

MENOPAUSE

Menopause is part of the normal life cycle of women. When a woman has passed through menopause, her monthly periods end and she no longer can get pregnant naturally. The average age for menopause is about 50 years old in the United States. Two hormones made in the ovaries, estrogen and progesterone, help to keep a woman's period going in a regular cycle.

Estrogens (estradiol, estrone, estriol) are female hormones. They are important for maintaining the health of the reproductive tissues, breasts, skin, and brain. Excessive estrogens can cause weight gain, fluid retention, migraines and over-stimulation of breasts, ovaries, which can lead to cancer. Insufficient estrogen levels can cause hot flashes, rapid skin aging, urinary problems, excessive bone loss and vaginal dryness.

Progesterone- can be thought of as hormonal balancer particularly of estrogens. Progesterone enhances the beneficial effect of estrogens while preventing the problems associated with estrogen excess.

Symptoms of menopause start when your estrogen levels change. Early in menopause, estrogen levels can rise and drop sharply, which means you may skip periods or have heavier flow than normal. The first changes most women notice are hot flashes, mood swings, and depression. Menopause can affect your body in many ways:

- Quick body temperature changes (hot flashes) and waking during the night.
- Moods that change frequently or a tendency toward sadness or anger. Some women become more confused or notice they are not able to concentrate as well as usual.
- Problem with dryness, itching, pain during sexual intercourse.
- Problem with sudden or frequent urinating.
- Problems with thinner skin, wrinkling, and blemishes as estrogen levels drop.
- A higher risk of weaker bones, osteoporosis, and bone breaks.
- Acceleration of risk factors associated with heart attacks and other heart problems because levels of fat in the body may rise.

Saliva Testing is the most reliable way to measure bio-available (free)

Hormone activity - hormones actually doing their work in the tissue of the breast, brain, uterus and skin, while most standard blood tests do not measure bio-available hormone levels. The advantages of saliva testing:

- Saliva collection is easy and can be done anywhere at your convenience.
- Saliva collection is at a much lower cost than blood testing.
- Saliva collection is painless (no needles). The sample can be collected at the optimal time of day.
- Samples can be stored at room temperature without loss of activity.
- Hormones in saliva are exceptionally stable, allowing wide latitude in collection and shipment.

- Saliva more accurately reflects the tissue uptake of hormones delivered through the skin in creams, gels, or patches.