

Menopause

Overview

Menopause is the transition period in a woman's life when her ovaries stop producing eggs, her body produces less estrogen and progesterone, and menstruation becomes less frequent, eventually stopping altogether.

Symptoms

In some women, menstrual flow comes to a sudden halt. More commonly, it slowly stops over time. During this time, the menstrual periods generally become either more closely or more widely spaced. This irregularity may last for 1 - 3 years before menstruation finally ends completely. Before this the cycle length may shorten to as little as every 3 weeks.

Common symptoms of menopause include:

- Heart pounding or racing
- Hot flashes
- Night sweats
- Skin flushing
- Sleeping problems (insomnia)

Other symptoms of menopause may include:

- Decreased interest in sex, possibly decreased response to sexual stimulation
- Forgetfulness (in some women)
- Irregular menstrual periods
- Mood swings including irritability, depression, and anxiety
- Urine leakage
- Vaginal dryness and painful sexual intercourse
- Vaginal infections
- Joint aches and pains
- Irregular heartbeat (palpitations)