



# INTRODUCTION TO MENOPAUSE

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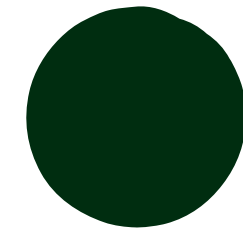
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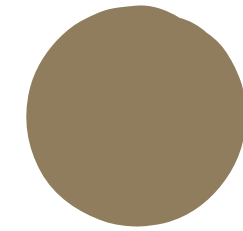
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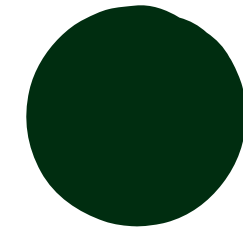




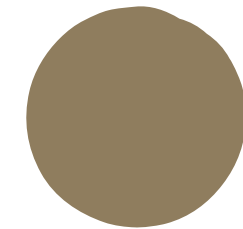
Menopause Explained



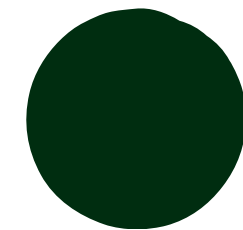
Symptoms & Diagnosis



Health Risks

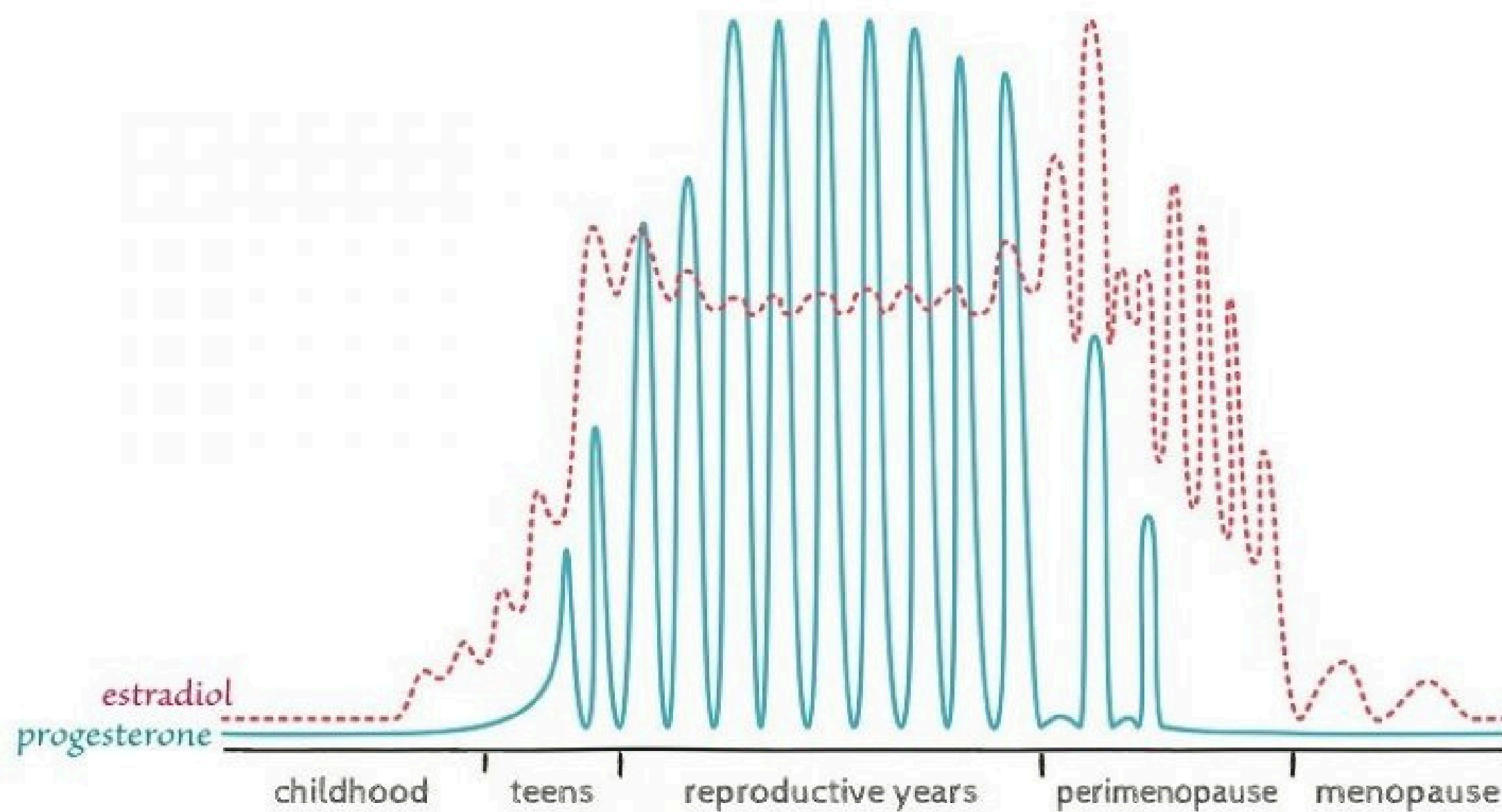


Menopause Support



Q&A

# Menopause - a hormone journey



## Perimenopause

- months, years, > decade
- you still have periods

## Menopause

- 51 yrs (45 - 55 yrs)
- no period previous 12 months

## Early Menopause

- < 45 yrs

## Primary Ovarian Insufficiency (POI)

- < 40 yrs (1/100)
- < 30 yrs (1/1000)

## Surgical / Chemical Menopause

# Influence of Sex Hormones

## The influence of oestrogen

### Brain

- Anti-inflammatory
- Improves blood flow in brain
- Improves mood and reduces anxiety
- Helps with learning
- Body temperature control
- Improves memory and concentration
- Increases levels of other neurotransmitters including dopamine, serotonin, acetylcholine, noradrenaline, melatonin
- Improves sleep
- Increases connections between brain cells
- Improves energy

### Heart

- Controls heart rate
- Keeps endothelium (cells lining interior surface of blood vessels) healthy
- Lowers blood pressure

### Liver

- Improves cholesterol regulation
- Improves glucose metabolism
- Increases breakdown of fat
- Improves liver function

### Skin

- Increases collagen production
- Reduces moisture loss
- Improves elasticity
- Increases blood supply to skin



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### Bones

- Increases bone mineral density
- Reduces inflammation in joints
- Increases muscle strength
- Improves flexibility
- Lubricates joints

### Joints and muscles

- Anti-inflammatory
- Muscle strength and flexibility
- Joint lubrication

### Bowel

- Maintains function
- Maintains balance of friendly bacteria
- Reduces heartburn

### Nerves

- Improves nerve transmission

### Bladder

- Reduces risk of infection
- Improves bladder function

### Vagina/vulva

- Increases lubrication
- Maintains balance of friendly bacteria in vagina
- Keeps tissues healthy

## The influence of progesterone

### Brain

- Helps brain cells to communicate better, which helps improve mood, memory and brain health
- Helps nerve functioning

### Breasts

- Tempers the effect of oestrogen and reduces breast cysts

### Immune system

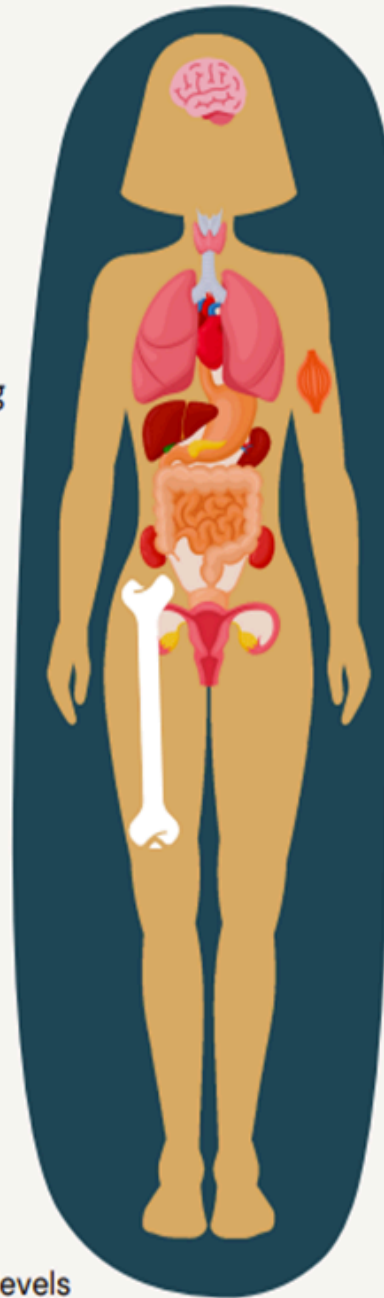
- Reduces inflammation
- Lowers risk of autoimmune disease

### Bones

- Builds bone

### Metabolism

- Regulates blood sugar levels



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### Psychological wellbeing

- Promotes sleep
- Relieves anxiety
- Helps use fat for energy

### Muscles

- Stimulates growth of new muscle
- Reduces muscle spasm

### Reproductive/sexual function

- Regulates menstruation
- Supports pregnancy
- Reduces bleeding

## The influence of testosterone

### Eye health

- Improves meibomian gland function and lubrication
- Reduces dry eyes

### Cardiovascular health

- Lowers triglyceride and cholesterol
- Improves cardiac capacity and output - makes your heart stronger and more efficient
- Improves endothelial function - helps the lining of your blood vessels work better, increasing blood flow

### Circulation

- Red blood cell production

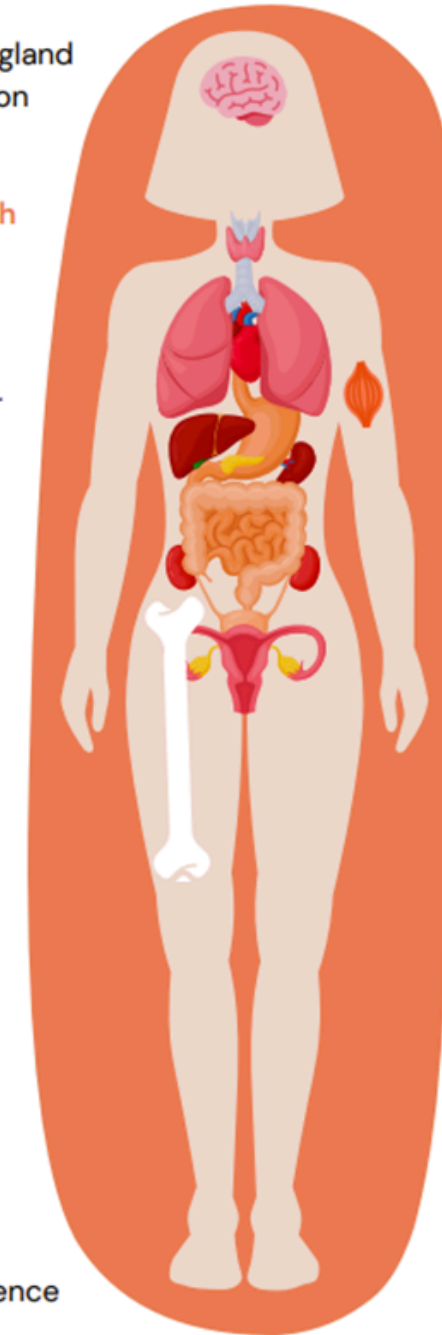
### Reproductive and sexual function

- Libido, arousal and orgasm

### Urogenital health

- Improves urinary symptoms including urgency and incontinence

- Reduces symptoms related to vaginal dryness and soreness



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### Brain function

- Improves concentration
- Improves memory, verbal learning and spatial abilities
- Sleep quality improves

### Mood

- Psychological wellbeing
- Improves energy

### Muscle

- Improves muscle mass and strength

### Metabolism

- Maintains normal metabolic function (blood pressure, lipids, glucose metabolism)

### Bone health

- Increased bone mineral density

### Bladder

- Reduces risk of infection
- Improves bladder function

### Vagina/vulva

- Increases lubrication
- Keeps tissues healthy

# Peri/Menopause Symptoms

*75%+ experience symptoms, 25% severe symptoms*

headaches

migraine

heart palpitations

dizziness

head pressure

breathing difficulties

hot flushes

night sweats

heavy/light periods

worsening PMS

poor sleep

tiredness

weight gain

muscle/joint pain

hair/skin changes

itchy skin

tinnitus

pins and needles



brain fog

poor concentration

poor memory/lapses

low energy/motivation

anxiety

panic attacks

low mood/depression

mood swings

irritable

tearful

reduced self esteem

low/lack of libido

vaginal dryness

urinary frequency

urinary urgency

recurrent UTI's

## Menopause Symptoms Questionnaire

This can be used to monitor symptoms and is worth doing regularly to assess how symptoms change with time or with treatment.

Please indicate the extent to which you are bothered at the moment by any of these symptoms by placing a tick in the appropriate box:

Symptoms	Not at all 0	A little 1	Quite a bit 2	Extremely 3	Comment
Heart beating quickly or strongly					
Feeling tense or nervous					
Difficulty in sleeping					
Memory problems					
Attacks of anxiety, panic					
Difficulty in concentrating					
Feeling tired or lacking in energy					
Loss of interest in most things					
Feeling unhappy or depressed					
Crying spells					
Irritability					
Feeling dizzy or faint					
Pressure or tightness in head					
Tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ear)					
Headaches					
Muscle and joint pains					
Pins and needles in any part of the body					
Breathing difficulties					
Hot flushes					
Sweating at night					
Loss of interest in sex					
Urinary symptoms					
Symptoms due to vaginal dryness					
SCORE					

# Menopause Symptom Questionnaire

Tip: Keep track of your symptoms!

Download from:

[www.themenopausecharity.org](http://www.themenopausecharity.org)

Or use a cycle tracking app (e.g. Clue, Natural Cycles - NC<sup>o</sup> Perimenopause, Balance Menopause app)

# Diagnosis

## > 45 yrs & otherwise healthy

- without laboratory tests
- perimenopause based on vasomotor symptoms and irregular periods
- menopause - no period in previous 12 months

## 40-45 yrs with symptoms or < 40 yrs menopause suspected

- consider Follicular Stimulating Hormone (FSH) test
- FSH can fluctuate

See NICE Guidelines:

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23)

**NICE**

National Institute for  
Health and Care Excellence



# Mis-diagnosis

## Why might this happen?

- lack of menopause awareness
- little or no formal medical training on menopause

## What diagnosis may be given?

- recurrent uti's
- depression/anxiety
- chronic fatigue
- chronic migraine
- fibromyalgia

## Referrals to:

- urology
- psychiatry
- memory clinic
- neurology
- rheumatology
- cardiology





# Menopause & Health Risks

- Heart disease
- Osteoporosis
- Cognitive decline



# Heart Disease

- increase body fat, weight gain
- increase blood pressure
- increase LDL-c and TG
- reduce HDL-c
- reduce insulin sensitivity
- increase inflammation
- increase risk type 2 diabetes
- increased CVD risk
- CVD most common cause of mortality



# Osteoporosis

- decreased bone density as estrogen declines
- increase in bone fragility
- increased risk of osteoporosis
- increased risk of fractures
- DEXA scan recommended for younger women
- Vit D supplementation and exercise (weight-bearing and strength training)



# Cognitive Decline

Estrogen, Progesterone and Testosterone play a role in our brain function, cognition, memory & learning

As hormones decline:

- lack of focus
- forgetfulness
- word finding difficulty
- easily confused
- memory loss
- brain fog

# Menopause & MS

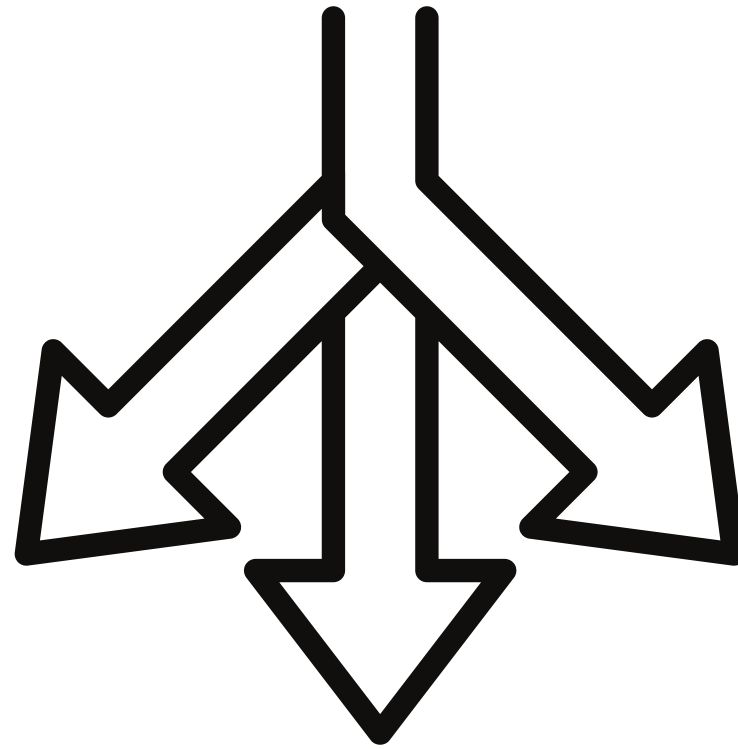
- Falling estrogen, progesterone & testosterone levels in menopause may reduce neuroprotection and increase inflammation, potentially influencing MS symptom activity
- Symptom overlap: fatigue, sleep issues, mood, cognition, bladder function
- Heat & hot flushes can temporarily worsen MS symptoms
- Impact on MS progression still unclear
- HRT is considered safe for women with MS
- Importance of a holistic, multidisciplinary approach



# Menopause Support Options

## LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

Nutrition  
Movement  
Sleep  
Stress management  
Positive Connections



## HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

Estrogen  
Progesterone  
Testosterone

## HERBAL/SUPPLEMENTS

Black cohosh  
Red clover  
Sage  
Ashwagandha  
Ginkgo biloba  
St John's wort  
Vit d

## COMPLIMENTARY THERAPIES

CBT  
Acupuncture  
Aromatherapy  
Relaxation therapy

## NON HORMONAL MEDICATIONS

Veozah  
SSRI's - Citalopram, Sertraline  
SNRI's - Venlafaxine  
Gabapentin/Pregablin  
Clonidine



## Seeking Medical Support

- track symptoms - e.g. questionnaire or cycle tracking app
- bring symptoms list/report to your appointment
- print NICE guidelines (ng23 guidelines)
- ask for blood tests
- get a copy of your blood results
- ask to see a menopause/women's health doctor/nurse at your surgery
- referral to NHS menopause clinic
- go see a private menopause specialist
- collaborative approach with healthcare provider

**Reminder: advocate for yourself, be assertive!**



# Supporting Others

## Be a Good Listener

- offer a non-judgmental, empathetic ear
- let them share their feelings without interrupting

## Acknowledge Their Experience

- validate their emotions and physical changes
- avoid dismissing symptoms as “just menopause.”

## Educate Yourself

- learn about menopause symptoms and challenges
- understand the physical, emotional, and psychological impacts

## Encourage Self-Care

- suggest practices that help manage stress (breathwork, movement etc.)
- support healthy lifestyle choices like balanced nutrition, movement, stress management, and sleep

# Supporting Others

## Be Patient and Understanding

- be aware that moods and energy levels may fluctuate
- avoid taking irritability or mood swings personally

## Offer Practical Help

- assist with daily tasks if they're feeling overwhelmed or fatigued
- suggest helpful tools like symptom trackers or signpost to educational resources

## Check In Regularly

- ask how they're feeling and if they need any support
- let them know they're not alone and can talk to you anytime



# Menopause Resources



British Menopause Society

<https://thebms.org.uk/>

Women's Health Concern

<https://www.womens-health-concern.org/>

NICE Guidelines (ng23): Menopause Diagnosis & Management

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23)

Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists:  
Menopause & Later Life

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/for-the-public/menopause-and-later-life/>

You and Your Hormones

<https://www.yourhormones.info/>

# Menopause Resources

Balance Menopause Website

[www.balance-menopause.com](http://www.balance-menopause.com)

Balance Menopause App

<https://www.balance-menopause.com/balance-app/>

The Meno Charity

[www.themenopausecharity.org](http://www.themenopausecharity.org)

Facebook Peer Support Group

MHDG (Menopause & HRT Discussion Group)

**Other helpful articles/booklets:**

Living Well Through Perimenopause & Menopause

[Living Well Through Menopause.pdf](#)

Menopause & Me

[Menopause-and-me.pdf](#)

HRT The Basics

[HRT the basics.pdf](#)

Easy HRT Prescribing Guide

[Easy HRT Prescribing Guide.pdf](#)

# Q&A

Thank you for listening

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