



Fact Sheet

Committee Opinion 349 of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (2006) states: "Using the menstrual cycle as an additional vital sign [for wellness in young girls and adolescents] adds a powerful tool to the assessment of normal development and the exclusion of serious pathologic conditions" (p. 1323).

'Instead of dreading their menses, early humans cherished the uterus and women's cycles of menstruation, pregnancy, birth and menopause ...[and] celebrated the uterus as the body's center of Female power and creativity.'

~ *Dr Eve Agee 'The Uterine Health Companion*

'Communing with our cycles is the foundation of a woman's health.'

~*Sara Avant Stover 'The Way of The Happy Woman*

The menstrual cycle is designed not only for the renewal of fertility and the creation of children, but also for the creation of culture, society and individual purpose and expression'.

~ *Miranda Gray 'The Optimized Woman*

'At menarche a young woman enters her power, throughout her menstruating years she practices her power and at menopause she becomes her power.' ~ *Native American Saying*

Top Facts Girls should know when starting their Menstrual Cycle

- **Puberty** – physical signs of female maturation
 - Signs of puberty are axillary hair and breast enlargement
- **Menarche** – first period
 - Usually starts 1-2 years after puberty
 - Usually starts between 8-17 yrs
- **Menses**
 - Also known as "period" or "menstruation"
 - Usually becomes regular within a year or two
 - Occurs about every 28 days but varies with individuals between 21 and 45 days
 - Lasts 4-6 days..again depends upon each individual
 - If no period by age 17, a girl should see a healthcare provider





Fact Sheet

Top Facts all Women should know about Estrogen and Progesterone

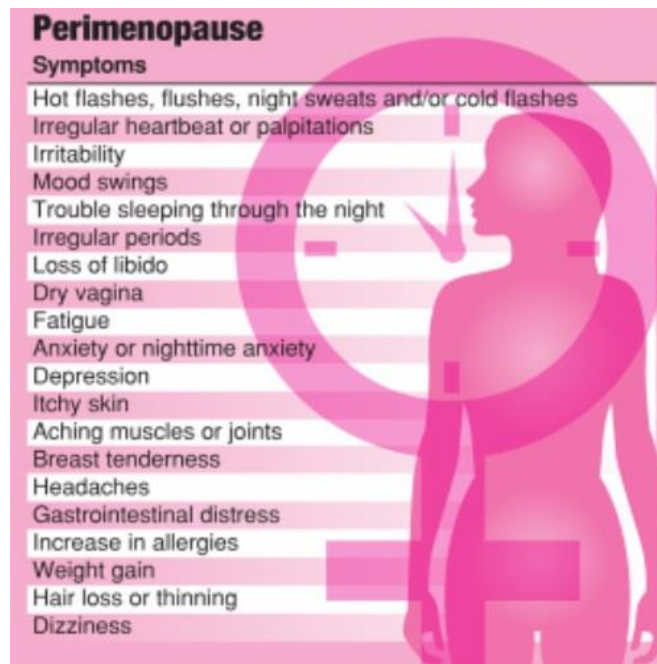
- **Estrogen**
 - Skin elasticity, lubrication of external genitalia
 - Sustaining bone density
 - Breast size
 - Promoting softer skin
 - Maintenance of a positive mood and memory
 - Around time of ovulation – increase in scores of psychological tasks, feeling more alert, and increased sexual arousal
- **Progesterone**
 - Works as an anti-inflammatory agent
 - Helps regulate the immune response
 - Decreases gall-bladder activity
 - Assists in vascular tone, thyroid functioning, bone building, skin resilience
 - Foster's sleep

Facts on Perimenopause and How to Adjust

- **Perimenopause**
 - Time leading up to “menopause”
 - Occurs during late 30's-40's
 - Decreased number of periods with variations in amount of blood flow
 - Woman can still become pregnant
- **Adjusting to Perimenopause**
 - Some women have fewer issues than others. Pay attention to your body, chart your cycle, moods etc. See what patterns emerge. Try to decrease the stress in your life and focus on your own well-being.
 - Menstrual irregularity - understand what is going on. Gain an acceptance of the changes your body is going through.
 - Hot flashes and sleep problems – layer clothing, keep manual and electric fans available.

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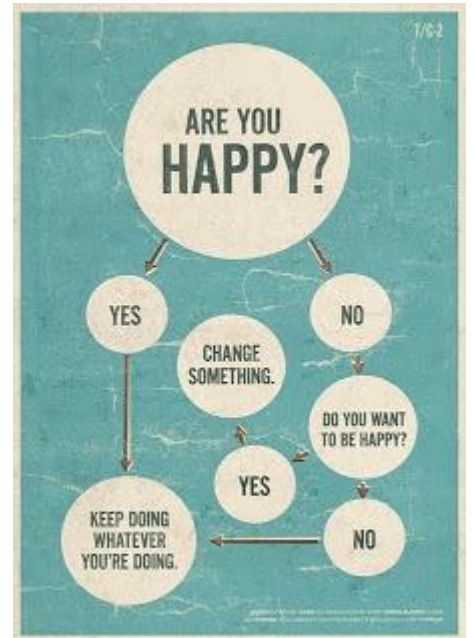
- Changes in mood – seek understanding from your friends and family. Give yourself permission to understand the mood changes and use relaxation techniques to work through them. Also exercise.
- Bladder and vaginal changes – check with your pharmacist or care-provider for vaginal lubricants. Never petroleum.
- Decrease in fertility – you can still become pregnant – no unprotected sex if you do not want a baby.
- Change in cholesterol level – work with care provider on best ways to control.
- Bone loss – weight bearing exercises, no smoking, discuss calcium with your doctor. Be sure to be an informed decision-maker. Do your homework and ask questions.



Fact Sheet

- **Menopause**
 - ANY bleeding after this time must be reported to the healthcare provider
 - Last period a woman experiences
 - Average age is 51
 - Determined to be “menopause” if a woman has not had a period for one year
 - ANY bleeding after menopause needs to be reported to care-provider

- **Ways to live more vibrantly in menopause**
 - Be present in your life
 - Be mindful of that presence
 - Practice gratitude
 - Exercise, exercise, exercise
 - Eat a well-balanced diet
 - Maintain/build relationships
 - Never quit learning
 - Try to quit detrimental habits...sugar, smoking, excessive drinking/drugs



Did You Know?

Half of American women
 between 50 and 65 said they
 are happiest and most fulfilled
 post-menopause.