

## PERIMENOPAUSE

### 1) What is perimenopause?

- Perimenopause means around menopause.
- Perimenopause has been called the "change of life" or "transition period."
- It typically refers to the time approaching menopause during which a woman starts to develop various symptoms due to declining oestrogen levels.

### 2) What is the difference between perimenopause and menopause?

Menopause is the time that marks the end of menstrual cycles. Menopause is said to have been established when a woman experiences 12 consecutive months of amenorrhea, that is; she misses her periods for 12 consecutive months. Menopause officially marks the end of capacity of reproduction in a woman.

Perimenopause, on the other hand, means "around menopause." It is also known as the menopause transitional phase. This phase may consist of occasional skipped cycles or menstrual irregularities and is called so because it happens before menopause.

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### 3) When does perimenopausal phase start?

On an average, women experience perimenopausal symptoms for about four years before attaining menopause. However, for some, this period may be much shorter or much longer. Many women start to experience perimenopausal symptoms around the age of 47.

### 4) How long does perimenopausal phase last?

Most women will have these kinds of symptoms for about four years before their periods come to end. Some women may experience symptoms even over a duration of 7-8 years before menopause.

### Symptoms of Perimenopause-

No two women may experience perimenopause in the same way. A woman may experience varied symptoms such as:

- Delayed menses.
- Changing bleeding pattern.
- Depressed mood.
- Increased Anxiety.
- Poor sleep.
- Hot Flashes.
- Vaginal Dryness.
- Dyspareunia.
- Symptoms related to urination such as urgency, burning, frequent urination.
- Breast tenderness.
- Lack of concentration/ Forgetfulness.
- Thinning of hair and skin.
- Hair greying.
- Weight gain.
- Joint pain.
- Muscle aches.
- Headaches.
- Fertility issues in women who are trying to conceive.
- Changes like osteoporosis, changes in lipid profile & other.

The changes that occur in body metabolism during perimenopausal phase can significantly affect the quality of life of a woman even before menopause is established.

**-Dr. Deepali Pawar**

### Causes-

Perimenopause is a natural phase. As a woman ages, her ovaries become depleted of eggs, also there are alterations in the quantity and frequency of ovarian hormone production, which can lead to numerous physical manifestations causing perimenopausal phase.

### Risk factors:

Perimenopause is a normal phase in life. But It may occur earlier in some women than in others. Although not always conclusive, some evidence suggests that certain factors may make it more likely to make the onset of perimenopausal phase at an earlier age.

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- **Smoking.** The onset of menopause occurs 1 to 2 years earlier in women who smoke than in women who don't smoke.
- **Family history.** Women with a family history of early menopause may experience early menopause themselves.
- **Cancer treatment.** Treatment for cancer with chemotherapy or pelvic radiation therapy has been linked to early menopause.
- **Hysterectomy.** A hysterectomy that removes uterus, but not ovaries, usually doesn't cause menopause. Although such women no longer have periods, but ovaries still produce oestrogen. But such surgery may cause menopause to occur earlier than average. Also, if one ovary is removed, the remaining ovary might stop working sooner than expected.

**-Dr. Rutuja Pandav**

## **Are there treatments that can ease the phase of perimenopause?**

Perimenopausal phase is a very important phase in woman's life. It is extremely important to address the symptoms and changes occurring in this phase to maintain a good quality of life not only at a personal level, social level, but at the level of family, and work as well.

We at "DYUMNA WOMEN'S CLINIC" are very happy to provide assistance to go through this phase with comfort and ease.

Our treatment protocol for PERIMENOPAUSAL PHASE includes various steps

1. Medicinal treatments.
2. Counselling.
3. Specialised therapies from Ayurved.
4. Pranayam and Yoga guidance.
5. Dietary modifications.
6. Lifestyle modifications.
7. Investigations as and when required.

**1.Medicinal treatment-** Personalised medicines are prescribed as per each individual considering various factors such as specific symptoms, lifestyle, metabolism.

Rasayanas are super specialised, highly potent medicines in Ayurved which act at minute levels in the body and mind creating harmony in the metabolism of the individual. This in turn helps to alleviate symptoms and maintain physiological balance in view of helping to avoid possible complications after menopause.

**2.Counselling-** At Dyumna women's clinic our objective is to create a healthy mind in a healthy body in mid age so that not only PERIMENOPAUSAL PHASE, but menopause as well can be a smooth process in a women's life. Most of the time symptoms are ignored or women are not aware that they should seek help. At Dyumna women's clinic we do our best to educate, counsel and treat. It is a matter of fact that even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century women, though extremely capable, do not take enough care of themselves primarily as they have to handle multiple fronts simultaneously and with equal efficiency. Sometimes they can go through

“SUPER WOMEN SYNDROME” along with perimenopausal phase.

**3. Specialised therapies from Ayurved-**These prove to be of great benefit in this phase and include:

**a) Sarvang abhyanga-** Abhyanga, that is massage with medicated oils is a very effective treatment which helps to control the rate of degeneration and relieve stress at physical and mental levels which are two of the prime changes occurring during perimenopause. It has great efficacy in relieving symptoms such as fatigue, body ache, mood swings and more.

**b) Basti-** Basti is a scientific procedure carried out in proper hygienic conditions in which medicines are instilled via anal route. Basti is a procedure which enhances the quality of life and is highly effective in correcting body metabolism. When used to treat perimenopausal symptoms, it can help to control degenerative rate, vaginal dryness, skin dryness, urinary symptoms, joint/ muscle aches.

- 1) Vaginal infections.
- 2) Cervical infections
- 3) White discharge.
- 4) Itching.

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**C) Yoni Dhawan-** Yoni Dhawan is a special treatment wherein vaginal canal is rinsed with medicated decoction under hygienic conditions. Personalised medicated decoctions are selected based on assessment by a physician. This procedure helps to alleviate conditions and symptoms such as- 1) Vaginal infections.2) Cervical infections.3) White discharge. 4) Itching.

**d) Yoni Pichu-** It is a special treatment modality where in a sterile tampon soaked in medicated oil or ghee is placed in the vagina for a specific period of time. This is extremely useful in different aspects such as- dyspareunia (painful coitus), vaginal dryness, urinary incontinence, uterine prolapse, white discharge, recurrent urine infections.

**e) Shiropichu-** It is a treatment in which surgical gauze soaked in medicated oil is placed on head for 4-5 hours /overnight. It's efficacy is observed in common symptoms of perimenopausal phase such as- stress, sleep disorder, poor memory, irritability, mood swings, anxiety.

**f)Nasya-** Nasya is instillation of medicines through nasal route. It helps to maintain balanced secretion of hormones. It reduces stress level as well.

## 4.Pranayam and Yoga guidance-

**Pranayam and meditation** - Mental pressure and stress have become inherent factors of current lifestyle. These in turn can aggravate perimenopausal symptoms such as mood swings and depression. Research has proven pranayam and meditation to have major positive effects in correcting metabolism to a great extent at physical as well as mental levels.Regular practice of pranayam & meditation can go a long way with – hot flashes, stress, lack of energy, hormonal imbalance, cardiovascular problems,etc.

**Yoga-** Some basic yoga practices can help one to deal with perimenopausal symptoms with ease and comfort. These practices elevate mood, fill life with positivity and make the body strong enough to bear with the changes it is going through.

**5.Diet** - It is most important aspect in terms of living a healthy life. Quality along with quantity is important. What

and when to eat are other things to be kept in mind. Meals should be taken at proper timings. Consuming organic food as far as possible is advisable. Heavy to digest food such as meat, cheese, yogurt and frozen desserts like ice cream, especially at night should be avoided. Stale food should not be consumed.

## 6.Lifestyle modifications-

**Sleep-** Sleep hygiene should be improved by avoiding screens and doing relaxing activities before bed. Naps during daytime should be avoided. Ideally, one must go to bed before 10.30pm. The average adult needs 7-8 hours of sleep. Alcohol, smoking and caffeine are advisable to be avoided or at least limited.

Meditation or other stress management techniques are advisable.

**Natural urges-** Avoiding suppression of natural urges like hunger, thirst, urination, defaecation etc. is extremely important to maintain harmony of mind and body metabolism.

**7.Investigations as and when required-**Certain investigations like blood sugar levels and lipid profile are advised to keep a check on the possible changes that can occur in the perimenopausal phase.

**Be aware, Be smart-** Though symptoms related to perimenopause that each woman experiences differ, it is extremely important to be aware of them and seek help for the same. Seeking help and taking proper measures can improve the quality of life not only for the particular woman, but her family as well because a woman certainly is the core of her family. Also some issues such as prolonged bleeding or heavy bleeding, changing bleeding pattern, white discharge or pain can be symptoms of serious ailments such as cancer. Hence, the importance of awareness.

**-Dr. Vineeta Bendale**