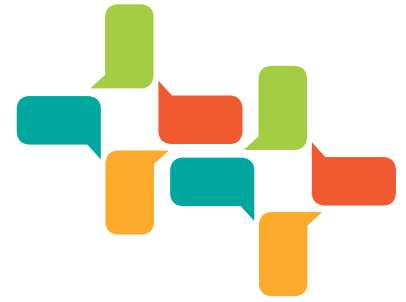


Menopause



Menopause is the time when a woman stops having her periods. It usually happens when a woman is between the ages of 45 and 55. Usually a woman's periods change before they stop completely. She might have her periods more often or less often than before. Her periods may last for more days and she may have more blood coming out of her vagina than before. This is called the 'menopause transition' or the 'change of life'.

Eventually a woman will not have her periods anymore. When a woman's periods stop because of menopause it means she cannot have babies anymore. This is because there are no more eggs coming out of the ovary into the uterus every month.

There are many changes for a woman during menopause

Many changes can happen to a woman's body and to her feelings during menopause. Some of these changes are:

- Women may feel hot and sweaty all of a sudden, especially at night. This is called a "hot flush"
- A woman's vagina may be drier and might not produce as much wet stuff (lubricant) when she is feeling sexy
- A woman's bladder may not be as strong and urine may leak out when she laughs, coughs or runs
- A woman's breasts may get smaller
- Some women may get more hair on their face
- Some women may get sore muscles and body aches
- Some women can feel tired but some women can feel like they have a lot of energy

There are also lots of feelings that a woman can have during menopause. Some of these feelings are:

- She can feel sad or worry a lot. She may feel happy one minute and then sad the next
- She may find it difficult to concentrate or remember things
- She may feel less sexy, or she may feel more sexy

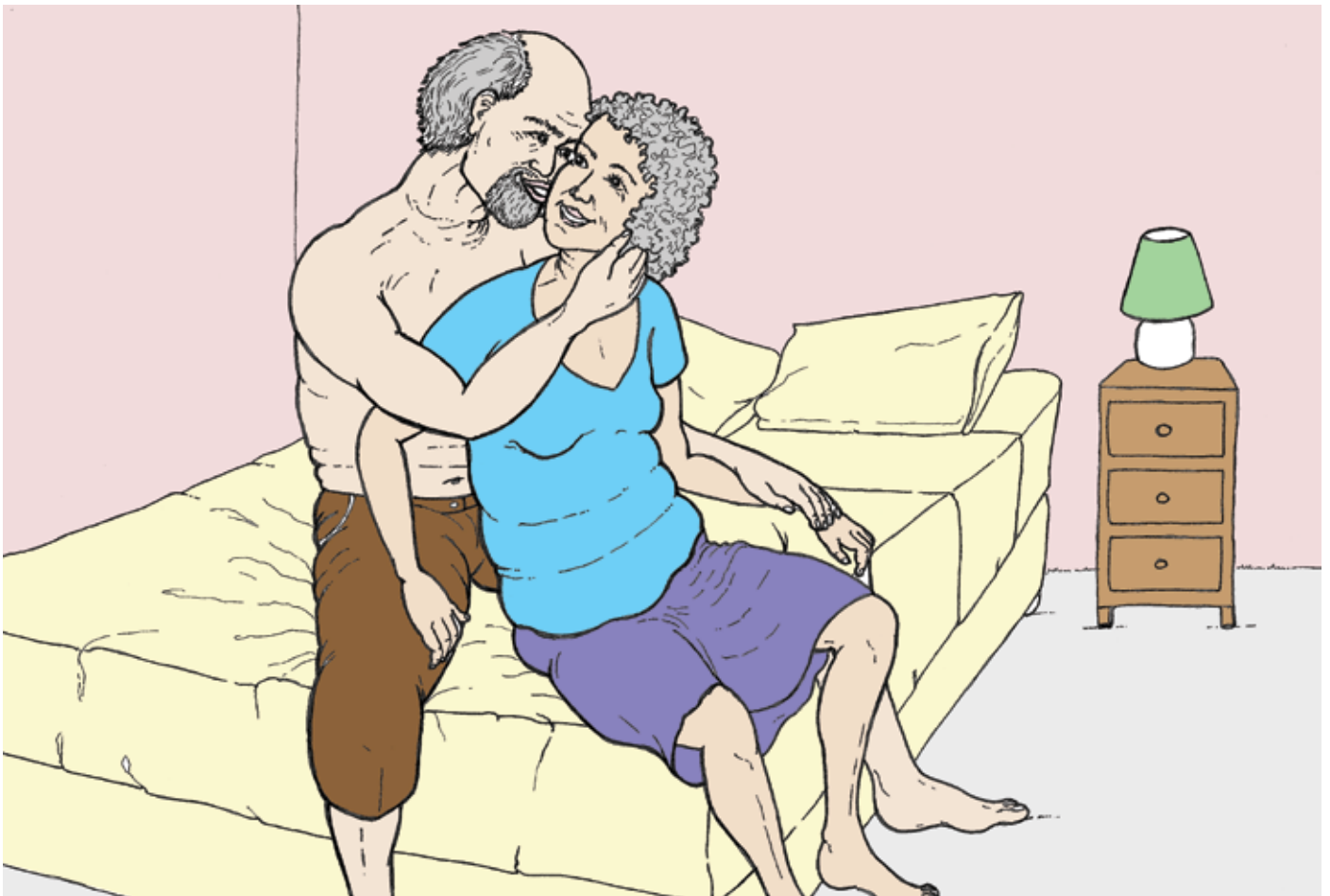
Menopause is different for each woman

Some women can feel all of these things and others may not feel any of these things. Menopause is different for each woman. If a woman is not happy with what is happening to her body or with how she is feeling during menopause, she should go to her doctor or to a Family Planning clinic.

If a woman is having lots of strong feelings, such as feeling sad or worrying a lot, it might be good for her to talk to someone that she trusts or go to a counsellor.

Menopause does not stop a woman from having sex

Just because a woman has reached menopause, it does not mean she stops having sex. Some women have the same amount of sex as they had before. Some have more sex and other women have less sex. It is up to the woman to decide if she wants to have sex and when she wants to have sex.





Staying healthy and happy during menopause

There are lots of things that a woman can do to be healthy and happy during menopause. Some things she can do are:

- Get some advice on foods that she can eat to keep her body and bones healthy and strong
- Do some exercise that she enjoys, as often as possible, like swimming, jogging or walking the dog
- Do things to help her stay relaxed. Some women like yoga, or meditation. Other women have baths and listen to their favourite music
- Keep doing things that she enjoys doing and help her to be happy

It may be good for a woman to make a list of all the things she can do to help her be healthy and happy during menopause.

Some women take medicines to help them during menopause. They can go to their doctor or a Family Planning clinic to find out what types of medicines may be useful.

Some women use lubricant (lube) to make their vagina wet and slippery when they are having sex.

Bleeding from the vagina after menopause

If a woman has gone through menopause and has any bleeding from her vagina, she should see her doctor straight away. Sometimes this is nothing to worry about but it could mean that something is wrong.



What you need to know:

- Menopause means that a woman has stopped having her periods and cannot have a baby anymore
- It is normal for a woman to stop having her periods when she is between 45 and 55 years old
- A woman should see her doctor if she has any bleeding from her vagina after menopause
- A woman can still have sex after she has reached menopause
- It is normal for a woman to experience lots of different changes in her body during menopause
- It is normal for a woman to have lots of different feelings like laughing, crying, feeling sad or angry during menopause
- A woman should keep doing things that she loves doing and make her happy while she is going through menopause
- A woman can go to her doctor or a Family Planning clinic to get help with some of the changes in her body and the changes in her feelings

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