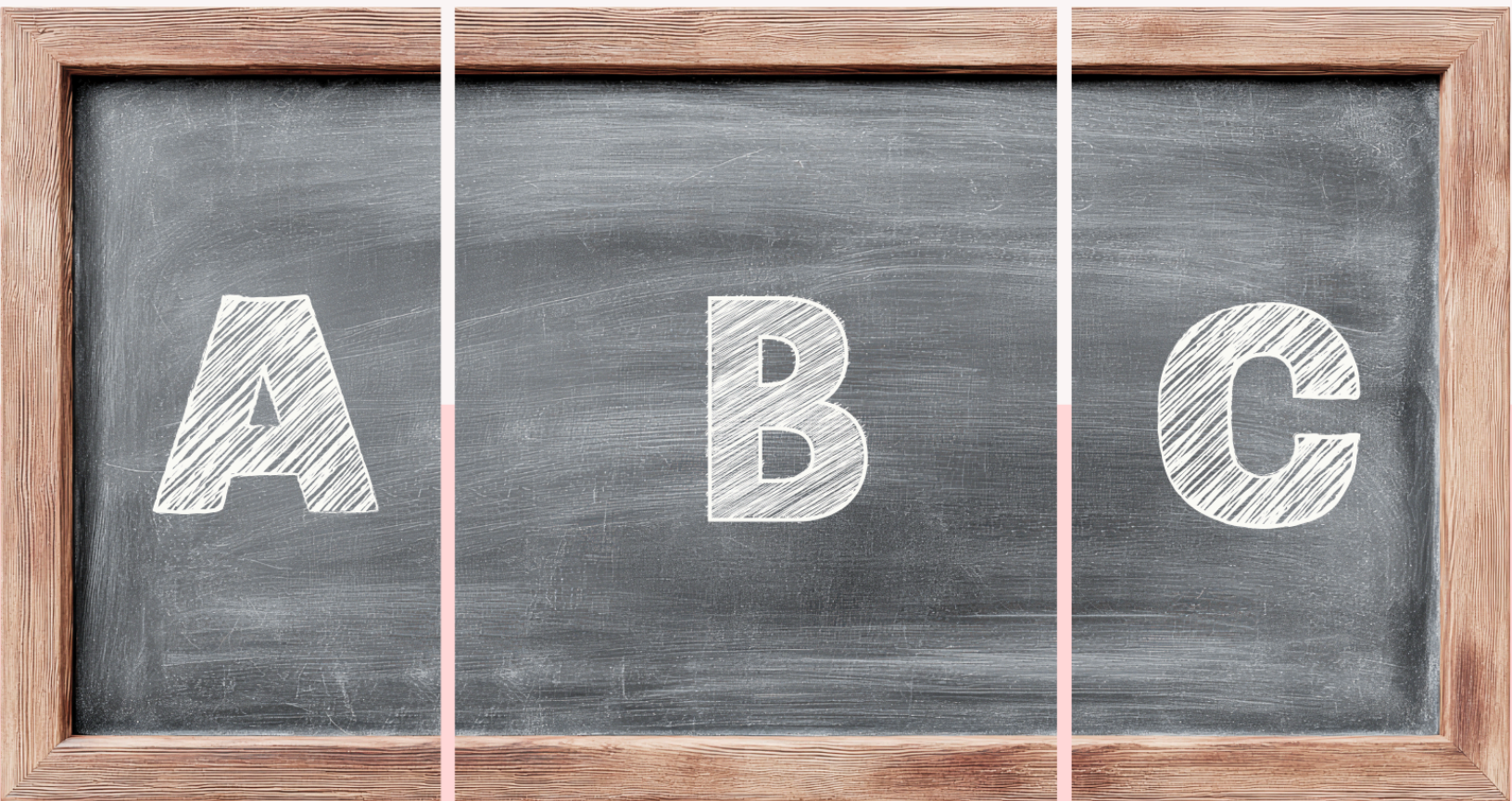


THE

A-B-Cs of MENOPAUSE



A GUIDE TO SIMPLIFYING THE CLINICAL
LANGUAGE OF MENOPAUSE

OKWOMENSHEALTHCOLLECTIVE.COM

WELCOME

The ABCs of Menopause was created to make menopause education more clear, approachable, and empowering—because understanding the changes happening in your body shouldn't feel confusing, overwhelming, or out of reach.

This resource is designed to help women better understand common menopause terms, symptoms, treatments, and health conversations so they can feel more informed and confident navigating this stage of life. We believe better health conversations start with accessible information, practical education, and the confidence to ask questions, recognize patterns, and advocate for yourself.

Whether you are in perimenopause, menopause, or postmenopause, our goal is to help you feel more supported, more knowledgeable, and less alone in the process.

The ABCs of Menopause is an educational wellness resource intended to support awareness, reflection, and more productive conversations with your healthcare team. *It is not intended to diagnose, treat, or replace personalized medical advice. For questions about your individual health, symptoms, or treatment options, please consult a licensed healthcare professional.*

You deserve clear information, thoughtful support, and a place where your questions belong.

We're so glad you're here.

Oklahoma Women's Health Collective

menopause basics

key terms every woman should know

Perimenopause and menopause can feel confusing and overwhelming on their own — especially when you're also trying to understand medical terminology, interpret what you're reading online, or make sense of conversations with your healthcare provider.

This resource was created to help simplify some of the most common terms, symptoms, treatments, and concepts associated with this stage of life so you can feel more informed, confident, and supported.

Medical Term	In Simple Terms
Early Menopause	Menopause that occurs between 40 and 45 years old (earlier than the expected age range).
Late Menopause	Menopause that occurs later within the expected age range.
Medically Induced Menopause (MIM)	When medical treatments stop the ovaries from producing hormones, causing menopause to happen earlier and often more suddenly than natural menopause.
Menopause	Permanent end of menstrual periods after 12 consecutive months without bleeding.
Perimenopause	Transition years leading up to menopause that occurs in the late 30s to mid-40s, with the average around 45 years
Postmenopause	Time after menopause (the final menstrual period).
Primary Ovarian Insufficiency (POI)	When ovaries stop functioning normally before age 40. Also known as premature menopause.
Surgical Menopause	Menopause caused by ovary removal.

common symptoms + changes

understanding experiences during the menopause transition

Medical Term	In Simple Terms
Anxiety	Feelings of excessive worry, nervousness, or fear that can affect thoughts, emotions, and physical health.
Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV)	A common cause of dizziness that can worsen around menopause.
Cognitive function	Memory, attention, problem-solving, language, and reasoning.
Depression	Persistent sadness affecting sleep, appetite, and daily functioning.
Dyspareunia	Pain during sexual intercourse.
Formication	Sensation of insects crawling on skin.
Genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM)	Vaginal, vulvar, and urinary changes that happen when estrogen declines — including dryness, irritation, pain with sex, and urinary symptoms.
Hot flash	Sudden warmth, flushing, sweating, and chills.
Hypoactive sexual desire disorder	Condition where a person has a persistent lack of sexual desire that causes personal distress or relationship difficulty.
Insomnia	Difficulty sleeping.
Insulin resistance (IR)	Declining estrogen changes how the body handles blood sugar. As levels fall, cells don't respond to insulin as well, so the body produces more of it.
Night sweats	Hot flashes during sleep.
Osteopenia	Early bone loss (not yet osteoporosis)
Osteoporosis	Bones become weak, making them more likely to break.
Sarcopenia	Loss of muscle mass and strength with age and hormone changes.
Vaginal atrophy	Thinning and dryness of vaginal tissues that can cause dryness, burning, irritation, urinary symptoms, and pain with intimacy.
Vasomotor Symptoms	Symptoms caused by changes in how the body controls temperature, most commonly hot flashes and night sweats.

Understanding care options

Understanding experiences during the menopause transition

Medical Term	In Simple Terms
Aromatase inhibitors (AI)	Prescription medications that lower estrogen levels in the body by blocking an enzyme (aromatase) that makes estrogen.
Calcium (Ca)	A mineral essential for bones, muscles, nerves, and heart function.
Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)	Healing approaches which are not typically part of conventional medicine.
Conjugated estrogens (CE)	A mixture of estrogens used to treat menopause symptoms.
Custom-compounded hormones	Hormones mixed into custom formulations and may come as creams, gels, capsules, or lozenges; not government regulated.
Esterified estrogens	Synthetic oral estrogen products.
Estrogen patch	Skin patch delivering estrogen systemically.
Estrogen plus progestogen therapy (EPT)	Combination hormone therapy to protect the uterus.
Estrogen therapy (ET)	Estrogen medications used in the treatment of menopause symptoms.
Gabapentin	Nonhormonal drug sometimes used for hot flashes.
Hormone therapy (HT)	Prescription hormones used for menopause symptoms.
Isoflavones	Plant-based weak estrogen compounds.
Local therapy	Treatment given only at the site of the concern.
Menopause Society Certified Practitioner	Healthcare professional who has completed specialized training and passed an exam through The Menopause Society to demonstrate expertise in menopause and midlife women's health.
Selective estrogen-receptor modulator (SERM)	A medication that acts like estrogen in some parts of the body and blocks estrogen in others.
Systemic therapy	Treatment that circulates through the body.
Transdermal estrogen	Estrogen that is absorbed through the skin.
Vaginal estrogen	Estrogen applied directly to vagina.
Weight-bearing exercise	Exercise that strengthens bones.
Women's Health Initiative (WHI)	A major long-term study that looked at how treatments like hormone therapy impact women's health as they age.

testing + screening

supporting midlife health through screening + prevention

Medical Term	In Simple Terms
Antimüllerian hormone (AMH)	A hormone test that helps estimate ovarian reserve, or how many eggs remain in the ovaries.
Bone mineral density (BMD)	Measurement of bone strength and fracture risk.
Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA)	Standard test to measure bone density.
Estradiol testing	A blood test that measures estrogen levels to help evaluate hormone changes related to perimenopause and menopause.
Follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH)	A hormone test that measures FSH levels, which often rise as the ovaries produce less estrogen during perimenopause and menopause.
FRAX	Tool that estimates 10-year fracture risk.
Lipid panel / cholesterol testing	A blood test that measures cholesterol and fat levels to assess heart health risk, which can increase after menopause.
Luteinizing hormone (LH)	A hormone that triggers ovulation. LH testing measures hormone levels, which can change as ovarian hormone production declines during perimenopause and menopause.
Mammogram	Breast x-ray.
Pap test / Pap smear	A screening test that checks cells from the cervix to look for abnormal changes that could lead to cervical cancer.
Sex Hormone Binding Globulin (SHBG)	A blood test that measures a protein that binds to sex hormones, helping determine how much estrogen and testosterone are available for the body to use.
Testosterone testing	A blood test that measures testosterone levels, which can affect energy, mood, muscle strength, and sexual health during menopause.
Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone (TSH)	A hormone that helps control metabolism, energy, and body temperature. TSH testing measures thyroid function, since thyroid symptoms can mimic menopause symptoms.
Vitamin D testing	A blood test that measures vitamin D levels, which are important for bone strength and overall health during and after menopause.

abbreviation cheat sheet

Abbreviation	Meaning
AI	Aromatase inhibitors
AMH	Antimüllerian hormone
BMD	Bone mineral density
BMI	Body mass index
CAM	Complementary and alternative medicine
CE	Conjugated estrogens
DXA	Dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry
ET	Estrogen therapy
EPT	Estrogen plus progestogen therapy
FRAX	Fracture Risk Assessment Tool
FSH	Follicle-stimulating hormone
GSM	Genitourinary syndrome of menopause
HDL-C	High-density lipoprotein cholesterol
HT	Hormone therapy
HTN	Hypertension
IR	Insulin resistance
LH	Luteinizing hormone
LDL-C	Low-density lipoprotein cholesterol
MIM	Medically induced menopause
POI	Primary Ovarian Insufficiency
SERM	Selective estrogen-receptor modulator
SHBG	Sex Hormone Binding Globulin
TSH	Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone
UTI	Urinary tract infection
VMS	Vasomotor symptoms
WHI	Women's Health Initiative

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Created by women, for women.

Stay connected to trusted health education, meaningful events, local provider resources, and thoughtfully curated content designed to support you at every stage.



You Belong Here.