

exacerbated by the added life stress that is common during the 40s and 50s. While many of the common treatments for menopause can help with mood changes, your provider may also recommend other types of treatment such as antidepressants.

9. Anxiety

The stress, insomnia, and hormonal imbalance brought by perimenopause can contribute to perimenopausal anxiety. Anxiety can also intensify other symptoms of perimenopause, such as difficulty sleeping and concentrating. Anxiety may be worse at night due to a rise in cortisol levels. Talk to your provider (or a mental health provider) to discuss treatment options that can provide relief.

10. Depression

In addition to anxiety, menopause mood changes can cause depressive symptoms. Women may experience bouts of unexplained sadness, fatigue, or low energy. While menopausal depression can be temporary, there is also risk of developing a depressive disorder during perimenopause and menopause. Working with a mental health provider can help you find treatment options that can help.

11. Irritability

Another mood change women can experience during perimenopause is irritability. The irritability may arise from low estrogen levels affecting brain chemicals regulating mood along with lack of sleep and anxiety.

12. Panic attacks

Hormonal changes can increase the likelihood of having a panic attack. Women may feel intense anxiety that manifests in symptoms such as increased sweating, shortness of breath, and a racing heartbeat. One study found that up to 18 percent of post-menopausal women experienced a type of panic attack with up to 10 percent experiences a full-blown panic attack, usually in response to a stressful life event. As with any menopause-related mood change, seek help from a mental health care provider, who may recommend counseling or medication to help provide relief.

13. Headaches

Migraines and tension headaches can become more common during perimenopause. Hormonal shifts may trigger migraine headaches, though many women notice headaches become less frequent once they reach menopause.

14. Fatigue

Menopause-related fatigue is a loss of energy that can happen at any part of the day. Hormonal imbalance and poor sleep quality — another menopause symptom — can also play a role. Interventions that improve your sleep quality can help, as can lifestyle changes such as exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet.

15. Joint pain

Decreasing estrogen levels can swell up joints and cause inflammation. Joint pain, a common symptom of perimenopause, can feel like a dull ache or a sharp pain shooting through the body. It's often worse in the morning when joints are stiff from being immobile at night.

16. Muscle aches

Together with joint pain, muscle aches and tension throughout your body is common during perimenopause and menopause. In fact, up to 70 percent of women may experience musculoskeletal pain. Lifestyle changes such as exercising, eating a healthy diet, lowering stress and getting enough sleep can help—and a doctor may recommend over-the-counter pain relievers or physical therapy if more intervention is needed.

17. Digestive issues

Women entering perimenopause may experience a range of gastrointestinal (GI) issues, such as pain after eating, gas build-up, and constipation. There is some research suggesting race may be associated with the severity and type of GI symptoms women experience during menopause. Hispanic women, for example, were more likely to experience constipation while white women reported more nausea, loss of appetite, and diarrhea.