



More than Hot Flashes: The Truth About Menopause

Healthy Aging Seminar, June 4th, 2025



Land Acknowledgement



Truth and
Reconciliation
Commission of Canada

<https://nctr.ca/>

I wish to acknowledge the land on which I live and work. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, it is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island.

We recognize the Anishinaabe origins of the name Mississauga and that many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples who call this area their home. We also recognize that many Indigenous Nations, Europeans, and newcomers were invited into covenants in the spirit of respect, peace, and friendship to peaceably share and care for the land and its resources. These covenants were broken, with the land and with each other.

We are all Treaty people. Many of us, have come here as settlers, immigrants, newcomers in this generation or generations past. We stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island as we strive to make this right.

Where should we start???



Why should we be talking about menopause?



10 Million women in Canada are over the age of 40 years old

25 % of Canada's population

20%

of women have no symptoms



60%

of women have mild to moderate symptoms



20%

of women have severe symptoms



Overlooked...

Health Equity for Women

Women trust their healthcare providers and seek support and guidance from them during their menopausal years.

A physician was the preferred source of information and advice for perimenopause/menopause, beating out the internet, friends, family and social media. In a world where social media dominates, women still value their healthcare provider's expertise and guidance when it comes to menopause.

While three-quarters of women were comfortable talking about menopause to their physician, only one-quarter said their physician proactively spoke with them about it.



77%

Comfortable speaking
with physician



27%

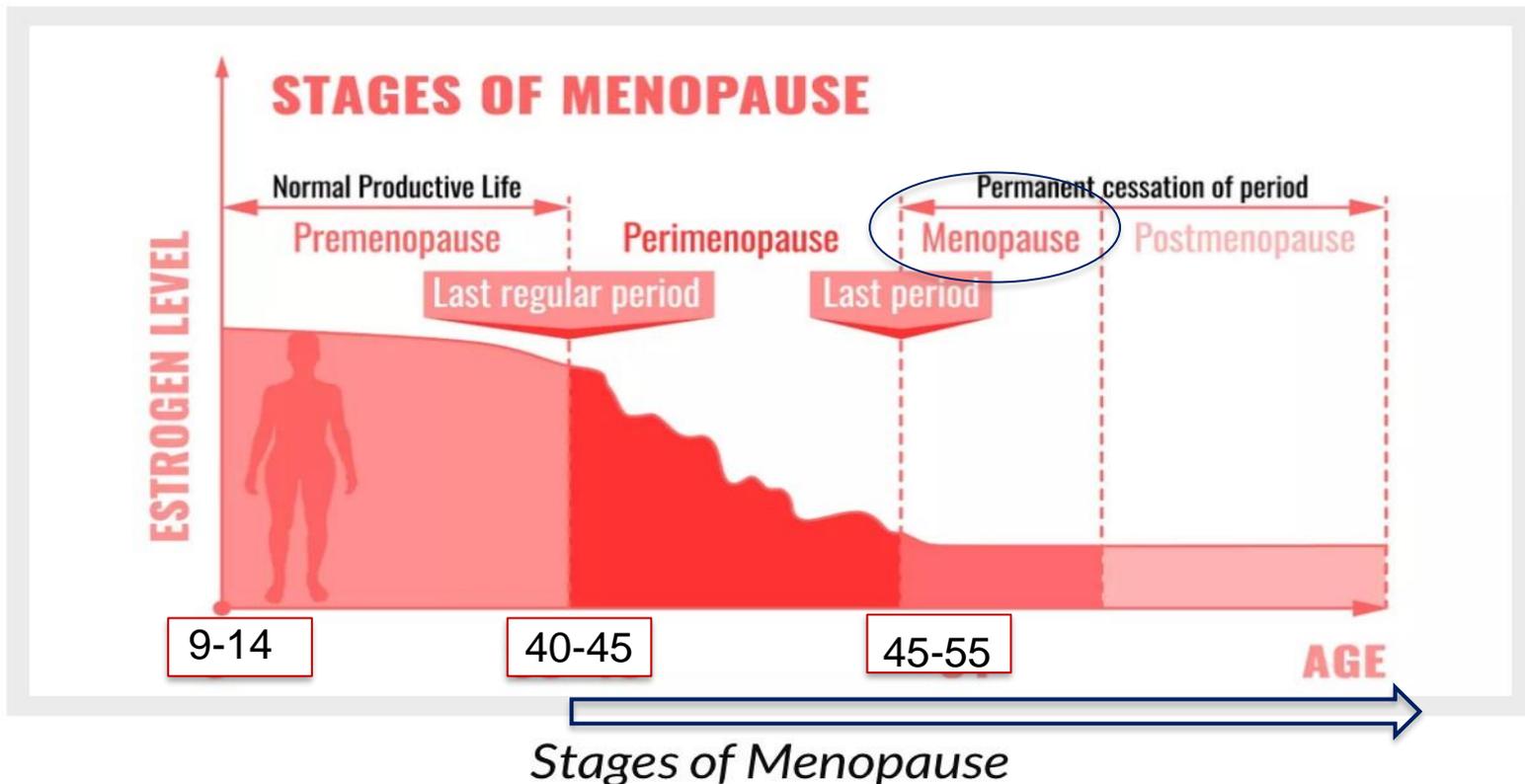
Physician proactively
spoke to patient

Presentation Aims

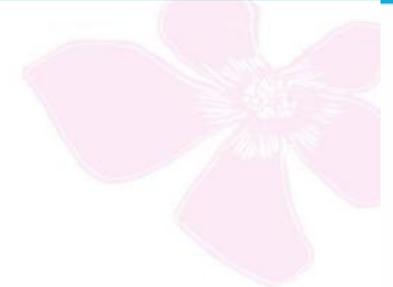
- Understand what is menopause
 - A journey through mid-life health
 - Phases and definitions (pre-, peri-, menopause, and post)
- Know what are menopause symptoms and how to manage them
- Become aware of the myths and stigma around menopause
- Become aware of the importance of maintaining good health during midlife

What is menopause??

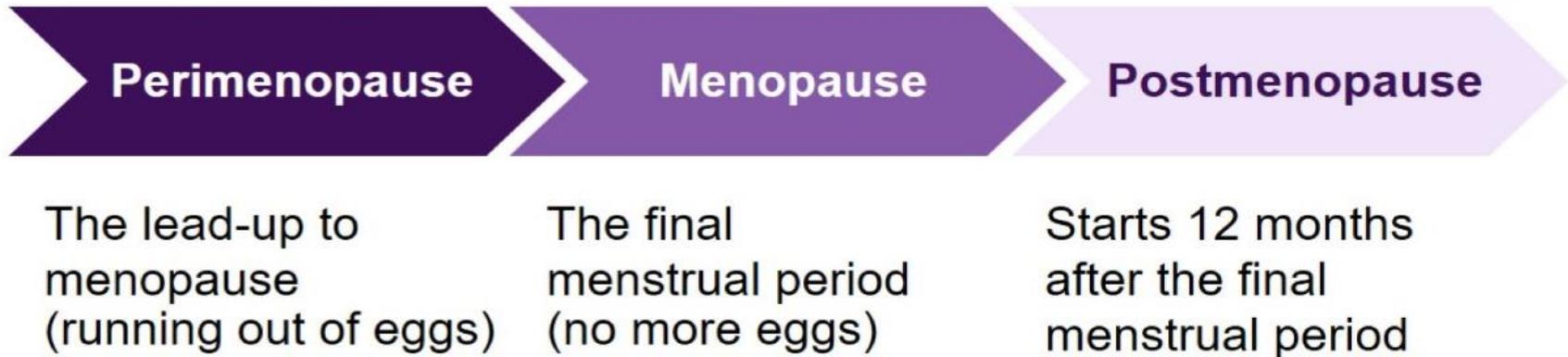
- Menopause is “when you naturally stop getting your periods”
- Natural process – ovaries run out of eggs



Menopause

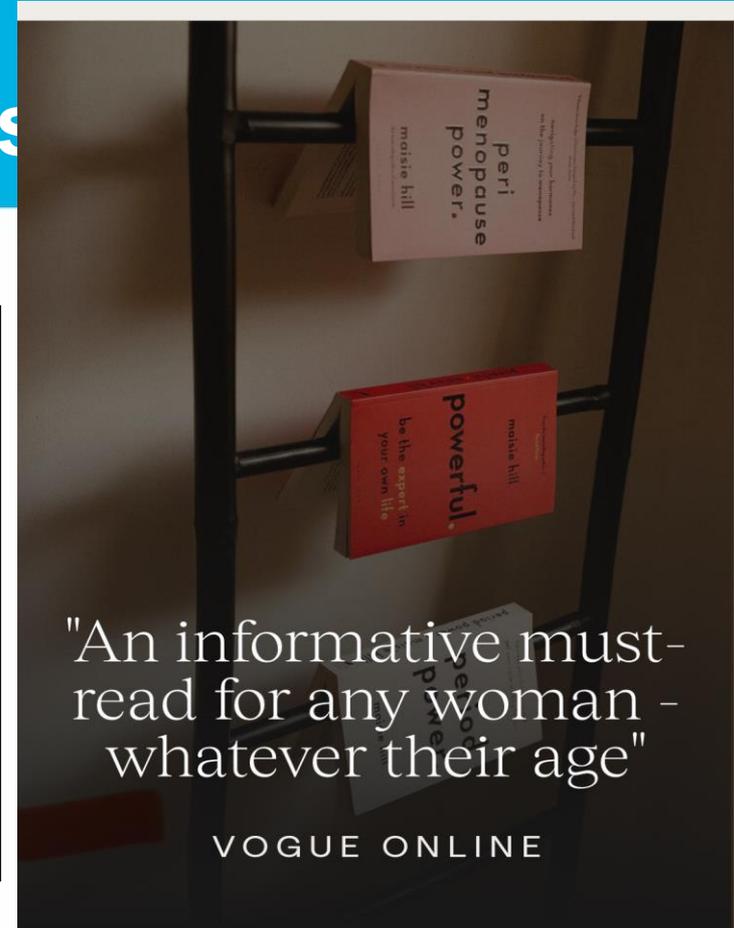
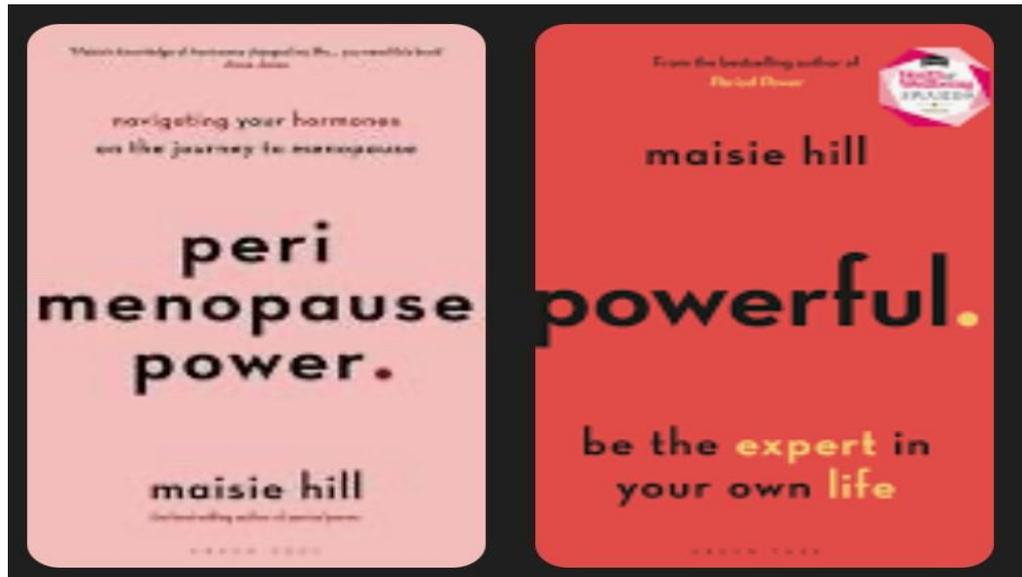


Stages of menopause



See a doctor if your periods stop naturally before you're **40**

Peri/Menopause Diagnosis



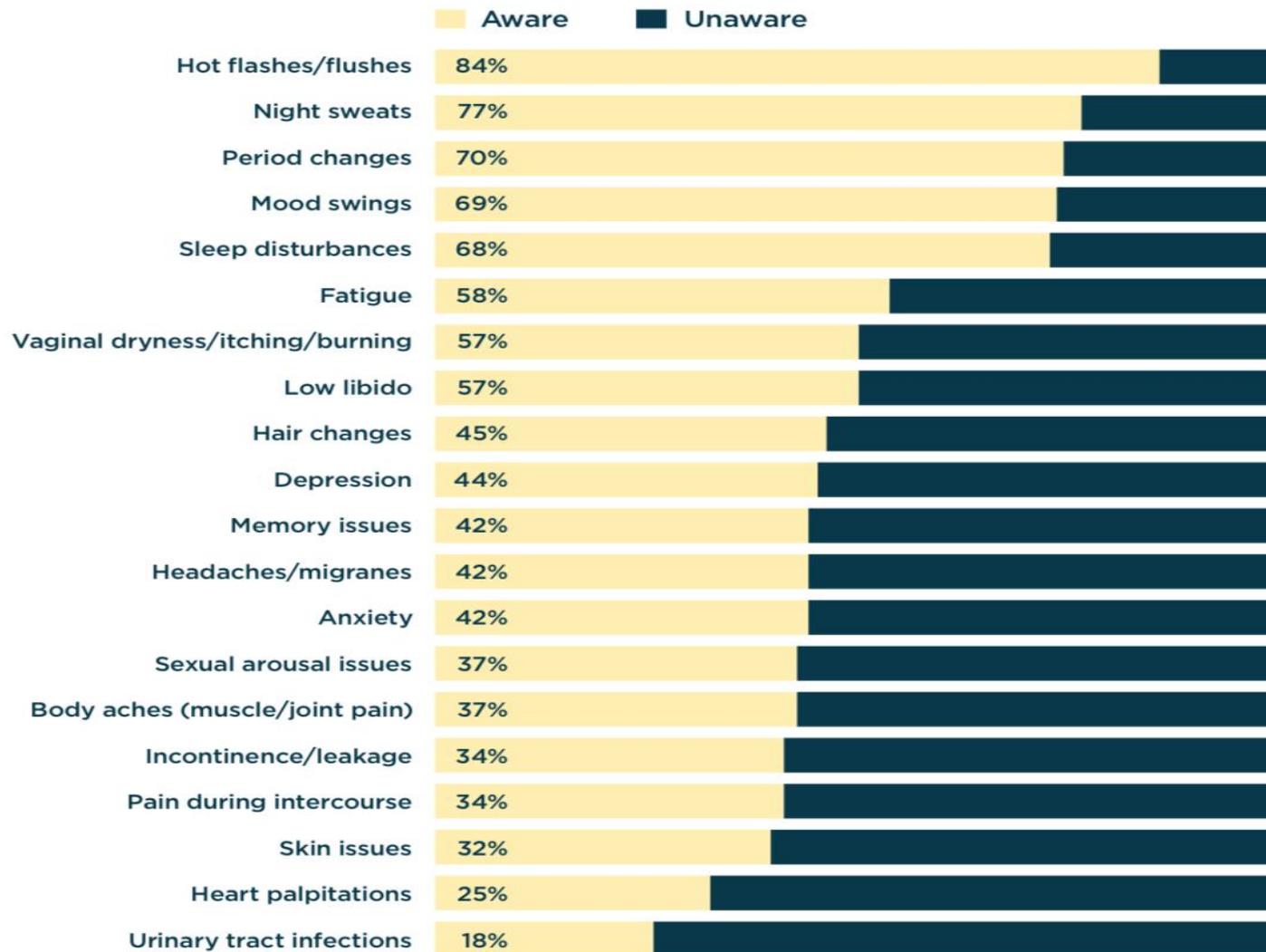
"An informative must-read for any woman - whatever their age"

VOGUE ONLINE

- BUT WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS???
- [The Magic of Menopause | Official Trailer | MasterClass](#)

PRAISED AS A HORMONE BIBLE, PERIMENOPAUSE POWER IS PACKED WITH RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT DEMYSTIFIES PERIMENOPAUSE, MAKING IT A MUST-READ FOR ANYONE SEEKING TO TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR HORMONAL HEALTH DURING THE 'CHANGE'.

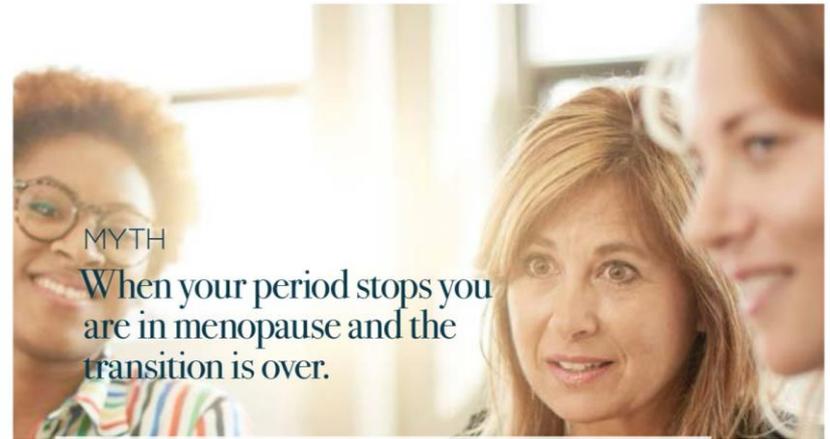
Menopause Symptoms



“Weak, Old, or Past their Prime”

3 *in* 10

The stigma of menopause and the reality of ageism for working women may be contributing factors as to why 29% of survey respondents report fearing that others may see them as “weak, old, or past their prime”.



MYTH
When your period stops you
are in menopause and the
transition is over.

Perimenopause is an ending to your reproductive years but it’s also a powerful transition into a new era of strength and wisdom.

Whether you’re just beginning to notice the signs of perimenopause or are in the midst of it, you can equip yourself with the knowledge to make informed decisions about your health.



MYTH
Hot flashes stop
once a woman
enters menopause.

True or False

When you enter perimenopause, you can't get pregnant

Perimenopause usually occurs in a woman's early-to mid-40s and lasts for 4 to 6 years. It can be as short as a few months or as long as 10 years.

Ovulation (the release of an egg) may occur twice in a cycle, or not at all.

Contraception is still important if you are not planning to become pregnant.

Symptom Management

- Treatment of menopausal symptoms depend on each individual woman's symptoms, risk factors and impact on her life
- Lifestyle measures such as eating well and getting regular physical activity are key to all women
- If symptoms that are affecting quality of life, women will need to seek treatment to help them manage their symptoms
 - Menopausal hormone therapy (MHT, formerly known as 'hormone replacement therapy', or HRT)
 - Non-hormonal options

Symptom Management

Management – lifestyle

- Avoid spicy foods.
- Reduce alcohol and caffeine.
- Don't smoke.
- Eat a balanced, nutritious diet.
- Include foods with phytoestrogens.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get enough sleep and try relaxation and mindfulness.
- Keep cool.



Symptom Management

Management – menopausal hormone therapy (MHT)

MHT is the most effective treatment for menopausal symptoms but is not suitable for all women.

- Rare risks of taking MHT:
 - blood clots
 - breast cancer
 - gallstones.
- Vaginal oestrogen is safe to use long term.



Symptom Management

Management – menopausal hormone therapy (MHT)

MHT is not recommended for women with past or current breast or endometrial cancers, severe liver disease, untreated high blood pressure, or those with a high risk of clotting.

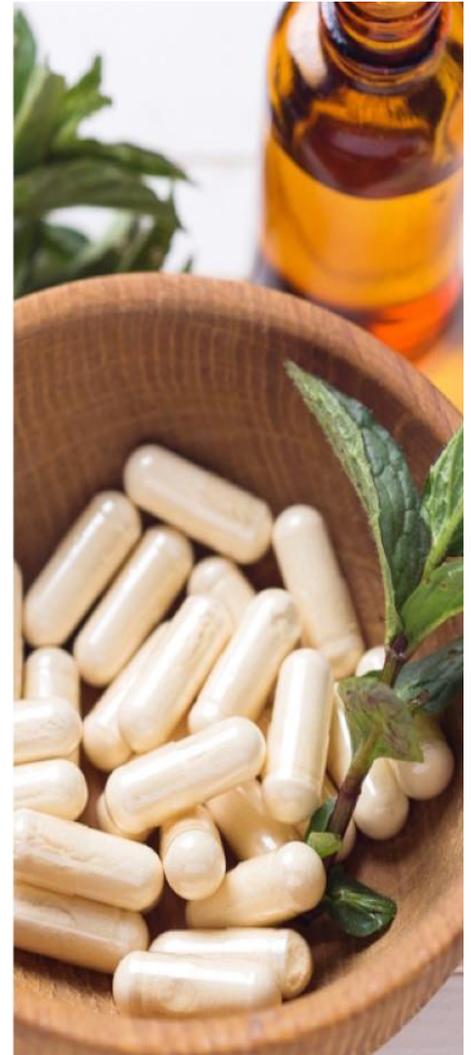


Symptom Management

Management – complementary therapies

- Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)
- Acupuncture
- Hypnotherapy
- Traditional Chinese medicine ***
- Herbal remedies, such as black cohosh ***
- Phytoestrogens – plant oestrogen in diet ***

*** Tell your doctor if you are taking these remedies, to examine adverse reactions or interaction with other medications.



MQ6 Menopause Assessment Tool

1. Changes to periods?	4. Any bladder issues, incontinence?
2. Any hot flashes?	5. How's your sleep?
3. Any vaginal dryness, pain, sexual concerns?	6. How's your mood?

Is MHT indicated?

VMS, GSM, Bone protection, POI

NO

NON-HORMONAL MEDICATIONS**

	VMS	GSM	SLEEP	MOOD
NKB Receptor Antagonists	+++		+	
Gabapentin*	++(1)		+++ (1)	+/- (3)
Antidepressants* ie. SSRI, SNRI	++		+/-	++/+++
Oxybutinin*	++	+(2)		

- Gabapentin can be sedating at higher doses and has shown potential benefits for night sweats
- Oxybutinin is indicated for symptoms of overactive bladder
- There is some evidence for benefits of gabapentinoid treatments for mood and anxiety disorders

* indicates off-label use for vasomotor symptoms
** based on low-level evidence/consensus opinion

Is GSM the only indication for MHT?

Are there CONTRAINDICATIONS to MHT?

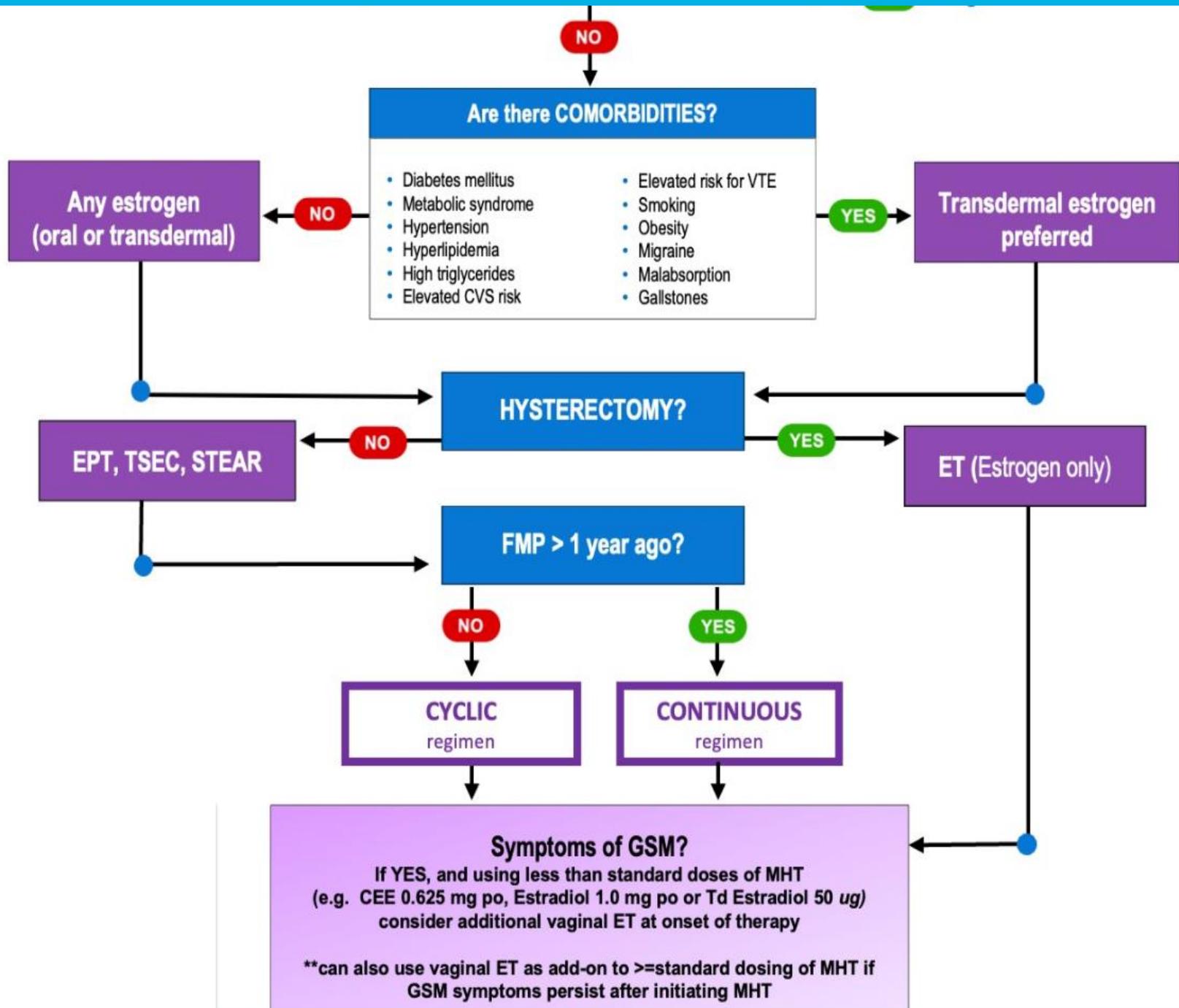
- Personal history of Estrogen dependent Cancers (eg. Breast, Endometrial, Ovarian)
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Pregnancy
- Coronary heart disease
- Active or previous history of stroke or VTE
- Acute liver disease
- Personal history or inherited high risk of thromboembolic disease (eg. Thrombophilia)
- Porphyria
- Migraine with aura? → not a contraindication but consider neuro consult?

NO

YES

- **Lubricant**
- **Vaginal Estrogen cream/tab**



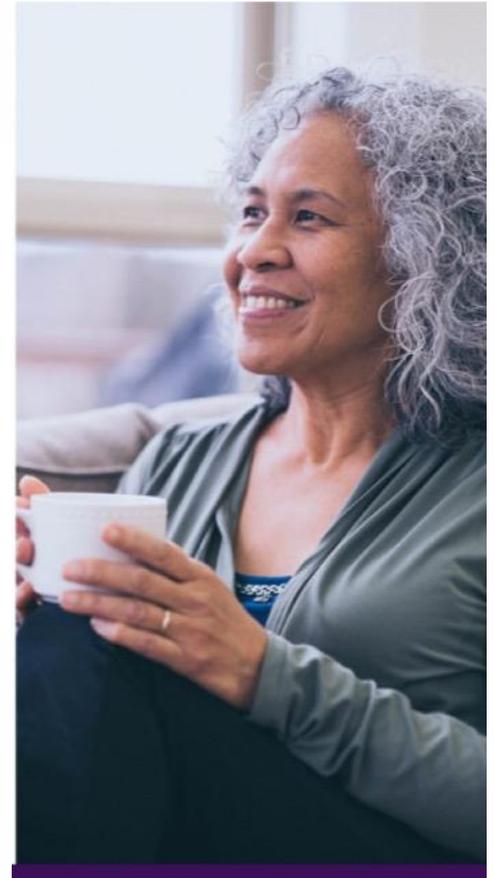


Post-Menopausal Health

- **Any vaginal bleeding after 12 months of having NO periods needs to be immediately investigated!!!**

Maintain good health to help prevent:

- cardiovascular disease
- osteoporosis
- central weight gain
- type 2 diabetes.



Postmenopause – healthy living

- Have a healthy diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Don't smoke.
- Reduce alcohol.



UPDATE your immunizations (Tetanus every 10 years, and pneumonia >65)

Preventative Care

Health checks in your 40s

- Sexual health and STI check
- Breast self-check
- Cervical screening test
- Heart health check
- Type 2 diabetes check
- Pre-pregnancy health check



Health checks from your 60s

- Sexual health and STI check
- Breast self-check
- Breast cancer screening (mammogram)
- Cervical screening test
- Heart health check
- Type 2 diabetes check
- Bowel cancer screening test
- Bone health assessment



Health checks in your 50s

- Sexual health and STI check
- Breast self-check
- Breast cancer screening (mammogram)
- Cervical screening test
- Heart health check
- Type 2 diabetes check
- Bowel cancer screening test
- Bone health assessment



Osteoporosis DEXA scan for
everyone >70 years of age
65-70 with one risk factor
55-65 with two risk factors

**A third or even half of your life
will happen after menopause,
so try to maintain good health.**

References/Resources

- [The Menopause Foundation of Canada](#)
- [Menopause and U](#)
- [Menopause wellness: How to balance nutrition, exercise and heart health | Heart and Stroke Foundation](#)

