

You can get help.

- Talk to your doctor about your symptoms.
- Some simple things may help. Find out what your choices are.
- Your doctor may suggest medicine. Ask about the benefits and risks.

Take care of your body.

- Have regular checkups and Pap tests.
- Be active on most days.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Quit smoking.
- Limit alcohol use.



I try to walk 20–30 minutes every day.

Build strong bones.

Activities that put weight on your legs, feet and arms are good for your bones.

Do one or more of these for 20–30 minutes on most days:

- Walk or use a treadmill
- Dance
- Take the stairs
- Lift weights
- Garden

These also make your heart and lungs stronger, help reduce stress and keep your muscles flexible.

To Learn More

Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.
1-800-230-7526
[www.plannedparenthood.org/
WOMENSHEALTH/menopause.htm](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/WOMENSHEALTH/menopause.htm)

Professional models were used in all photographs.

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1-800-321-4407
www.etr.org

A nonprofit organization



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What Is Menopause?



Menopause is a natural thing.

All women stop having periods at some time in their lives. This is called menopause (MEN-oh-paws).

- The average age of menopause is 51.
- A woman may notice changes in her body as early as age 35. These early changes are called **premenopause**.
- It can take a few years from the time you first see changes for your periods to stop.
- Some women hardly notice the changes. Others have a harder time. Every woman is different.

What causes it?

- At puberty, your body begins to make female hormones.
- These hormones tell your body to release eggs, prepare to get pregnant and have periods.
- At premenopause, your body begins making fewer and fewer hormones.
- After a while your periods will stop.

You may have these changes.

- Lighter periods or heavier periods
- Skipping a period or bleeding between periods
- Sleep problems
- Hot flashes or night sweats
- Dry vagina
- Mood swings, forget things or can't concentrate

These changes may not bother you.

Or they may bother you a lot.

Take care of your bones.

Your bones can get weak when your body makes fewer hormones. This is called osteoporosis (oss-tee-oh-poh-ROH-sis).

You're at risk if:

- You're thin and have small bones.
- Other women in your family have it.
- You don't get enough calcium.
- You don't get enough exercise.
- You smoke or have more than 1 drink of alcohol a day.

Talk with your doctor about how you can keep your bones strong.

Some women have strong symptoms.

- Bleeding may be heavy or last a long time.
- Lack of sleep may mean being very tired during the day.
- Vaginal dryness may make sex painful.
- Hot flashes may disrupt daily life.



Talking to my doctor about why my periods changed helped me a lot.