

A GUIDE TO GYNECOLOGY: MENOPAUSE

MYTHS OF MENOPAUSE: TRUE OR FALSE

All women put on weight during menopause

False: There is no definitive proof that menopause directly causes weight gain – growing older and generally being less active could simply be the cause.

You cannot get pregnant after menopause

False: Women can get pregnant even after having experienced menopause; therefore contraception should be used for 1-2 years afterwards.

Onset of menopause is similar in female family members

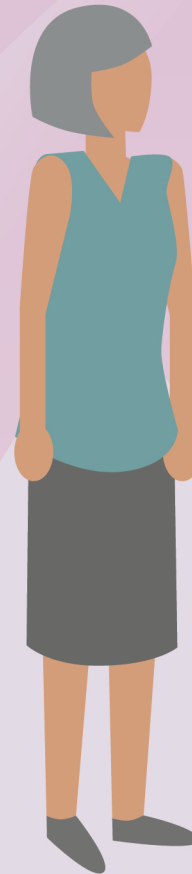
True: The age at which daughters experience menopause is often similar to the age at which their mother went through menopause.

WHAT IS MENOPAUSE

Menopause is the time in a woman's life when menstruation ends. It marks the end of egg production by the ovaries, so monthly menstrual cycles (periods) stop and a woman is typically no longer able to become pregnant. Menopause is caused by a gradual decline in the level of sex hormones produced by the body. As levels decrease the monthly periods gradually come to an end.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Some women experience little or no symptoms. Typical physical symptoms of menopause include: hot flashes, night sweats, palpitations, insomnia, joint aches, vaginal dryness and headaches. In some instances menopause can also have an impact on psychological well-being. Anxiety, depression, difficulty concentrating, emotional sensitivity, irritability, forgetfulness and mood swings can occur.



WHEN DOES MENOPAUSE OCCUR?

Several factors are known to influence the age of onset of menopause. These include: genetics, socioeconomic background, health and lifestyle, diet, exercise and even the altitude at which women live. Most women will experience the onset of menopause sometime in their late forties or early fifties.

WHAT IF SYMPTOMS BECOME UNUSUAL?

Many women go through menopause with minimal discomfort; however, some women may experience symptoms which affect their daily activities. If this happens, it is important that a woman contacts her healthcare professional to outline her symptoms and discuss her options. Treatments, including hormone replacement therapy (HRT), are available to help alleviate such symptoms. Dietary changes and exercise regimes can also help improve the signs of menopause.

Abbott seeks to advance the knowledge, understanding and treatment of gynecological disorders with its Women First science program to help advance gynecological care with the medical community.