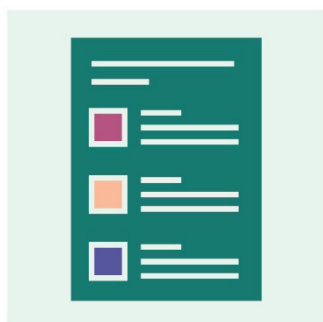


## How to use this document



We are the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

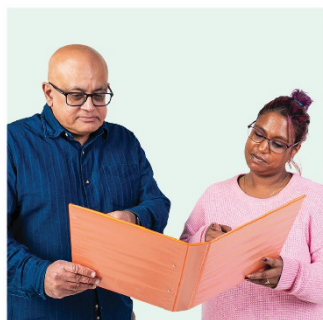
We wrote this document.



We wrote some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is also a list of these words on page 21.



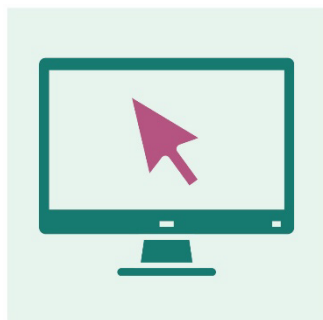
You can ask someone you trust for support to:

- read this document
- find more information.



This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

It only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other documents on our website.

[www.health.gov.au/perimenopause](http://www.health.gov.au/perimenopause)

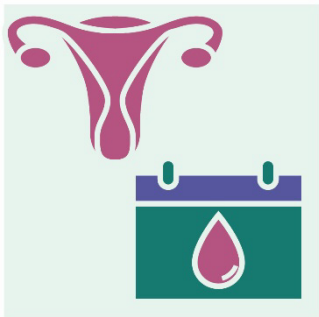
## What's in this document?

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## What is menopause?



**Menopause** is when someone's **menstruation** stops.



Menstruation is also called a period.

It is a kind of bleeding from the vagina that usually happens once a month.

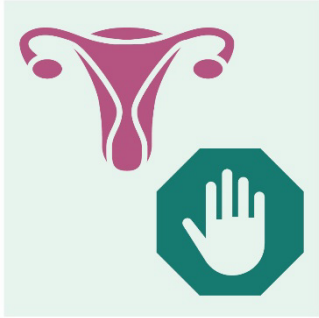


**Ovaries** are a part of your body that:

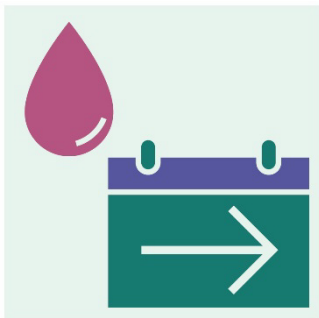
- release eggs – to help make a baby



- make some **hormones** – chemicals that help your body work well.



Menopause means your ovaries have finished releasing eggs.



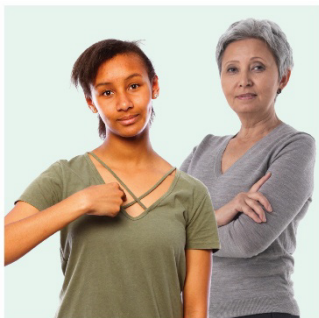
You will know you have reached menopause

**1 year** after your last period.

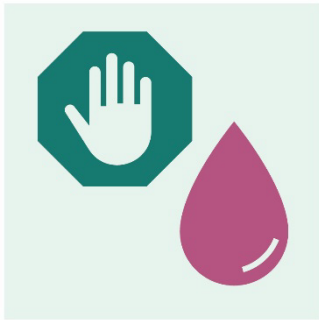


Most people go through menopause between

**45 and 55 years old.**



But it can also happen at different ages.

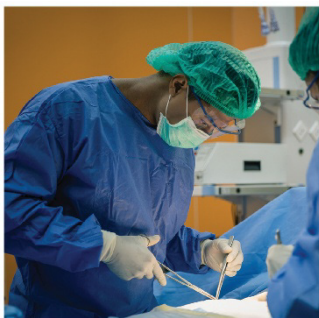


Sometimes other things can make menopause happen.

For example:



- some treatments for cancer



- having an operation that takes away your ovaries.

## Who can experience menopause?



Everyone born with ovaries will experience menopause.

This includes:



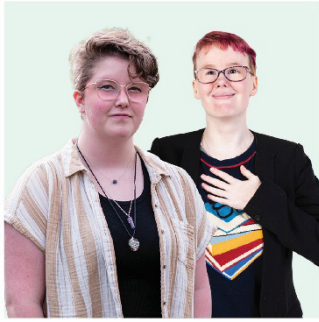
- women



- **transgender** men.



Transgender is when a person's gender is different from the one they were given when they were born.



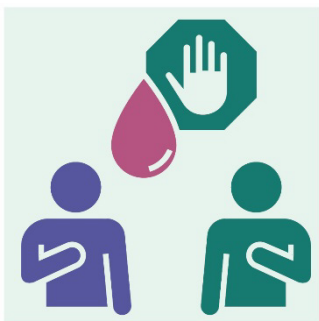
Menopause can affect **non-binary** people with ovaries.

When a person is non-binary, they feel like they don't fit the idea of being a man or a woman.



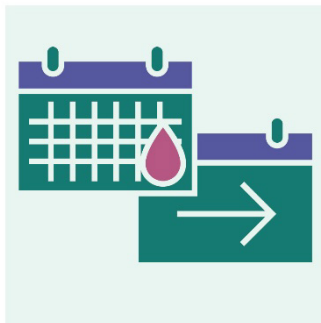
Menopause can also affect **intersex** people with ovaries.

An intersex person is someone who is born with parts of their body that are not completely male or female.



Everyone will experience menopause in different ways.

## What is perimenopause?



**Perimenopause** is the time around menopause.

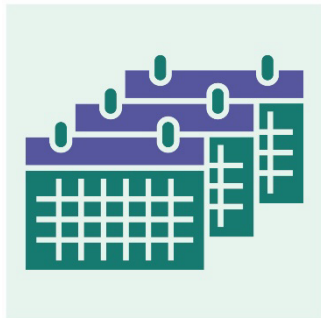
It is the time leading up to your last period.

It ends **12 months** after menopause.

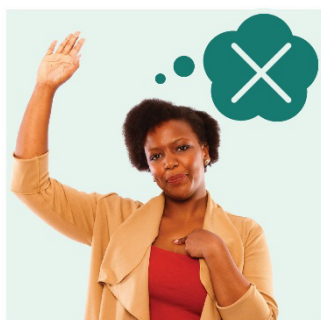


Perimenopause usually:

- starts after you turn **40 years old**



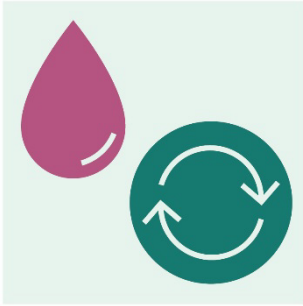
- lasts between **4 and 6 years.**



But your experience might be different.

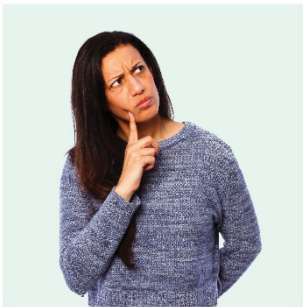


During perimenopause, your hormone levels change.



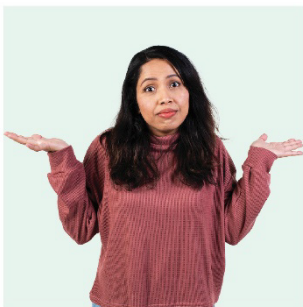
This can make your period:

- be heavier
- be lighter
- not come as often
- not last as long.

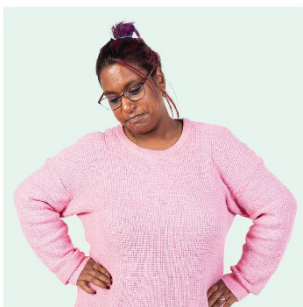


Perimenopause can also make you feel:

- confused

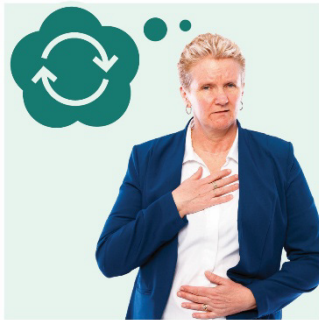


- unsure



- different.

## How does menopause affect people?



A **symptom** is a sign that changes are happening in your body.



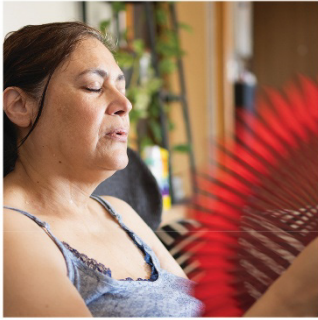
You can have symptoms during:

- menopause
- perimenopause.



Symptoms might affect your body.

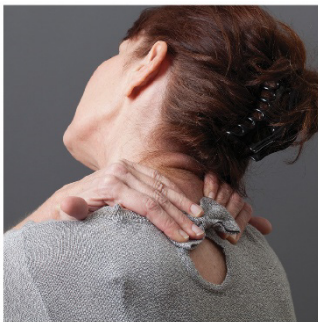
For example, you might have:



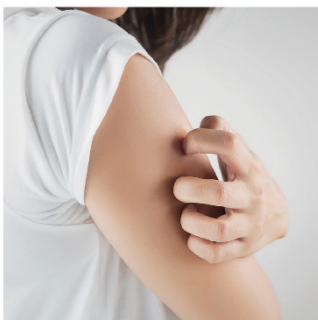
- hot flashes – a sudden feeling of heat on your face and body



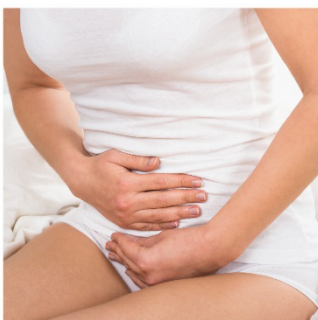
- trouble sleeping – including sweating at night



- sore joints and muscles



- dry or itchy skin



- a dry feeling in your vagina.



Symptoms can also affect how you feel.

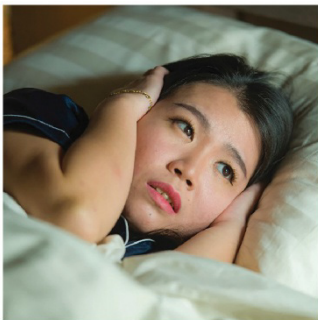
For example, you might:



- feel sad



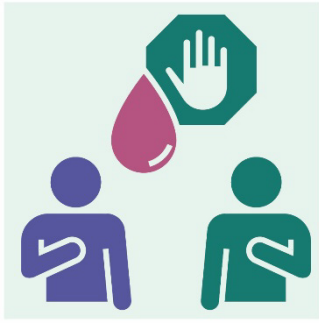
- forget things



- have **anxiety**.



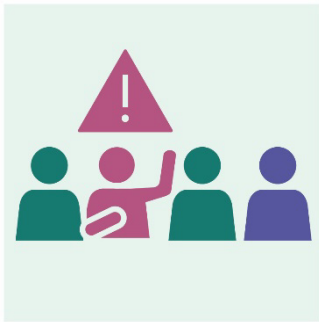
Anxiety is when you feel very worried or scared about something that may or may not happen.



Menopause affects people in different ways.



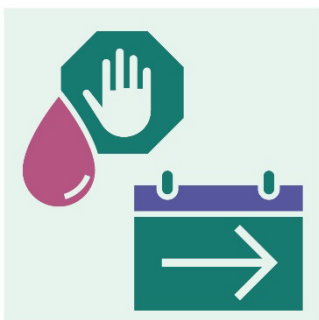
About half of people have mild symptoms.



About **1 in 4 people** have symptoms that affect their daily life.

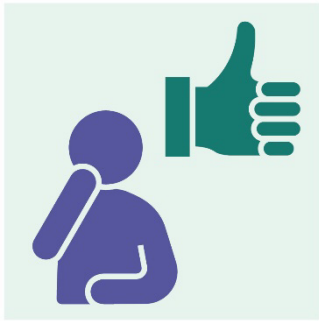


About **1 in 4 people** don't have any symptoms.



People can also have symptoms after menopause.

## Managing your symptoms



There are different ways to manage your symptoms.



You can choose what works best for you.

## Living a healthy life



You might choose daily activities that support your health.

For example:



- stopping smoking



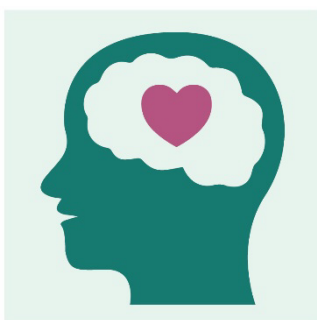
- drinking less alcohol and coffee



- eating healthy food.



You can also take care of your **mental health**.



Your mental health is about how you:

- think and feel about yourself
- deal with things in your life
- manage your feelings.

## Help from a doctor



You can talk to your doctor about what help is right for you.



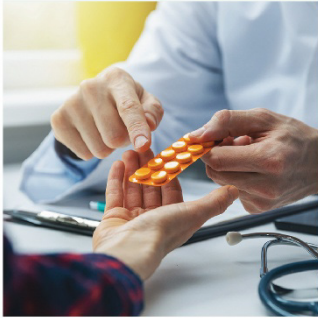
For example, your doctor can help you manage your hormones.

This includes giving you medicine that adds hormones to your body when your hormones are changing.



You can also get help that doesn't include hormones.

This can include:



- different medicines

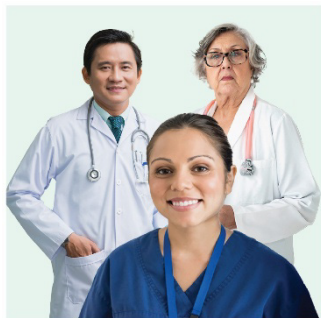


- **therapy.**



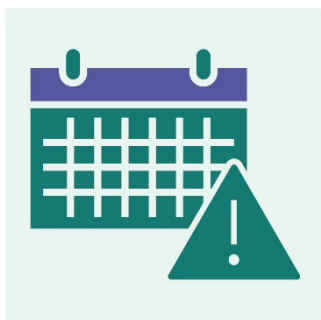
Therapy includes different types of support that can help improve how you think and feel.

## Support for you



Health professionals can support you during perimenopause and menopause.

You should talk to your doctor if your symptoms:



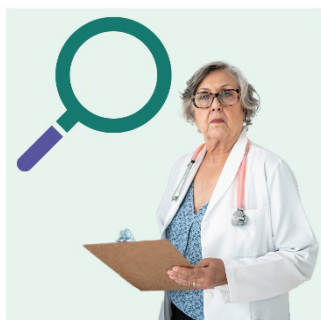
- are affecting your daily life



- make you feel worried.

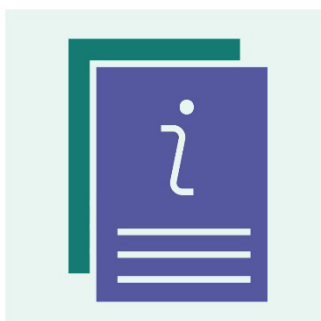


Other health problems can have the same symptoms as perimenopause and menopause.



Your doctor can check your health to make sure you get the right support and care.

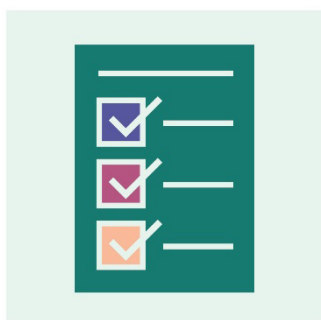
## More information



We have more information about:

- menopause
- perimenopause.

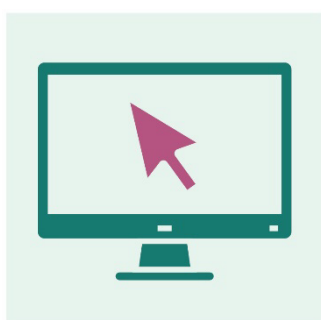
This includes:



- a checklist of symptoms



- information in different languages.



You can find more information on our website.

[www.health.gov.au/perimenopause](http://www.health.gov.au/perimenopause)

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



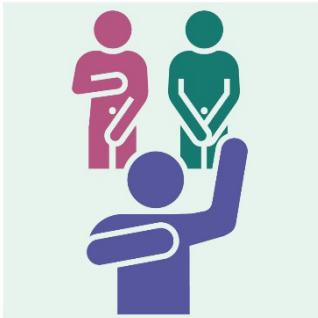
### **Anxiety**

Anxiety is when you feel very worried or scared about something that may or may not happen.



### **Hormones**

Hormones are chemicals that help your body work well.



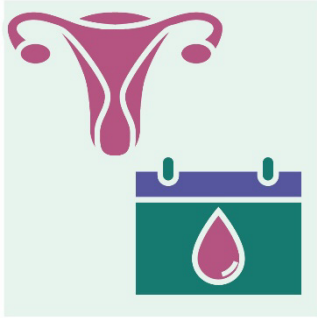
### **Intersex**

An intersex person is someone who is born with parts of their body that are not completely male or female.



### **Menopause**

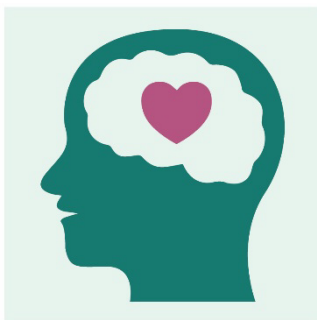
Menopause is when someone's menstruation stops.



## Menstruation

Menstruation is also called a period.

It is a kind of bleeding from the vagina that usually happens once a month.



## Mental health

Your mental health is about how you:

- think and feel about yourself
- deal with things in your life
- manage your feelings.



## Non-binary

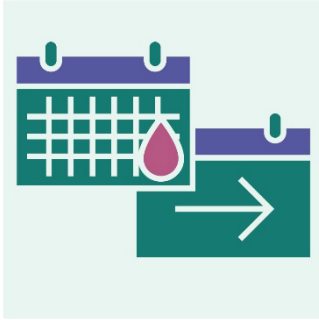
When a person is non-binary, they feel like they don't fit the idea of being a man or a woman.



## Ovaries

Ovaries are a part of your body that:

- release eggs – to help make a baby
- make some hormones.



## **Perimenopause**

Perimenopause is the time around menopause.

It is the time leading up to your last period.

It ends 12 months after menopause.



## **Symptom**

A symptom is a sign that changes are happening in your body.



## **Therapy**

Therapy includes different types of support that can help improve how you think and feel.



## **Transgender**

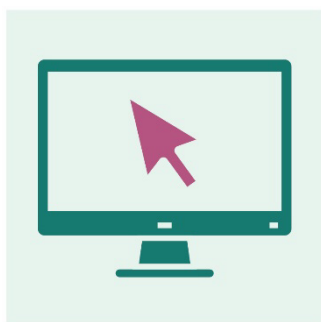
Transgender is when a person's gender is different from the one they were given when they were born.

## Contact us



You can write to us.

Women's Health Section  
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing  
GPO Box 9848  
Canberra, ACT 2601



You can visit our website.

[www.health.gov.au/perimenopause](http://www.health.gov.au/perimenopause)



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