

## How can I tell if I'm going into menopause?

Perimenopause is the first stage in the transition to menopause, or the end of your periods. During perimenopause, you will begin to see menstrual cycle irregularity. Other symptoms may include:

- **Mood changes:** irritability, anxiety, depression, changes in libido, even rage!
- **Cognitive changes:** brain fog, difficulty concentrating, word finding difficulties, memory lapses
- **Skin Changes:** dry, itchy skin, sensitive skin, new allergies or rashes
- **Weight gain:** without change to diet or exercise routines, usually stored in the abdomen
- **Heart palpitations:** irregular heartbeat, changes in blood pressure, light headedness and dizziness
- **Sleep disturbance:** difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, waking up too early
- **Vasomotor symptoms:** hot flashes, night sweats, sudden chills

Perimenopause can start as early as your mid-30's! Educate yourself on the symptoms and have a Menopause Plan!

The good news is that with lifestyle changes, you can manage many of these symptoms and feel like yourself again! Reach out for a free consultation for menopause coaching today!



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# Menopause Hormone Therapy

## What Is Menopause Hormone Therapy (MHT)?

Menopause Hormone Therapy (MHT), formerly known as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), is a treatment used to relieve symptoms of menopause by supplementing the body with estrogen, or a combination of estrogen and progesterone, and in some cases, testosterone. MHT is the most effective treatment for many menopausal symptoms and can also provide long-term health benefits for some individuals.

### Types of MHT

- Estrogen-Only Therapy - For people who have had a hysterectomy.
- Combined Estrogen + Progesterone Therapy - Needed for those with an intact uterus to reduce the risk of endometrial cancer
- Bioidentical Hormone Therapy - Some FDA-approved formulations use hormones chemically identical to those produced by the body
- Synthetic Hormone Therapy refers to hormone treatments made from artificial (lab-created) chemical compounds that are designed to mimic your body's natural hormones, like estrogen and progesterone

### Delivery Methods

MHT comes in a variety of forms to suit different preferences and needs:

- Oral tablets
- Transdermal patches
- Topical gels or sprays
- Vaginal creams, tablets, or rings (for local symptoms like dryness)

### Benefits of MHT

- Significant reduction in hot flashes and night sweats
- Improvement in sleep quality
- Relief of vaginal dryness and discomfort
- Boost in mood, energy, and quality of life
- Bone protection and reduction in risk of osteoporosis and fractures

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# The Stages of Menopause

## Premenopause – The “Before” Stage

- This is the time in your life when you’re still having regular menstrual cycles and hormone levels are generally steady. You may not notice any signs of menopause just yet.

*Tip: Now’s a great time to build healthy habits that will support you through the transition ahead (think: sleep, nutrition, stress management, and movement).*

## Perimenopause – The Transition Zone

- Perimenopause usually starts in your 40s (sometimes late 30s) and can last anywhere from 2 to 10 years.
- Hormone levels, especially estrogen and progesterone, start to fluctuate—and that’s when symptoms can show up.
- You might still get periods, but they could be irregular, heavier, or lighter than usual.
- Common symptoms: Hot flashes, Mood swings, Sleep troubles, Brain fog, Irregular cycles, Vaginal dryness

*Tip: Track your cycle and symptoms—you may start to notice patterns that help you prepare for what’s next.*

## Menopause – The Milestone Moment

- You’ve officially reached menopause when you’ve gone 12 months without a period (not due to pregnancy, illness, or another medical reason).
- The average age is around 51, but it can happen earlier or later.

*Tip: Celebrate this new chapter—even if symptoms are frustrating, there are ways to support your body and mind through the changes.*

## Postmenopause – The After Phase

- This is everything after that 12-month mark.
- Hormone levels stay lower, and while some symptoms may ease, others can continue or show up later (like changes in bone or heart health).

*Tip: Keep up with regular check-ups and focus on long-term wellness—think bone strength, heart health, and cognitive support.*

Every journey through menopause is unique. You don’t have to do it alone. As a menopause coach, I’m here to help you feel informed, empowered, and supported every step of the way.



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# Move Through Menopause: Strength Training

*Support your body, boost your mood, and feel strong—at every stage*

## Why Strength Training Matters in Menopause

As estrogen levels dip during menopause, our bodies go through some big changes—including a natural loss of muscle mass and bone density. Strength training can help counteract that.

Benefits include:

- Increased bone strength (hello, osteoporosis prevention!)
- Better balance and coordination
- Boosted metabolism
- Improved sleep
- Mood support + confidence boost
- Joint protection and pain reduction

## What Counts as Strength Training?

- Bodyweight exercises (squats, lunges, push-ups, pull-ups)
- Resistance bands
- Dumbbells or kettlebells
- Barbell exercises
- Wearing a weighted vest

## How Often Should You Train?

Aim for 2–3 sessions per week focusing on all major muscle groups. That's plenty to build strength and support your body through menopause.

*Bonus: Add in daily movement like walking, stretching, or yoga for flexibility, balance, and stress relief*

## Use Progressive Overload to Build Strength

If you want to actually build muscle and strength over time, your body needs a challenge. That's where progressive overload comes in—it means gradually increasing the difficulty of your workouts over time. You can do this by:

- Adding a little more weight
- Doing more reps or sets
- Slowing down the movement for control
- Reducing rest time between sets

*Reminder: Small changes = big impact over time. It's not about pushing hard every day—it's about steady, smart progress.*

If you don't know where to start with strength training, I design customized programs for all fitness levels as part of a coaching program!



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# Nourish Your Body Through Menopause

Nutrition Tips to Support Energy, Hormones & Long-Term Health

## Why Nutrition Matters During Menopause

As hormones shift, your metabolism, bone health, mood, and digestion may shift too. The good news? What you eat can make a real difference. Nourishing your body with the right foods helps you feel more balanced, energized, and strong through every stage of menopause.

### Prioritize Protein

Estrogen loss affects muscle mass, and protein is your best friend for strength, metabolism, and satiety. Aim for 1 gram per pound of your ideal body weight daily.

*Try this: Include a protein source at every meal—like eggs, Greek yogurt, tofu, lentils, fish, or lean meats.*

### Support Bone Health

Bone density naturally declines after menopause. Calcium + Vitamin D are essential!

*Try this: Add leafy greens, fortified plant milks, almonds, canned salmon with bones, and a bit of safe sun exposure or a D supplement.*

### Balance Blood Sugar

Fluctuating blood sugar can worsen hot flashes, mood swings, and fatigue.

*Try this: Pair carbs with protein or healthy fat (like apple slices with nut butter or oatmeal with chia and almonds). Limit added sugars and refined carbs.*

### Fiber is Your Friend

Fiber supports digestion, hormone regulation, and heart health—so important post-40!

*Try this: Choose whole grains (quinoa, oats), beans, fruits, and vegetables. Bonus: fiber helps you feel fuller longer.*

### Hydrate Like It's Your Job

Hot flashes, fatigue, and brain fog? Water can help.

*Try this: Aim for 6–8 glasses a day. Add lemon, cucumber, or mint if plain water feels boring.*

### Limit Alcohol & Caffeine

These can trigger hot flashes, mess with sleep, and spike anxiety in some women.

*Try this: Experiment with reducing or spacing them out—and notice how your body responds.*

I help menopausal women navigate their nutrition goals with realistic, personalized strategies that support energy, hormone balance, and overall well-being—without restrictive diets.



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# Why Hire a Menopause Coach?

## What is a menopause coach?

A menopause coach is a professional who provides personalized support and evidence-based strategies to help women navigate the physical and emotional challenges of perimenopause and menopause. This includes guidance on nutrition, exercise, sleep hygiene, stress management, and more to improve overall quality of life.

## How can a menopause coach help me?

A menopause coach works with you to develop and implement lifestyle changes tailored to your unique needs and symptoms. This may involve creating personalized workout plans with an emphasis on resistance training, advising on nutrition adjustments, improving sleep habits, managing stress, and educating you on menopause hormone therapy (MHT) options to discuss with your healthcare provider.

## Why should I choose The Menopause OT for coaching?

At The Menopause OT, you'll work with Julie, an experienced Occupational Therapist with over 20 years in adult inpatient rehabilitation. After personally navigating surgical menopause and becoming a Certified Menopause Coach with a Women's Health Certification, Julie is passionate about helping women feel their best during their menopausal years. Her approach combines professional expertise with personal experience to offer compassionate and effective support.

## What can I expect during the coaching process?

The coaching process begins with an initial consultation to review your medical history, menopause symptoms, and current diet and exercise routines. Sessions can be conducted virtually or in-person for clients local to Philadelphia. Together, you'll set achievable goals and have regular check-ins to discuss progress, making gradual changes at a comfortable pace. A minimum commitment of three months is recommended to fully experience the benefits of the program.

*Embarking on this journey with a dedicated menopause coach can provide the guidance and support needed to navigate menopause with confidence and improved well-being.*

If you're ready to start feeling more like yourself again, reach out for a free consultation today!



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## Menopause Hormone Therapy (MHT): Myths vs. Facts

### **MYTH #1: "Hormone therapy is dangerous for everyone."**

**FACT:** Hormone therapy is safe and effective for many people when started under age 60 or within 10 years of menopause. Risks depend on your health history, type of hormones used, and delivery method. For many, benefits outweigh the risks.

### **MYTH #2: "HRT causes breast cancer."**

**FACT:** Hormones do not cause cancer, but they can feed a cancer that is already present and cause it to spread or grow. Some types of combined estrogen and progesterone therapy may slightly increase breast cancer risk after long-term use (typically 5+ years), but the risk is small. Estrogen-only therapy actually **REDUCES** breast cancer risk. It's important to personalize care with your provider.

### **MYTH #3: "You have to go through menopause naturally—it's just a part of life."**

**FACT:** While menopause is natural, suffering through severe symptoms isn't necessary. Hormone therapy can provide significant relief from hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, and more—improving quality of life.

### **MYTH #4: "Natural or bioidentical hormones are always safer."**

**FACT:** "Natural" doesn't always mean better or safer. FDA-approved bioidentical hormones are available and well-regulated. Compounded hormones from custom pharmacies are not FDA-approved and may carry more risk. Always consult your provider.

### **MYTH #5: "You can't use MHT if you've had a hysterectomy."**

**FACT:** Actually, people who've had a hysterectomy often only need estrogen therapy—without progesterone—which can come with fewer risks. MHT can still be a safe option depending on your health status.

### **MYTH #6: "You can only take MHT for 10 years or until you are 60."**

**FACT:** You can use MHT for as long as needed, under guidance. Some people use it for just a few years, while others continue longer with regular check-ins. There's no one-size-fits-all timeline. Long term use may reduce risk of osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and dementia.

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# Better Sleep During Menopause

Sleep Hygiene Tips from The Menopause OT

Struggling with sleep during menopause is very common – and you're not alone. Hormonal shifts can lead to night sweats, insomnia, early waking, and restless sleep. These tips are designed to help support more restful nights.

## Stick to a Consistent Sleep Schedule

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day – even on weekends. This helps train your body's internal clock (circadian rhythm)

## Cool Your Sleep Environment

- Keep your bedroom around 60–67°F (15–19°C)
- Use breathable bedding and moisture-wicking pajamas
- Consider a cooling pillow, fan, or chill pad

## Wind Down with a Relaxing Bedtime Routine

- Dim the lights 1–2 hours before bed
- Try calming activities like: Gentle stretching, meditation or deep breathing, warm (not hot) bath or shower, herbal tea (caffeine-free), or journaling
- Limit screen time before bed, the blue light can disrupt melatonin production

## Watch What You Eat & Drink

- Avoid caffeine after 2 PM and heavy meals late at night
- Be mindful of alcohol – it may make you sleepy at first but disrupts deep sleep
- Reduce nighttime awakenings by cutting back on drinks 1–2 hours before bed

## Discuss Sleep Support Options

- Hormonal shifts may require tailored solutions. Talk to your healthcare provider about:
  - Menopause Hormone Therapy (MHT)
  - Melatonin & Magnesium
  - Sleep-specific supplements or medications

Menopause Coaching Can Help!  
I help you build a personalized sleep and wellness plan that fits your body, lifestyle, and goals.



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