

Section 3

Early and premature menopause



Menopause before the age of 45 is called early menopause. Menopause before the age of 40 is called premature menopause.



Premature menopause is different to menopause. Premature menopause means that the ovaries are not working properly. They stop making eggs years before they normally would.

Causes of early and premature menopause



Women can experience early or premature menopause for lots of different reasons. This includes some surgeries or cancer treatments.



The reason will not be known for most women.

Signs and symptoms of early and premature menopause



The symptoms of premature menopause are the same as perimenopause.



If you are taking hormonal contraception, you might not notice a change in your periods but you may have other symptoms.



Early and premature menopause are unusual, so symptoms can be missed or thought to be caused by something else.

Diagnosing early and premature menopause



Speak to your GP if your periods have stopped or have been coming less often (for around 4-6 months). Your GP can carry out a blood test to measure your hormones.



It can take a long time to diagnose premature menopause. Symptoms could be caused by something else. Your blood test can rule out some other problems.

Management of early and premature menopause



Having an early or premature menopause can mean a higher risk of osteoporosis (weak bones) and heart disease. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) can lower these risks and help with symptoms.



Women who have an early or premature menopause should be offered Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), unless there is a medical reason not to take it.



They should continue taking Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) until the average age of the menopause. This will replace the hormones that would usually have been made by the body.

Early and premature menopause and fertility



Early and premature menopause can affect having children naturally.



Women who have early or premature menopause do not release an egg from their ovaries every month. This makes it difficult to get pregnant.



If you want to have children, you should talk to your GP. They can explain the different ways you can try to do this. A small number of women who have premature menopause can still become pregnant.



If you do not wish to become pregnant you should use contraception. You can talk to your GP about the best kind of contraception for you.

Support for early and premature menopause



There is support available for women who experience early or premature menopause. You can visit Menopause Cafes, online forums, social media groups or support websites to hear from women with similar experiences.

Some websites you may find useful are:

- [The Daisy Network](#)
- [Health Talk](#)
- [The Fertility Network](#)
- [Menopause Matters](#)