

MEDICAL SUPPORT FOR MENOPAUSE CHALLENGES

1.3 million

women transition into menopause annually in the U.S.¹

51

Average age at menopause¹

80%

of women experience menopausal symptoms¹

Menopause is a life stage, typically in a woman's late 40s or 50s, defined once 12 months have passed after her last menstrual cycle. The onset and duration of the menopause transition (also known as perimenopause) is influenced by many factors, including biology, lifestyle, certain health conditions, and sociocultural determinants of health. Some individuals may experience menopause early (before age 45) or without a transition period due to certain medical conditions or surgical procedures.



Women of color are more likely to experience an earlier and longer menopause transition, and have more severe symptoms.²

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

There are treatment options available for almost every symptom associated with menopause. It may take a combination of options to fully address your menopause symptoms.

- ▶ **Hormone therapy (HT)** involves taking supplemental estrogen and/or progesterone that the ovaries are no longer producing due to menopause.
- ▶ **Nonhormonal medications**, such as neurokinin receptor (NKR) antagonists and certain low-dose antidepressants, can address vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes).

- ▶ **Complementary and alternative approaches** include natural remedies (vitamins and herbs) and techniques, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, acupuncture, and yoga.
- ▶ **Lifestyle approaches** might involve healthy eating, quitting smoking, physical activity, prioritizing sleep, and stress management, as well as addressing health concerns with providers, such as sexual and mental health.

For more information about treatment options and wellness tips during menopause, download the [SWHR Preparedness Toolkit: A Woman's Empowerment Guide](#).

Many private insurance plans that include prescription drug coverage may cover menopause-related medications, including hormone therapies and nonhormonal medications, antidepressants, and gabapentinoids. Note that such coverage may require a special consultation and/or justification of the medication as "medically necessary" by your health care provider.

Bioidentical hormones are chemically and structurally identical to those naturally produced by the ovaries. It is strongly recommended that bioidentical HTs approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) are used, compared to *compounded* bioidentical hormones, which are custom products made in compound pharmacies and not regulated or approved by the FDA.



PROVIDERS FOR YOUR MENOPAUSE CARE

While some women may feel hesitant about discussing menopause with their provider, be encouraged to advocate for addressing your individual health care needs and finding relief for your symptoms.

The annual well-woman visit is a good place to begin discussing questions about menstrual cycle changes and the menopause transition. However, this preventive care appointment is not designed to focus on existing or new health challenges. Women who have specific concerns about new or bothersome symptoms that they think may be associated with menopause or a potential health condition should not wait until their annual appointment to seek care. They should schedule an appointment that is dedicated to addressing their concerns.

Some women may need to visit various providers to address their menopause symptoms and care needs, including stress management, social support, and workplace accommodations.

Certain health care professionals may not be covered by an individual's insurance plan, while others may require referral or prior authorization procedures to receive services or medications. Examples of health care professionals include:

- ▶ Acupuncturist
- ▶ Physical Therapist
- ▶ Dietitian or nutritionist
- ▶ Psychologist
- ▶ Social Worker



Some health care providers can get women's health or menopause-associated certifications by completing additional training and exams toward this specialized area of care.

It is important to discuss how care will be coordinated between providers, while making sure your primary care provider remains updated, as the lead of your health care team. Consider requesting a referral to a specialist or seeking out a second opinion if you feel that your provider is unable to address your care needs or you want another perspective on your care options.