

# Women's Health

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## Sexual Health

### Menopause: Physical & Emotional Concerns Explained

Source: Dr Wee Horng Yen, Consultant and Director, [Women's Wellness Centre, KK Women's and Children's Hospital](#)

#### Does menopause ever happen early (with the typical age around 51)? If yes, why?

Menopause occurring before the age of 40 is considered premature. This could be idiopathic (cause unknown) or due to conditions like Turner's syndrome, autoimmune diseases (e.g. Grave's disease), or radiation or chemotherapy for cancer treatment. This happens due to the very fast depletion of ovarian follicles, as in cases of Turner's syndrome, or due to destruction of ovarian tissue as a result of radiation or chemotherapy drugs.



#### How does menopause affect a woman mentally?

Psychological symptoms are frequently reported around the time of menopause. Symptoms include depression, loss of memory, irritability, poor concentration, tiredness and loss of confidence.

Women also experience sleep disturbances and insomnia, which could partly be due to night sweats and hot flushes. Menopause can be a difficult time for a woman as it not only marks the end of her reproductive capacity, but can also be associated with changes in domestic arrangements and feelings of loss of youth and femininity. Therefore, the symptoms experienced may not be entirely due to a lack of oestrogen.

A combination of physical and psychological influences can result in a complete loss of libido, decreased sexual satisfaction and avoidance of intercourse.

#### In some cases, women seem to turn white-haired "overnight." What causes this?

This phenomenon is actually due to a medical condition termed "diffuse alopecia areata" which can result in sudden hair loss. In women who have a mix of dark and grey or white hair, the uncoloured hair is less likely to fall out whereas the dark hair falls out. As a result of this a woman can appear to go grey overnight.

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