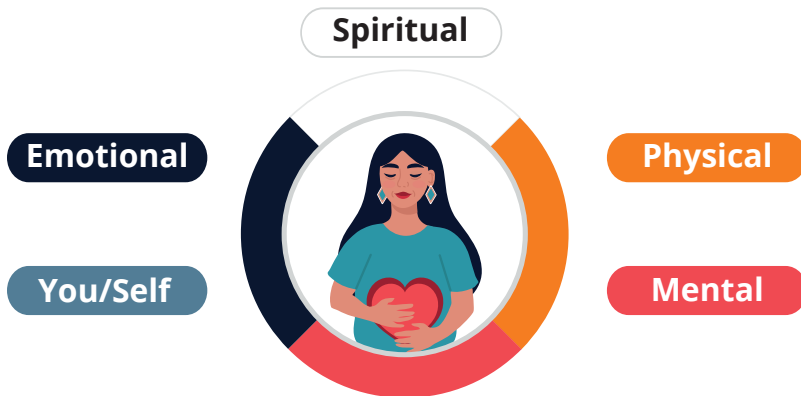


Balancing Your Health and Wellness During Menopause

Menopause is part of life

Menopause is a natural phase of life that occurs when your ovaries stop producing eggs, usually between 40-55 years of age. This leads to changes in your sex hormone levels and the permanent end of your periods (which are sometimes referred to as your moon time). You have reached menopause once you have not had a period for one full year.



While typically discussed in relation to cisgender women (whose sex assignment at birth aligns with their gender identity), menopause may also be experienced by Two-Spirit, Indigiqueer, trans, and nonbinary people depending on their anatomy and use (or non-use) of gender-affirming hormones.

Menopause can affect all areas of your health (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual), but you can still live well and achieve balance during this stage of your life. Some people even find this phase liberating and consider it something to celebrate.

Spiritual

Menopause is a normal phase in the journey of your life. As you navigate the changes, it can be helpful to ground yourself by connecting or reconnecting with your culture, community and/or the Creator. You can pull strength and support from all of these.

Emotional

The hormonal changes that happen during menopause can bring a mix of emotions. Some people report feeling disconnected from themselves, while others experience few symptoms. Still others embrace this transition in their life phase. If you need additional support, connecting with family and friends can be a healthy outlet.

Mental

Hormonal changes in your body during menopause can impact your mental health. If you notice concerning shifts in your mood, speak with a health care provider. You could also try connecting with friends, family, and community for support; speaking with an Elder or Traditional Healer; using traditional medicines; or connecting with the land.

Physical

During menopause, the physical changes happening throughout your body—including your heart, brain, skin, and reproductive organs—can sometimes be uncomfortable. Common symptoms include hot flashes, night sweats, irregular sleep patterns, brain fog, vaginal/genital dryness, irritability, and irregular bleeding. You can speak with a health care provider if you are having difficulty managing these or other symptoms.

You/Self

Your needs are important. Menopause can have a significant impact on your daily life, and symptoms may persist for years. If you are struggling, health care providers can help.

As well, First Nations traditional lifestyles including daily cultural practices like gathering and preparing food, dancing and drumming, keep you active, connected, and social as you age. This supports physical health as well as mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Balancing Your Health and Wellness During Menopause

Trouble falling or staying asleep

Night sweats

Brain fog

Common menopause symptoms

Irregular bleeding

Vaginal/genital dryness

Hot flashes

Irritability

You can find support and potential treatment options by talking to your health care provider about your symptoms. If you do not have a health care provider, you can speak with a doctor through the [FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day Program](#).

Did you know?

The transition to menopause can begin with irregular menstrual cycles. This commonly happens between the ages of 40 and 55.

Menopause in First Nation Communities

In some First Nations cultures, there is no word for “menopause”; it is simply referred to as “that time when periods stopped.”

Despite being a common experience, information about menopause is limited, leaving many people unsure of how to manage symptoms and maintain wellness.

Traditionally, First Nations knowledge about menopause was passed down by mothers, aunties, and Elders. While some people still learn this way, others grew up in families where sexual and reproductive health were not discussed. Colonization and the oppression of First Nations peoples' comfort with sexual and reproductive matters has contributed to the discomfort and silence around these subjects.



Did you know?

Eating healthy foods, moving your body, being mentally well, reducing your alcohol intake, and reducing or stopping commercial tobacco can help you live well in menopause.