

PERI+MENOPAUSE CHECKLIST



To meet the criteria for a perimenopause diagnosis, you should have at least one of the first two symptoms checked off. The remaining symptoms can be attributed to hormonal changes characteristic of peri+menopause.

Name:

Date:

CYCLE CHANGES

- Cycle length changes by more than 7 days
Ex. 21 days one month, 28 days another month- this is the definitive symptom that marks early perimenopause based on the Straw Criteria.
- Skip cycles
Ex. more than 60 days between cycles - this is the definitive symptom that marks late perimenopause based on the Straw Criteria
- Period is heavier than usual
Often due to anovulatory cycles and insufficient progesterone production
- Period is lighter than usual
Often due to low estrogen
- Spotting between periods
Due to greater fluctuations in hormones
- More PMS
Due to greater fluctuations in hormones
- No period for 12 months
This marks MENOPAUSE

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Vasomotor Symptoms

Due to fluctuations in estrogen levels, which affect the body's ability to regulate temperature

- Hot flashes
- Night sweats
- Cold flashes

Sleep

Caused by symptoms such as hot flashes or night sweats, as well as hormonal changes associated with this phase

- Insomnia
- Trouble sleeping through the night
- Sleep apnea - this needs to be ruled out when not feeling rested after sleep

Body Composition Changes

Lower estrogen levels can lead to changes in how the body uses energy and where it stores fat

- Weight gain
- Loss of muscle mass
- Increase in body fat, especially in abdomen

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PHYSICAL CHANGES

Breast

They can get larger in early perimenopause with increased estrogen production and then decrease in size in late perimenopause and menopause when estrogen is low

- Change in breast size
- Tender breasts - due to fluctuation in hormones
- Breast cysts- due to fluctuation in hormones

Sexual

Due to decreasing estrogen levels

- Changes in libido
- Vaginal dryness - due to low estrogen
- Pain during intercourse
- Increased risk of urinary tract infections
- Urinary incontinence

Mental and Emotional Symptoms

Higher risk of depression and anxiety in peri + menopause

- Mood swings
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Apathy
- Feelings of sadness
- Decreased self-esteem
- Feelings of grief or loss
- Decreased motivation
- Difficulty concentrating
- Brain fog and memory lapses
- Heart palpitations

Neurological

- Headaches and migraines (can be worse in perimenopause)
- Difficulty with coordination
- Dizziness

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PHYSICAL CHANGES

Skin and Hair

Low estrogen levels result in reduced collagen and elastin, which are vital for skin's moisture, elasticity, and overall appearance.

- Dry skin
- Acne
- Itchy skin
- Increased wrinkles
- Decreased skin elasticity
- Increase in facial hair
- Thinning of hair on the head
- Changes in hair texture

Gastrointestinal

Fluctuating levels of estrogen and progesterone affect the retention of water and gas and alter motility

- Loose stool
- Constipation
- Gas and bloating
- Increased sensitivity to pain of IBS symptoms
- Acid Reflux or GERD flare ups
- Gallstones

Eye

- Dry eyes
- Increase in floaters

Ear

Histamine levels can be higher in early perimenopause due to increased estrogen production

- Tinnitus (ringing in ears)
- Vertigo

Dental

- Gum disease
- Dry mouth
- Burning mouth

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PHYSICAL CHANGES

Immune

Histamine levels can be higher in early perimenopause due to increased estrogen production and as hormone levels change. The response, regulation, and function of the immune system may also be altered due to the immune cells' sensitivity to these hormones

- New or worse allergy symptoms
- Flare-ups of autoimmune disorders
- Increase in inflammation
- Increased susceptibility to illness

Bone, Muscle and Joint

- Due to loss of estrogen
- Bone loss and increased risk of osteoporosis
- Joint pain and stiffness
- Muscle tension

Cardiovascular

Changing hormone levels can affect heart function and the increase cholesterol leading to increased risk of heart diseases

- Heart Palpitations
- Increase in cholesterol levels
- Intermittent chest pain
- Changes in blood pressure
- Increase in heart rate

Sensory Changes

- Increased sensitivity to light, sound, or smell

What to do with this checklist

- Complete annually to keep track of your symptoms and identify patterns
- Bring it to your family doctor, naturopath or functional medicine provider to help get the support you deserve
- Share it with women in your life who may find it useful

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OTHER CONDITIONS TO RULE OUT

The following conditions overlap with many of the symptoms of peri+menopause and need to be considered for a proper diagnosis and treatment plan.

- Low Vitamin D
- Anemia
- Thyroid Disease – Hyper and Hypothyroidism
- Metabolic Syndrome
- Nutrient Deficiencies – calcium, B vitamins, magnesium, omega 3, fiber
- Diabetes or Insulin Resistance
- Sleep Apnea
- Arthritis
- Anxiety and Depression

BLOOD WORK

These blood tests are useful are for women experiencing peri+menopause.

- Cholesterol panel including apolipoprotein (a) and Apo B
- Homocysteine
- Thyroid panel including TSH, free T3, free T4 and thyroid antibodies
- CBC, Ferritin, Iron, TIBC, Transferrin Saturation
- B12
- Vitamin D
- Liver enzymes
- Fasting glucose, fasting insulin and HbA1C
- CRP
- FSH
- Estradiol, progesterone, LH