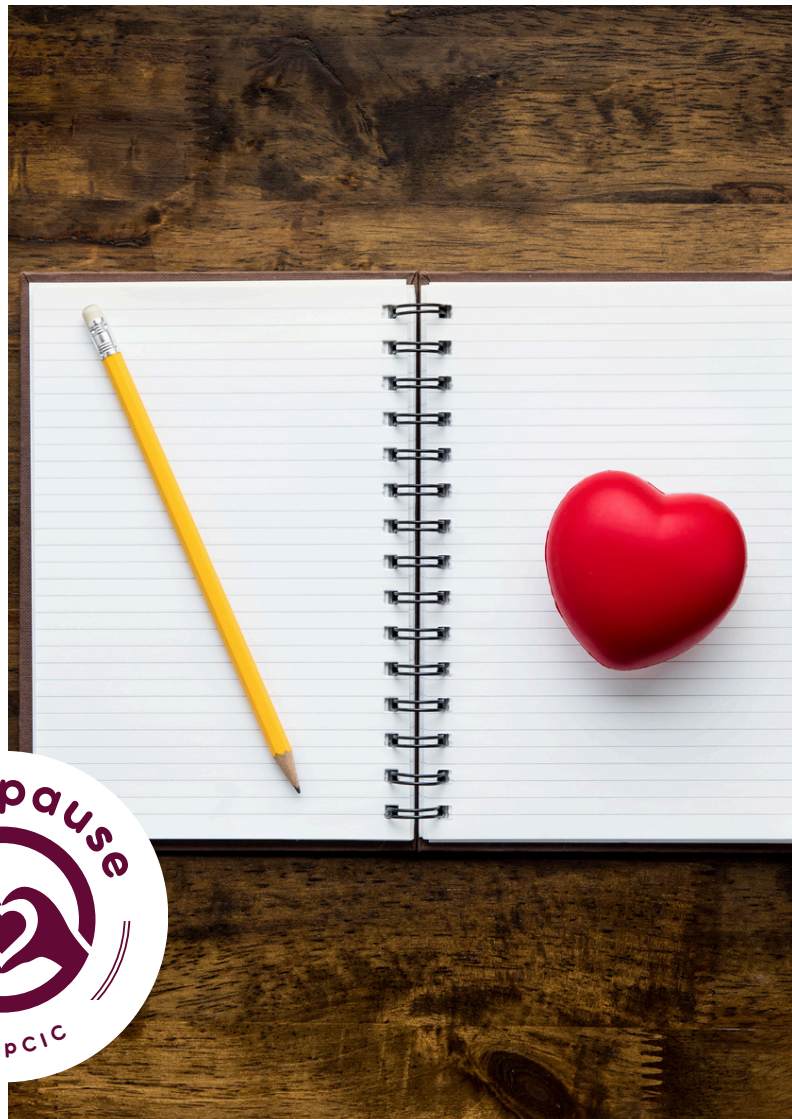


THE

Menstrual *Health*

TIMELINE

*A journey from
periods to postmenopause*





A MENOPAUSE EVOLUTION

“ the change in the way we educate people about menstrual health across lifespan and generations

Made possible thanks to



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🌐 www.menopausegroup.org

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MENSTRUAL MATHS

From birth to death sex hormone levels change in patterns. There are monthly patterns, called the menstrual cycle, and lifetime patterns referred to as reproductive aging. Both are driven by ovarian activity.

See below the 'typical' time frames (based on living from 0 to 100!)



Puberty is when periods usually start aged ~11

The ovaries are programmed to experience 400-450 cycles over a total of ~40 years. The early cycles are intermittent but settle into a 'regular' pattern until the late 30s

Premenopause

When ovarian activity is changing after the late 30s but no obvious signs and indicators of the change can be felt.

Perimenopause (aka menopause transition)

The time before menopause day represents the last ~7-10 years of ovarian activity. The ovarian cycles often become intermittent. Signs and indicators are likely to be experienced.

Periods stop on Menopause Day

$11 + 40 = 51$ - the average age of menopause

Postmenopause is the day after Menopause Day

Menopause day + $\infty = 51 + \infty$

Postmenopause
The rest of your life

Premenstruation
Age 0 - 10

Menstruation
Age 10-37

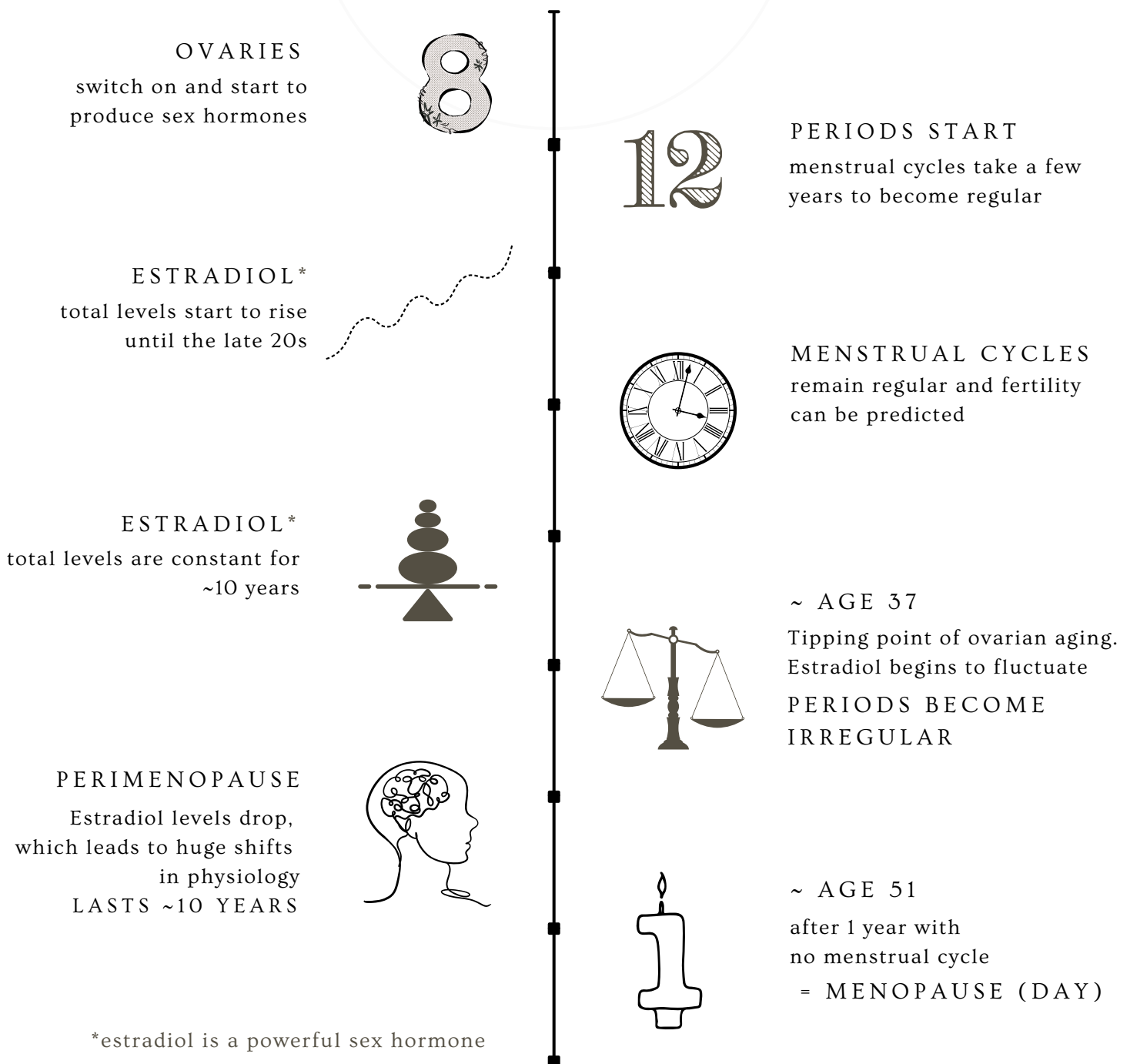
Premenopause
Age 37 -41

Menopause Day
Age 51

Perimenopause
Age 41-51

THE MENSTRUAL HEALTH TIMELINE

Another way to view the hormone shifts is as a timeline of hormonal events that are forecast the moment chromosomes unite.



Postmenopause
Estradiol levels are low and remain this way

MENSTRUATION AWARENESS

We cannot stress the importance of being fully aware of your menstruation. Length of cycle and blood flow are, in fact, vital signs of health, long before perimenopause. If you can think back to when your periods were regular then make a note of mood, flow, and duration that you typically experienced. The more pieces of your hormone jigsaw we have, the easier it will be to adapt the plan. Knowing your 'normal' is a great starting point in any conversation around menopause.

Frequency, duration of bleed, and flow variation

Regularity of periods is most often a key feature of menopause transition, so understanding the time stamps of when and how long can be a good indicator of where you are on the journey. The periods rarely become softer, gradually more infrequent, and then stop. It's more a case of getting worse before better. However, if the flow is heavy and 'flooding' in a very unpredictable way you may want to consider seeking medical advice. By recording it you know, it's not guesswork. Perimenopause can overlap with other additional challenges, so if you have as much data on yourself as possible, rather than 'think so' or 'maybe' the concerns can be addressed more effectively.

How do you feel before and after bleeding?

If you are symptom tracking or using the food & mood diary you will probably be able to join the dots between the times before and after periods. For example, do you notice night sweats coincide with the time prior to bleed? Does your insomnia ease off at certain times? Are you more or less energetic? There could be a very subtle difference as to when you experience fatigue or digestive issues for example.

How does this help?

Nutritional variations and changing the way you move at certain times of the cycle can be very beneficial to synchronise with the hormone ebb & flow. When weight gain is such a challenge at this time, knowing that sometimes you just simply need to carb-up to support your hormones and at times you will find fat burn, can go a long way toward your meno-mindset and shape-shifting evolution.

During the bleed - limit your intake of fatty and salty foods, and drink herbal tea like chamomile to soothe cramps. Depending on how heavy your flow is, you may also benefit from increasing your iron intake around this time.

Follicular phase - after bleeding estradiol starts to rise again and energy increases. Your body is actually more receptive to activities like strength training, so it's a great time to focus on fitness.

The Ovulation phase - is when your estradiol levels reach their peak and start to balance out again when your body releases an egg. You will want to eat foods that support your liver, as these offer health benefits that can protect against environmental toxins known to impact hormones. Anti-inflammatory foods such as whole fruits, vegetables, and almonds will do the trick.

Next the luteal phase - is the time before your period when you will benefit from eating healthily and steering clear of foods that can trigger period cramps, so this is the best time to avoid caffeine, alcohol, added salt, and carbonated drinks.

MENSTRUAL CYCLE NUTRITION

Food can have a really powerful impact on our menstrual cycles; supporting ovulation, sex hormone production and menstrual health, by providing nutrients and calming inflammation. Foods do not directly influence sex hormone levels involved in menstrual health, but they can help the body function better, which ultimately has a whole-person affect.

1

WEEK ONE



2

WEEK TWO



OESTROGEN IS LOW AND NOT YET RISING. PROGESTERONE IS ABSENT. ENERGY COULD BE LOW. APPETITE LOW. EMOTIONS RANK ON THE INSIGHTFUL LEVEL AND JOURNALING IS RECOMMENDED AT THIS POINT TO MAINTAIN PERSPECTIVE.

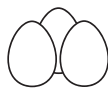
Keep protein levels moderate, such as one or two meals a day with protein as the focus.

Slow-acting carbs. Aim for low-sugar fruits and ones that are high in Magnesium e.g – grapes, figs and banana

Vegetables are always a good thing aim for ones higher in iron e.g. broccoli and any green veg turned into a soup.

Keep fats low in amount and naturally sourced.

Keep food choices simple and not too heavy digestion-wise. Look to nature's kitchen and try ingredients such as turmeric that are anti-inflammatory & calming



OESTROGEN IS STARTING TO RISE. PROGESTERONE IS STILL ABSENT. ENERGY INCREASE AND WE QUITE OFTEN HEAR OURSELVES SAYING 'BACK TO NORMAL'. APPETITE RISING. EMOTIONS RANK ON THE ASSERTIVE LEVEL AND JOURNALING IS RECOMMENDED AT THIS POINT TO MAINTAIN FOCUS.

Protein levels can be increased to medium by incorporating in to each meal or increase portion sizes. The type of protein, if you are a meat eater, can be more of the red kind this phase.

Iron-rich foods are still a priority here to replenish sources after blood loss.

In the carbohydrate category you can manage to be more flexible during phase 2 as the increased circulating oestrogens help support insulin sensitivity. This means the carbs you do eat are more likely to be burnt off rather than stored.

If fat burn is something you are looking to optimise this phase is a good time to find it by 'bio hacking'. In which case moderate carbs to slow-acting only e.g veggies.

Keep fats moderate in amount and naturally sourced.



MENSTRUAL CYCLE NUTRITION

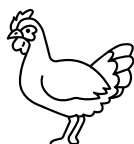
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WEEK THREE



4

WEEK FOUR



OESTROGEN IS STARTING TO FALL AND PROGESTERONE RISES SHARPLY. ENERGY IS STILL HIGH AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS PHASE BUT THEN WE BECOME MORE RELAXED AS PROGESTERONE KICKS IN. THERE IS AN ILLUSION OF FEELING MORE ENERGETIC BECAUSE THE PROGESTERONE HELPS US HANDLE STRESS BETTER, BUT TRY NOT TO PUSH TOO HARD AS THE NEXT PHASE IS AROUND THE CORNER. APPETITE STILL HIGH, BUT BE PREPARED TO MITIGATE POTENTIAL CRAVINGS IN PHASE 3.

Protein levels can be increased to medium-high by incorporating in to each meal or increase portion size. Lighter proteins like fish and sources of essential vitamins and minerals from nuts and seeds work well this week. Now is a good time to also stock up on consuming nutrient dense foods to minimise cravings and preparing foods to have on standby that are gentle on you for the next phase.

Keep fats moderate in amount and naturally sourced.



OESTROGEN IS LOW AND PROGESTERONE IS STARTING TO FALL AND VERY LOW BY THE END OF THIS PHASE. ENERGY IS THERE ONE MINUTE AND GONE THE NEXT. APPETITE IS LOWER THAN PHASE 3.

PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME CAN OCCUR. IT CAN BE TRIGGERED BY THE DROP IN PROGESTERONE BUT ALSO IF YOU ARE LOW IN SEROTONIN, THE BRAIN CHEMICAL RESPONSIBLE FOR STABILISING OUR MOOD.

Have a ready to go supply of easy to consume, tasty meals with moderate protein portions. This helps support the mood-boosting serotonin and foods like bananas are also a good source of minerals at this point.

Carbohydrates that are simple and straightforward work best here. Dark chocolate and dried fruit help to provide nutrients with a hint of sugar to prevent a complete meltdown.

Unless we are prepared this is when cravings can hit us and our appetite increases for the foods that will not serve us well in the next phase.

Natural fats sourced from magnesium rich foods such as nuts, seeds and avocado are also helpful and minimise inflammation.

