Understanding perimenopause

A patient guide to symptoms and your next visit

Perimenopause is the transition before menopause. Hormone production becomes less predictable, and symptoms may begin while you still have periods. Menopause is reached after 12 months without a period when there is no other explanation.

Changes to discuss

Change	What you may notice
Period patterns	Cycles becoming shorter, longer, or less predictable; changes in flow
Hot flashes and night sweats	Sudden warmth, flushing, or sweating, including during sleep
Sleep	Difficulty falling asleep, repeated awakenings, or feeling unrefreshed
Mood	Irritability, anxiety, low mood, or feeling less like yourself
Concentration	Trouble focusing, remembering words, or keeping track of tasks
Vaginal and urinary comfort	Dryness, irritation, discomfort during sex, or urinary urgency
Sexual desire	A change in interest in sex, sometimes alongside discomfort or fatigue
Muscles and joints	New or increased aches and stiffness

Symptoms do not establish a diagnosis

Thyroid problems, anemia, medication effects, sleep disorders, depression, and pregnancy can overlap with some symptoms. Routine hormone testing is generally unnecessary in otherwise healthy women aged 45 or older with typical symptoms and cycle changes. Your clinician can decide whether other testing is needed.

Seek care for bleeding changes

Report unusually heavy or prolonged periods, bleeding between periods, or bleeding after sex. Any bleeding after 12 months without periods needs evaluation. Seek emergency care for heavy bleeding with faintness, chest pain, or shortness of breath.

Preparing for your visit

Bring your period history, medications and supplements, contraception details, relevant medical history, and previous hormone treatments.

My three most bothersome symptoms

1. _____

How it affects my day: _____

2. _____

How it affects my day: _____

3. _____

How it affects my day: _____

Recent period changes or unexpected bleeding

_____

Questions and goals for my visit

_____

_____

Treatment can be tailored to you

Options may include hormone therapy, nonhormonal medicines, and treatments for vaginal dryness or discomfort. Sleep and mood concerns may need targeted care. Benefits and risks depend on your health history. Menopausal hormone therapy is not birth control; pregnancy remains possible during perimenopause.

Meet Patricia Rosen

At Santa Fe Mobile MD, Patricia Rosen, CNM, CFNP, is a women's health expert and Menopause Society Certified Practitioner who provides care for most of our patients experiencing perimenopause and menopause. She takes an individualized approach, considering your symptoms, medical history, and goals when discussing treatment options.

Request a visit: santafemobilemd.com/schedule/

References and further reading

Based on guidance from The Menopause Society, ACOG, NICE, the Office on Women's Health, and the European Society of Endocrinology. Full references accompany the blog article.

menopause.org: Perimenopause | NICE menopause guidance

General patient education; individual evaluation and treatment may differ.