

Side Effects - **Late effects**

MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

Some cancer treatments (and the medicines tamoxifen and raloxifene) can cause changes in women's bodies and reduce the number of hormones they make. These changes can cause periods to stop, and other symptoms of menopause. Over time, some women start getting their periods again (this is more likely for younger women), but others will not. Give yourself permission to mourn the loss of your fertility.

Some common signs of menopause are:

- **Irregular periods.** They may become less regular. They could be lighter. Some women have short times of heavy bleeding. Sometimes, they stop suddenly.
- **Problems with your vagina or bladder.** Tissues in these areas become drier and thinner. You may be more likely to get vaginal infections. As you get older, you may also have problems holding your urine or urinary tract problems.
- **Lack of interest in sex.** These changes may make it hard for you to become sexually aroused.
- **Fatigue and sleep problems.** You may feel tired or have trouble getting to sleep.
- **Memory and other problems, such as depression, mood swings and irritability.** There may be a connection between changes in your hormone levels and your emotions. Some of these, especially memory problems, may be related to growing older.
- **Other changes in your body.** You may notice your waist getting bigger, less muscle and more fat around your body or thinning and loss of elasticity of your skin.
- **Hot flashes.** Hot flashes are often worse at night and can affect sleep or cause mood changes.

See a gynecologist every year and ask about:

- Medicines, supplements or other approaches that can help you manage menopause symptoms
- Tests you should have (such as a bone density test to see if you are at risk for osteoporosis)
- Ways to reduce your chance of getting:
 - a. **Osteoporosis.** Menopause can put you at risk for losing bone tissue, which can weaken your bones and make them easier to break.
 - b. **Heart disease.** Menopause can also lead to higher cholesterol, which can increase your risk of diseases that affect your heart and blood vessels.

Here are some tips to help deal with hot flashes:

- **Quit smoking.**
- **Drink plenty of water.**
- **Try to maintain a healthy weight through exercise and diet.**
- **If you are having hot flashes,** try to write down when they happen to help you find out what to avoid.
 - a. Sleep in a cool room to avoid being awakened by hot flashes.
 - b. Dress in layers that you can take off if you get warm.
 - c. Use cotton sheets and wear clothing that lets your skin breathe.
 - d. Try having a cold drink or turning on a fan at the beginning of a hot flash.
 - e. Try not to eat a lot of spicy foods.
 - f. Limit the alcohol and caffeine you drink.