

Glossary of Terms

Information Sheet for Health Professionals

Early menopause	Menopause occurring between 40-45 years of age is called early menopause, with a reported prevalence of 12%.
Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)/ Hormone Therapy (HT)	MHT are hormones that are prescribed during the menopause transition and menopause to alleviate oestrogen deficiency symptoms such as hot flushes, mood swings, vaginal dryness and to prevent or treat osteoporosis. MHT is also recommended for women with premature ovarian insufficiency. Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT) is the term for what was formerly referred to as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).
Hysterectomy	A hysterectomy is surgical removal of a woman's uterus. Diagnosis of perimenopause/menopause depends on the presence of menopausal symptoms due to by the absence of menses in hysterectomised women. In pre-menopausal women, ovarian function will continue normally in most women although there is a small risk of an earlier menopause.
Intra-Uterine Device (IUD, IUCD, IUS)	Long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods are usually made of flexible plastic inserted into a woman's uterus. In addition to contraception, a progestogen releasing IUD (or IUS, intrauterine system) may be used for treatment of menorrhagia and as the progestogen component of MHT.
Oestrogen	Oestrogen is the main female sex hormone. There are three major naturally occurring oestrogens: oestrone (E1), oestradiol (E2) and oestriol (E3). Oestradiol is the most abundant in pre-menopausal women.
Off-Label Use	When a drug is used to treat a condition outside the specific purpose for which it was approved by Australia's medicines regulator, the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Off label use requires patient consent
Oophorectomy	Oophorectomy is the term used to describe the surgical removal of one or both ovaries.
Osteopaenia	Osteopaenia, sometimes called low bone mass, refers to reduced bone density (T scores <-1.0 to >-2.5 on bone densitometry)

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Osteoporosis	Osteoporosis is microarchitectural bone deterioration leading to minimal trauma fractures. On bone density T-scores are ≤ -2.5 . Menopause related oestrogen deficiency is a risk factor for osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is associated with increased fracture risk.
Menopause	Menopause refers to the final menstrual period and is said to have occurred when there have been no menstrual periods for one year. The average age of menopause in Australian women is 51 years (range 45-55 years).
Peri-menopause	Peri-menopause refers to the time from the onset of a change in menstrual cycle pattern or onset of menopausal symptoms, through to one year after the last menstrual period. The average duration is 4-6 years with onset in the fifth decade of life (40's).
Post-Menopause	Post-Menopause starts one year after the last menstrual period.
Premature Menopause	Premature menopause is menopause occurring before age 40 years and includes surgical removal of ovaries (bilateral oophorectomy). Premature ovarian insufficiency (POI) may also be included under this heading although cessation of ovarian function in POI is not always irreversible.
Premature (or primary) ovarian insufficiency (POI)	Loss of ovarian function in women younger than 40 years of age affecting approximately 4% of women. In most women, POI occurs spontaneously and the cause is unknown. POI was previously referred to as premature ovarian failure; however, the preferred term is now premature (or primary) ovarian insufficiency.
Progesterone	Progesterone is the ovarian hormone produced by the corpus luteum which prepares the endometrium for implantation of the fertilized egg.
Progestogen	Progestogen is a hormone which can be natural or synthetic but has a similar effect on a woman's body as progesterone.
Progestin	Progestin is a synthetic hormone which has the actions of progesterone.
Surgical Menopause	Menopause resulting from ovaries being surgically removed. Due to the abrupt cut-off of ovarian hormones, surgical menopause can cause the sudden onset of menopause symptoms.
Testosterone	Testosterone is the male sex hormone found in smaller amounts in women. In women, increased levels of testosterone can lead to acne and hirsutism. Low levels of testosterone in women may contribute to loss of libido.

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