



# Understanding Perimenopause

The years of change before menopause — what to expect, and what helps [drregu.com.au](http://drregu.com.au)

Recover • Rebalance • Revive




PATIENT GUIDE

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## It's not all in your head — and it's not just hot flushes.

Perimenopause is the natural 'run-up' to menopause, when hormone levels rise and fall unevenly. It can last around four years and often starts while your periods are still regular — so the changes can feel confusing. You're not imagining it.

 **~4 yrs**  
how long it commonly lasts


 **40s**  
when it usually begins

 **30+**  
recognised symptoms, not just flushes


### Symptoms you might notice

 **Hot flushes & night sweats**  
Sudden waves of heat, flushing or sweating — often worse at night and disturbing sleep.  


- Often the first thing people link to menopause.

 **Changing periods**  
Cycles may get closer together or further apart, lighter or heavier. This is expected.  


- See your GP if bleeding is very heavy or unusual.

 **Mood & anxiety**  
Low mood, irritability, tearfulness or anxiety that feels unlike your usual self.  

- Hormone shifts affect mood — it's real, not weakness.

 **Sleep & brain fog**  
Broken sleep, trouble concentrating, and that 'words on the tip of my tongue' feeling.  

- Usually eases as things settle — and help is available.

 **Aches & joint pains**  
New stiffness or aching joints and muscles, often worse in the morning.  

- Very common and often overlooked as a symptom.

 **Vaginal & bladder changes**  
Dryness, discomfort or needing to pass urine more often. Treatable — please do mention it.  

- Simple, effective treatments exist — don't suffer in silence.

**Do I need a blood test to diagnose it?**  
Usually no. If you're over 45 with typical symptoms, perimenopause is diagnosed from your symptoms and age — a hormone blood test can be misleading because levels swing day to day. Blood tests are mainly useful if you're under 45 or the picture is unclear.



## Everyday things that genuinely help

**1**

### Move regularly

Daily activity lifts mood, sleep & bone strength

**2**

### Sleep & cool down

Cool room, light bedding, wind-down routine

**3**

### Eat & hydrate well

Calcium, protein; limit alcohol & caffeine triggers

**4**

### Mind your wellbeing

Stress, breathing and talking things through help

**! See your GP sooner if you have:**

- Very heavy, prolonged or frequent bleeding
- Bleeding after sex, or between periods
- Any bleeding after 12 months with no periods
- Low mood that won't lift, or you're not coping
- Symptoms before age 45, or under 40
- Symptoms badly affecting work or home life

**✓ What your GP can offer**

- ✓ A diagnosis based on your symptoms & age
- ✓ MHT (HRT) — the most effective option for many
- ✓ Non-hormonal treatments if MHT isn't for you
- ✓ Vaginal oestrogen for dryness or bladder symptoms
- ✓ Contraception advice — you can still conceive
- ✓ A review of mood, bone and heart health

**i Worth noting before your appointment**

- ✓ Your main symptoms and which bother you most
- ✓ Your periods — timing, flow and any changes
- ✓ How sleep, mood and energy have changed
- ✓ Whether you still need contraception
- ✓ Your own and family medical history
- ✓ What you'd most like help with first

**Symptom diary**

Jot a quick note of your strongest symptoms over a couple of weeks — patterns help us tailor the right treatment for you.

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5

**You don't have to just put up with it**

Perimenopause is a normal life stage — but the symptoms are treatable.

*Come and talk it through. There's usually far more we can do than people expect. — Dr Regu*