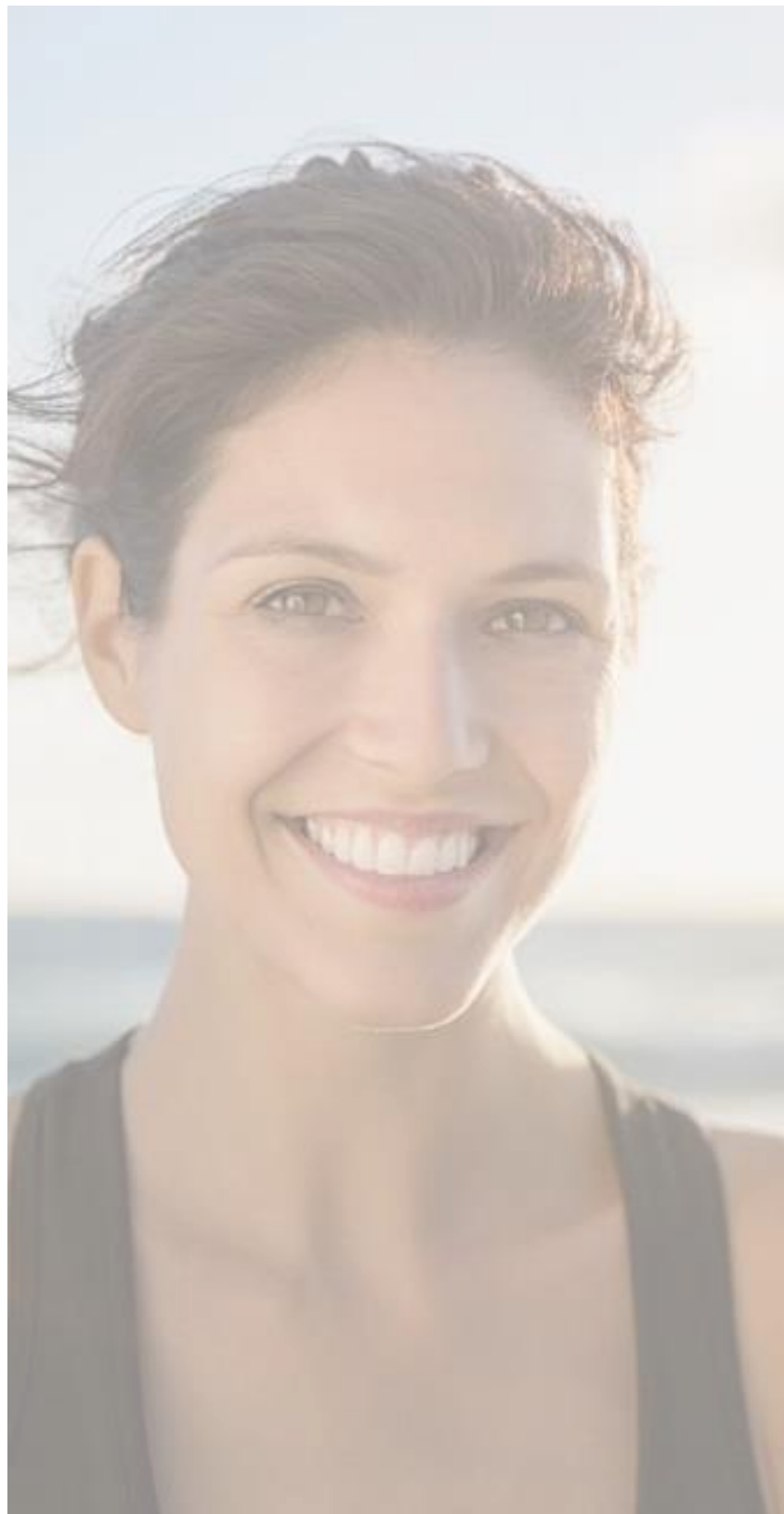




Menopause in Life and Work

For more information on Women's Health Programmes
contact us at info@womanon.org

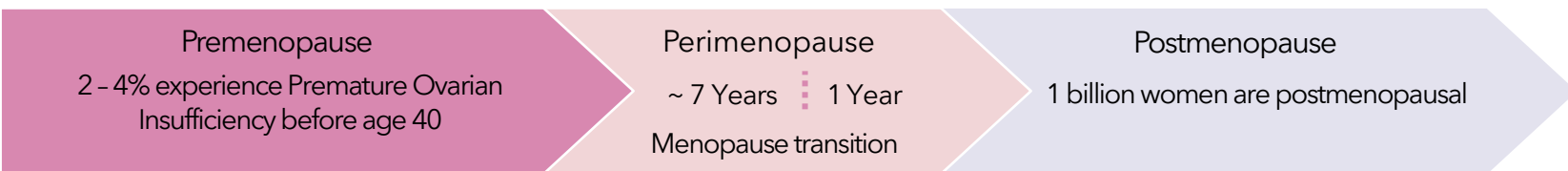


Overview

Menopause is an inevitable life stage and major life event affecting all women in a variety of ways, both short and long term, but experiences vary significantly. **Perimenopause** usually occurs around six years before the onset of **menopause**. During perimenopause women's **oestrogen** and **progesterone** levels begin to fluctuate, causing them to experience mood changes, irregular menstrual cycles, and other menopausal symptoms. Perimenopause continues until one year after a woman's last period and often lasts for around 7 years in total.

Every woman experiences menopause differently. Some women have few or no symptoms over the menopause transition while others have severe symptoms that impair their **quality of life** and **mental health** and may be persistent. Symptoms can last from a few months to several years and up to **80% of women** experience physical and/or emotional symptoms during this time.

Many women feel unsupported as they transition menopause. To better prepare and support women, Womanon provides an approach that goes beyond specific treatments to empower women with **high-quality** information, **tools** to support decision making, **empathic** clinical care, and **workplace** adjustments as needed.



The issue

Societal shifts are needed to better support women transitioning during perimenopause, including by clinicians, researchers, workplaces, and wider society. There is an urgent need to improve women's **understanding** and management of menopause through **accessible, evidence-based** education and support with menopause education interventions that are **inclusive** for all ages and abilities.

Symptoms

Hot flushes and sweats, tiredness and sleep disturbance, joint and muscle ache, heart palpitations, mood swings, anxiety and depression, forgetfulness, lack of concentration, vaginal dryness, vulval irritation, discomfort during intercourse, loss of interest intercourse and increased urinary frequency or urgency.

Menopause in Life and Work

Womanon's approach is premised on:

- **Destigmatise** menopause and build understanding that it is a natural part of ageing which women experience in a variety of ways.
- All women should have **access to accurate information**, available in various forms and through recognised sources.
- Building a **strengths-based approach** that explicitly recognises that women have skills, resources, and resilience to manage their lives through menopause.
- Empower women with holistic, high quality, and inclusive menopause awareness, education, and support, that builds **community** by providing a range of **tools** tailored to specific groups.
- Healthcare professionals should have a basic understanding of menopause and know where to **signpost women for advice**, support, and treatment whenever appropriate.
- Every primary care team should have at least one nominated person with a **special interest** in menopause.

Targeted support is provided for groups who need specific care:

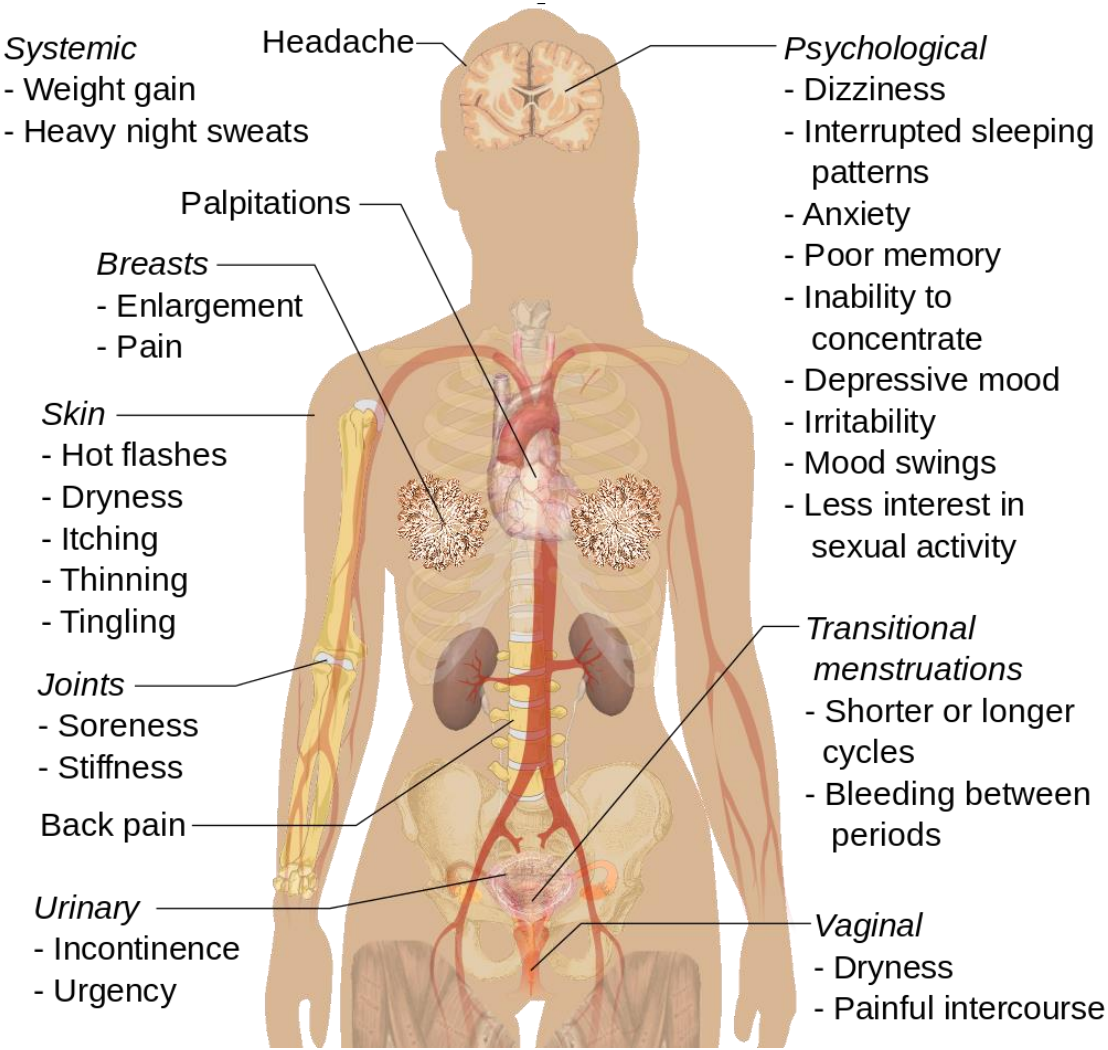
- **Treatment-induced** menopause.
- Those with premature or early menopause may experience feelings of **distress and isolation** and be at increased risk of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, and osteoporosis.
- Those with severe **vasomotor symptoms**, previous **depressive disorder** and/or recent **stressful life events** are at increased risk of depressive symptoms.
- Menopausal symptoms are common after **cancer treatment** and many patients do not get access to effective treatments. With such person's care should be multidisciplinary, managing common symptoms in one place.

The programme:

- Interactive sessions, usually **two hours** in duration, inclusive for all ages and abilities.
- What menopause is, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment / management, **lifestyle factors**, and life post menopause.
- **Six to eight weeks** long, delivered in individual and group settings.
- Delivered through **employers** and in **communities**, fusing education with coaching and peer support.
- The creation of more menopause-friendly **work** and **community** environments.
- Access to **tools** supporting decision making.
- Access to a supportive and informed clinician willing to listen and participate in **shared decision making** for treatment.
- Access to realistic and **balanced** information.



Perimenopause Symptoms



Mikael Häggström, CCO, via Wikimedia Commons