

# Health Tips

from New London Hospital

## The Basics of Menopause



*Eileen Kirk, MD*

**Menopause is a normal condition that all women experience as they age.** The term “menopause” is commonly used to describe any of the changes a woman experiences either just before or after she stops menstruating, marking the end of her reproductive period.

**Menopause, when it occurs after the age of 40,** is considered “natural” and is a normal part of aging. Some women can experience menopause early, either as a result of a surgical intervention or damage to the ovaries.

Most women going through menopause will experience hot flashes, a sudden feeling of warmth that spreads over the upper body. Other common symptoms include: irregular or skipped periods, insomnia, mood swings, fatigue, depression, irritability, headaches, or bladder control problems.

**Simple tests can accurately determine a woman’s stage of menopause.** One of these is a blood test for FSH (Follicle Stimulating Hormone). FSH dramatically rises as ovaries begin to cease hormone production. Menopause is a good time for women to receive a comprehensive examination to evaluate their health and to receive suggestions to improve overall wellness.

Women should contact their primary provider if they have questions about menopause.

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