

VII Menopause

Menopause: is defined as permanent, physiologic cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity.

Most women stop menstruating by 48-55 yrs of age.

→ Postmenopause is the period beginning from about 1 yr after menses cease.

→ Due to a rise in estrogen levels, menopause ~~syndrome~~ may be associated with some atrophy of breast tissue & genital organs, loss in bone density & vascular changes.

→ Menopause starts gradually & is usually signaled by changes in menstruation. The monthly flow may rise or fall, become irregular, & finally cease. Ovulation occurs less frequently, estrogen levels fluctuate.

Physiological changes in Menopause
The lack of estrogen & progesterone causes many changes in women's physiology that affect their health.

health & well-being. The symptoms of menopause due to changes in the metabolism of the body.

- ↑sed. Cholesterol level in the blood: Hyperlipidemia or an ↑se in the level of cholesterol & lipids in the blood is common. This leads to gradual ↑se in the risk of heart disease & stroke after menopause.

- Osteoporosis: Ca loss from the bone is ↑sed in the first 5 yrs after the onset of menopause, resulting in a loss of bone density. The calcium moves out of the bones, leaving them weak & liable to fracture at the smallest stress.

- Urinary System: As the estrogen level ↓ses after menopause, the tissue lining the urethra & the bladder become drier, thinner & less elastic. This can lead to ↑sed frequency of passing urine as well as an ↑sed tendency to develop UTI.

changes in the genital organs.

Uterus: The uterus become small & fibrotic due to atrophy of the muscles after the menopause. The cervix become smaller & appears to flush & vagina. In older women the cervix may be impossible to identify separately from vagina. The vaginal & cervical discharge decreases in amount & later disappears completely.

Ovaries: become smaller & shrink in size, become wrinkled & white. The ovaries produce little oestrogen during reproductive life begin to produce it in rising amounts.

Vagina: vaginal mucous membrane becomes thin & loses its elasticity. Used sex-relation make vagina dry. Sexual intercourse become painful & difficult due to pain from the dry vagina.

Vulva or external genital organs: The fat in the labia majora & the mons pubis decreases & pubic hair become sparse.

Breast: fat gets reabsorbed & the glands atrophy. The nipple decreases in size, the breasts become flat & pendulous.

Changes in the general appearance

Skin: The skin loses its elasticity & becomes thin & fine. This is due to the loss of elastin & collagen from the skin.

Weight: wt ↑ is more likely to be the result of irregular food habit. due to mood swing. There is more deposition of fat around hips, waist & buttocks.

Hair: become dry & coarse after menopause. There may be hair loss due to rising level of estrogen.

Voice: voice becomes deeper due to thickening of vocal cords.

Changes in the vasomotor sys.

Hot flashes: hot flashes are incidents where the woman in menopause gets a

Sudden feeling of warmth & flushing that starts on the face & quickly spreads all over the neck & upper body. The hot flashes can occur at any time of the day or night. The hot flashes are often associated & profuse sweating.

Night sweats are closely related to hot flashes. Both usually occur simultaneously. Sweat can occur any time of the day or night, they are common at night. The sweat can be severe enough to wake up the woman from a sound sleep & may make it difficult for her to go back to sleep. The sudden waking up from sleep can cause palpitation & sometimes panic attacks.

Psychological changes

The psychological changes are mainly manifested by frequent headache, irritability, fatigue, depression & insomnia. Although these are often said to be due to changes in the hormonal levels, they are more likely to be related to the loss of sleep due to night sweats.