

Types of menopause

Not everyone reaches menopause naturally. Some people experience menopause suddenly or earlier in life because of medical treatment, surgery, or ovarian conditions. These pathways can feel very different from the natural transition.

What you might notice:

You may feel caught off-guard by the speed of change or notice symptoms that feel stronger or more abrupt than expected. You may also feel that standard menopause information doesn't match your experience.

What may help:

Knowing which menopause pathway you are experiencing can help you understand your symptoms and get the right support. Different types of menopause may need different approaches to treatment, including HRT, mental health support, or specialist care.

Types of menopause

Surgical / induced menopause

- Happens when both ovaries are removed (oophorectomy)
- Can occur during planned surgery (e.g., hysterectomy)
- Hormone levels drop suddenly, often causing immediate, intense symptoms
- Usually requires tailored medical support, often including HRT unless not medically suitable

Chemical / medical menopause

- Caused by treatments that temporarily or permanently stop ovarian function



- Common in some cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy or medication to suppress hormones
- Symptoms may come on quickly and can be strong
- Menopause may be temporary or permanent depending on treatment

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI)

- When menopause occurs before age 40
- Ovaries stop working fully or release hormones unpredictably
- Can happen naturally, or because of genetics, autoimmune conditions, or unknown causes
- Often requires specialist support, and HRT is usually recommended until average menopause age unless not suitable

Seek support if your menopause:

- happened suddenly or earlier than expected
- feels linked to surgery, chemotherapy, or another treatment
- causes symptoms that affect daily life or mental wellbeing
- leaves you unsure what treatment options you should be offered

Questions you may want to ask a clinician:

- What type of menopause am I experiencing, surgical, chemical, POI, or natural?
- How does this change the care or treatment I should receive?
- Is HRT appropriate for my situation?
- Do I need referrals to specialists (e.g., oncology, endocrinology, gynaecology)?
- What long term health checks should I have?





Remember that you're not alone, and you don't have to wait until things feel overwhelming to talk. Reaching out can help you understand what your body is going through and make sure you have the support you need.

