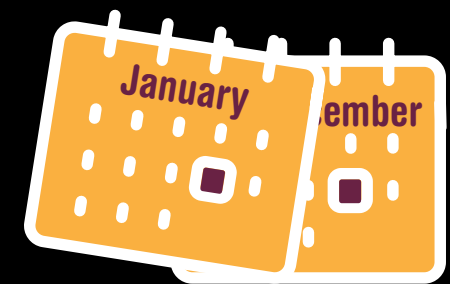


Did you know?



MENOPAUSE is the point in time when menstrual periods have stopped for 12 months in a row.



Loss of the hormone estrogen causes common effects (hot flashes, mood swings, sleep problems)

Symptoms may continue after periods cease

PERIMENOPAUSE is the years (8-10) of body changes leading up to the end of your period.

Symptoms may be more intense and/or begin at an earlier age for women living with HIV than others

More research is needed to better understand these differences



What Menopause Is (and Is Not)



MENOPAUSE IS:

- A **natural** life process
- A span of many years (beginning with **perimenopause** – the years leading to the **end of your period**)
- Experienced by **anyone** with ovaries, including **transmasculine** individuals
- **Liberating** for many!

MENOPAUSE IS NOT:

- An illness or disease state
- Limited to a single point in time
- The reason for all changes related to aging
- The end of your life or your sex life!



Women living with HIV may...



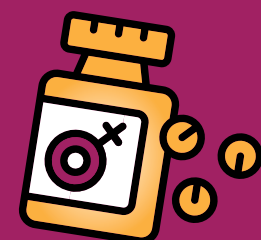
Experience earlier start to menopausal changes
(more research needed to confirm)



Worry their symptoms mean HIV is no longer under control

HIV-related symptoms overlap with common menopausal effects (hot flashes/night sweats, anxiety/mood changes, brain processing challenges)

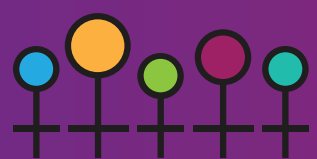
Hormone replacement therapy may ease these symptoms



Have greater chance of declining heart, bone, and brain health before estrogen levels drop during perimenopause, further increasing risk

Managing these effects can start anytime - even *before* menopausal changes begin

Talk to your provider about your concerns!



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Menopause, HIV, and Mental Health



PAST TRAUMA and/or mental health challenges have been shown to affect menopausal changes

- **Women living with HIV** report higher rates of mental health concerns, even *before* estrogen's protective effects on mood decrease during perimenopause



PERIMENOPAUSE is a good time to:

- **Engage** with supportive peers, groups, organizations
 - **Stay connected** with a therapist
 - **Adjust** mental health medications
- ...especially for those with known history of depression and/or anxiety*



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Sex, Pleasure, and Menopause



Some changes of menopause can affect your sex life, including:

Lack of sex drive

Vaginal dryness
(can lead to painful sex)

Mood changes

It is normal to not be into having sex.

If you are into it, talk to your partner(s) about using lube or explore ways to get aroused besides penetration:

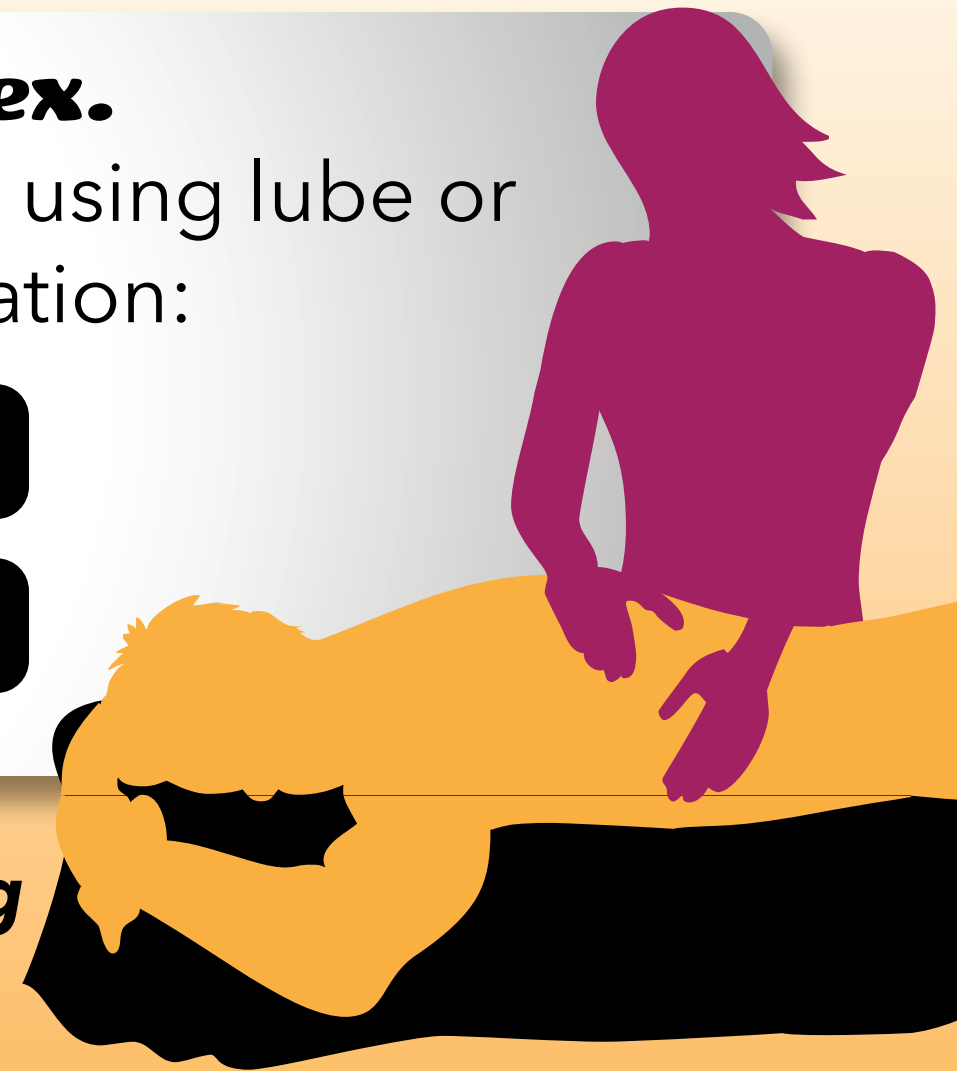
Foreplay

Massage

Oral sex

Masturbation

Talk with a trusted provider about managing these effects - you are not alone!



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Menopause: The Bottom Line



Education, conversations with peers and providers, mental health support, and early screening can help with managing this life transition!

To access our fact sheet on menopause and the whole series of infographics,
go to
bit.ly/MenopauseHIV
or
scan the QR code.



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