

The background of the entire page is a dark, almost black, field filled with numerous out-of-focus, glowing circles of light. These circles vary in size and brightness, with some appearing as bright, almost white-yellow spheres and others as softer, more diffused blue or cyan tones. The overall effect is a bokeh or "light painting" aesthetic.

**Wyeth**

**Leading the way in women's health.**

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Understanding  
menopause  
and what you  
can do.



**“When I first started experiencing the symptoms of menopause, I had lots of questions, so I turned to my doctor. This information can help you know what questions to ask when you talk to your doctor.”**

***Cheryl Ladd***



**“I knew menopause was a change in my body, but I wanted to know exactly what was happening.”**

**Q: What is menopause?**

**A:** Menopause begins when your ovaries’ production of estrogen declines, at first causing your menstrual periods to possibly become irregular and eventually to stop altogether. You are in natural menopause when you haven’t had a period for 12 consecutive months. You are in surgical menopause when your ovaries have been removed, usually as part of a total hysterectomy (removal of the uterus). In addition to the end of monthly periods, menopause may also initiate a series of other physical changes, such as hot flashes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness. Menopause may also lead to postmenopausal osteoporosis.

**“Menopause affects every woman differently.”**

**Q: When does menopause normally occur?**

**A:** For most women, natural menopause occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, although it can happen earlier or later. The average age of menopause is 51 years.

**“I wanted to understand what the symptoms of menopause were and if the changes I was experiencing were normal.”**

**Q: What are the most common symptoms of menopause?**

**A:** Some of the most common symptoms of menopause are hot flashes and night sweats. If you are experiencing these symptoms, you’re not alone—approximately 75% of menopausal women experience them, too.

Hot flashes, which can cause flushing with a sensation of heat that may include sweating, can interrupt your life and keep you from feeling comfortable. Night sweats, which are hot flashes with drenching perspiration occurring at night, also can interfere with your life as they can keep you from getting a good night’s sleep.

Vaginal dryness is also a symptom of menopause. Low levels of estrogen decrease the vagina’s lubrication, making tissue less elastic and more easily irritated. This symptom can make intimacy and sexual intercourse difficult. Unfortunately, vaginal dryness does not improve over time, and, in fact, can worsen if left untreated.



**“Understanding my symptoms was the first step toward making choices to help me stay healthy.”**

**“When I talked to my doctor, I learned that keeping my bones strong was especially important during menopause.”**

**Q: What is postmenopausal osteoporosis?**

**A:** Postmenopausal osteoporosis is a thinning of the bones that begins in the first few years after menopause, when women experience rapid bone loss. The progressive thinning and weakening that accompanies osteoporosis can lead to fractures and can be a serious health risk. Talk to your doctor about the best ways to protect your bones after menopause.

**“My doctor helped me assess how my symptoms were impacting my life so we could discuss options for managing them.”**



**Q: Are there ways to manage menopausal symptoms?**

**A:** You and your doctor can assess the menopausal symptoms you may be experiencing and what choices you can make to help keep you healthy during menopause. One good way to start the conversation with your doctor is to complete the Menopause Assessor in this brochure and then make an appointment to discuss it.



## Assess How Your Menopausal Symptoms Are Affecting You

I have been bothered by:	Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Very	Extremely
Irregular periods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hot flashes that make me uncomfortable or embarrassed, or that interrupt my activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Night sweats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sleep disturbances that may leave me feeling tired or irritable the next day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occasional mood swings or irritability, which may be affecting my relationships with my family, friends, or coworkers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A lack of energy that slows me down or stops me from doing the things I want or need to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vaginal dryness, itching, or burning that can make intimacy uncomfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>If you have checked any of the "Somewhat," "Very," or "Extremely" boxes, you should speak to your health care professional. He or she can help you evaluate your treatment options, based on your personal needs and health risks.</p>					
I have a personal or family history of:	Personal	Mother/Sister	Other Family		
Menopausal symptoms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Heart disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Breast cancer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Stroke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Blood clots	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Osteoporosis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**“I want to stay healthy. That’s why my doctor recommended a series of baseline screening tests.”**

**Q: What are the screening tests women of menopausal age should have?**

**A:** You and your doctor can decide which screening tests are most appropriate for you, but the following are some of the most commonly recommended screenings:

- ‡ **Cholesterol checks every 5 years**
- ‡ **Blood pressure screenings every 1 to 2 years**
- ‡ **Osteoporosis screening, known as bone mineral density (BMD) testing**
- ‡ **Breast cancer screenings:**
  - **Mammograms every year, after age 40**
  - **Breast exams by a health care professional**
  - **Monthly self breast exams**
- ‡ **Cervical cancer test:**
  - **Pap test every 1 to 3 years**
- ‡ **Annual colorectal cancer screening, if you are over age 50**

**“Staying in good health is easier when you do all you can to take care of yourself. Diet and exercise are an essential part of what keeps me looking and feeling my best.”**

**Q: Are there certain kinds of foods that are good for women in menopause?**

**A:** Yes. As many women discover, their energy level and weight can fluctuate during menopause and eating healthfully is a good way to combat this. A diet with plenty of fresh foods is important to help ensure you’re getting the vitamins you need. For more information on what’s right for you, talk to your doctor.

**Q: Why is exercise so important now?**

**A:** Regular exercise is important at all phases of life, but during menopause it’s especially valuable as it can help you build muscle, help prevent bone loss, and strengthen your cardiovascular system. Overall, staying fit is a good way to help yourself feel better and stay stronger. Talk to your doctor about the right kind of exercise for you.

notes: