

As you enter the menopause transition, it's a good idea to see your primary care provider or a clinician (such as a gynecologist) who is a certified menopause practitioner to help you manage symptoms and stay on the path to long-term health.\* To help you get the most out of that visit, print this list of questions to ask, and take it with you.

☐ **What are the most common symptoms of menopause?**

You may want to discuss changes in your menstrual periods, hot flashes, sleep problems and vaginal dryness.

☐ **How will I know that I've reached menopause?**

Even though 51 is the average age of menopause for American women, defined as one year after the last menstrual period, there is a wide variation. Plus, symptoms often occur during perimenopause, the period leading up to menopause that can last from a few months up to a decade before menopause.

☐ **Will I gain weight?**

Now is a good time to talk about maintaining a healthy weight to reduce your risk for heart disease and diabetes.

☐ **How might the menopausal transition affect my sex life?**

You may experience a change in your level of desire, as well as discomfort during sex. There are many solutions.

☐ **How might the menopausal transition affect my moods?**

Many women experience moodiness as hormones shift. For some women, ongoing symptoms such as sleep problems can trigger depression. Let your doctor know how you're feeling.

☐ **Will I need treatment for the menopausal transition?**

It's not a disease, and some women do fine on their own, while others benefit from symptom relief.

☐ **What are the risks and benefits of hormone therapy, and what forms are available?**

Whether hormone therapy is right for you depends on your age, health history, symptoms and personal choice.

☐ **What are the risks and benefits of nonhormonal remedies?**

Ask about both supplements and mind-body approaches, such as breathing exercises and cognitive therapy.

☐ **What recommendations do you have for diet, exercise, sleep and stress reduction to manage symptoms and stay healthy?**

Now is a good time to discuss your goals for a healthy lifestyle.

☐ **Based on my personal history, are there any other health concerns I need to know about, monitor and/or get screened for?**

Your doctor may suggest new screenings to evaluate the health of your bones, your heart and more.

\*To find a certified menopause practitioner near you, consult the North American Menopause Society's website at <https://www.menopause.org/for-women/find-a-menopause-practitioner>

**Source:** James A. Simon, MD, CCD, NCMP, clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology, The George Washington University School of Medicine, is a Washington, DC-based physician who provides patient-focused care for women across the reproductive life cycle, from adolescence to childbirth, and through the menopausal transition.

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