

Hormonal Changes in the Stages of Menopause and Weight Management



Menopause is a natural stage in a woman's life that marks the end of menstrual cycles, confirmed after twelve consecutive months without a menstrual period. Although it can occur anytime between the ages of 40 and 50, the average age of onset is around 51.

Information

During menopause, the ovaries stop releasing eggs and the body produces less estrogen and progesterone. The decline in these hormones is the main cause of the symptoms associated with this stage. In some cases, menopause can be induced by certain medical treatments, such as chemotherapy or hormone therapy (HT) used in breast cancer.

What Are the Hormonal Changes in the Stages of Menopause?

Perimenopause (Transition)

- **Estrogen.** Its levels become irregular and, over time, tend to decrease.
- **Progesterone.** Begins to decline progressively and consistently.
- **Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH).** Rises significantly as the body attempts to stimulate ovaries that are already losing function.

Menopause:

- **Ovarian function:** The ovaries stop releasing eggs, and the production of sex hormones drops to very low levels.

Post menopause:

- **Estrogen and progesterone.** They remain at very low and stable levels.



What are the causes of weight gain during menopause?

During menopause, weight gain can be caused by several factors. Low estrogen levels, loss of muscle mass, and a slower metabolism make the body more likely to

accumulate fat. In addition, these changes can be influenced by lifestyle and genetics, further increasing the likelihood of gaining weight during this stage.

What complications are related to weight gain?

Weight gain during menopause can lead to several health complications. Among the most common are an increased risk of developing:

- Type 2 diabetes
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Respiratory problems

These effects are linked to hormonal changes, the redistribution of body fat, and other factors characteristic of this stage.

How to prevent weight gain during menopause?

To prevent weight gain during menopause, it's helpful to adopt habits that support your metabolism and overall health.

Healthy eating: A healthy diet that includes more fiber, healthy fats, and lean proteins, as well as reducing sugary drinks and avoiding prolonged fasting without supervision, can help maintain a stable weight.

Physical activity: Strength training is important to counteract muscle loss and boost metabolism. In addition, aerobic activity, such as brisk walking for at least 150–200 minutes per week, also supports weight management.

Lifestyle: Getting enough sleep is essential, since lack of sleep increases the risk of weight gain.

Managing stress and having regular medical check-ups are also helpful.



Important: Perimenopause is the stage with the highest risk of weight gain, so making these changes early is important to help prevent complications.

Treatment

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT): It helps relieve menopause symptoms by restoring estrogen and progesterone.

Some of its benefits include:

- **Bone health:** Helps prevent osteoporosis and reduces the risk of fractures.
- **Improved quality of life:** Supports better sleep patterns, mood, and cognitive function.



- **Vaginal health:** Improves dryness.
- **Skin health:** Helps maintain skin elasticity and hydration.
- **Hot flashes and night sweats:** Significantly reduces their intensity and frequency.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that may arise during and after treatment, please visit your primary care physician or contact the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line: 1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health 787-641-9133

References:

<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000894.htm>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/womens-health/in-depth/menopause-weight-gain/art-20046058>

<https://espanol.womenshealth.gov/menopause>

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