

BEDIENT FUNCTIONAL HEALTH

Why Does It Feel Like My Body Is Betraying Me?

A straight-talking guide to what may be changing after 40, why symptoms that seem completely unrelated can start showing up together, and what your body may be trying to tell you.

3am

You used to sleep through the night. Now you're staring at the ceiling with your brain suddenly wide awake.

You're eating pretty much the same way you've always eaten, but your body composition is changing anyway.

Your shoulder hurts. Your digestion is weird. You can't find the word you were literally about to say. Your hair feels different. Your libido has apparently left the building.

And after a while, it can start to feel like your body is working against you.

**It's not in
your head.**

Midlife brings real hormonal changes, and those changes don't happen in isolation. Hormones interact with your brain, bones, muscles, metabolism, sleep, gut, blood sugar and more.

The symptoms you're noticing are information.

Let's translate some of them.

Maybe you've noticed...

Waking around 3 a.m., wide awake when you desperately want to sleep

Belly weight that **will. not. budge.** even though you're doing the same things that used to work

Brain fog or losing your thought mid-sentence

Hot flashes or night sweats

Anxiety that feels new, or suddenly much louder

Mood changes that don't feel like you

Low libido

Vaginal dryness or discomfort

Achy joints or a shoulder that suddenly seems to have opinions

Hair thinning or changes in texture

Digestion that isn't handling food the way it used to

Feeling wired and exhausted at the same time

You don't need to check every box, but when several things change at once, it's worth looking at the pattern.

Your body isn't betraying you. It's giving you information.

02

So...what is actually changing?

Perimenopause isn't an on/off switch.

Estrogen and progesterone can fluctuate during the menopause transition, menstrual cycles may become irregular, and symptoms can change over time. The experience isn't identical from one woman to the next. That's part of what makes this phase so confusing.¹

Estrogen

THE UNPREDICTABLE ONE

Estrogen patterns change during the menopause transition. Those shifts happen alongside changes many women notice in areas such as temperature regulation, sleep, mood, sexual health and body composition.¹

This is one reason two months can feel completely different even though you're living in the same body.

Progesterone

PART OF THE CHANGING CYCLE

As ovulation and menstrual cycles become less predictable during perimenopause, progesterone patterns change too. Sleep and mood symptoms are also commonly reported during this transition.¹

For some women, that's when the "I don't feel like myself" feeling starts showing up.

I know that feeling.

Testosterone

YES, WOMEN HAVE IT TOO

Testosterone is one part of women's sexual and overall health, but symptoms should not be pinned on a single hormone without looking at the larger clinical picture.

Cortisol

THE STRESS RESPONDER

Cortisol is produced by the adrenal glands and plays a central role in the body's stress response. As ovarian hormone production shifts during the menopause transition, some women notice their adrenal system seems to be picking up more of the load, and if that system is already under strain from years of poor sleep or chronic stress, the effects can compound.

If a schedule that used to feel manageable suddenly feels like too much, that's worth paying attention to, not dismissing as a personal failing.

Why you feel the way you feel

3 a.m. wake-ups

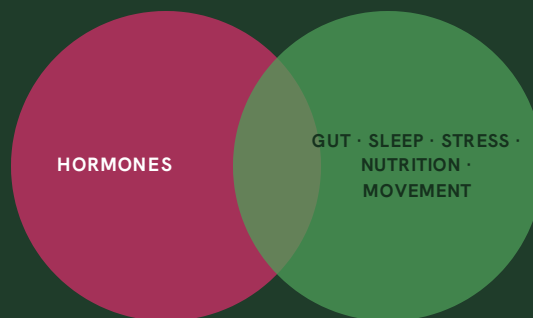
Cortisol naturally rises and falls across the day, and that rhythm may shift during the menopause transition. Combined with declining progesterone, which has a calming effect on sleep, that's one plausible reason for waking abruptly in the early hours.

Brain fog

Estrogen is involved in blood flow and communication between brain cells, so shifting levels are one plausible contributor to the brain fog and word-finding trouble many women notice. It doesn't mean it's the only explanation, or a personal failing.

Body composition

Changing estrogen levels are associated with shifts in where the body tends to store fat, and elevated cortisol has been linked to changes in cravings in some studies. That may be one reason habits that used to work stop working the same way.



Your hormones are part of the picture.

Not the whole picture.

Your gut, blood sugar, nutrition, stress, sleep, movement, medications, health history and other factors can all influence how you feel in midlife. That's why chasing one hormone number doesn't always answer the question you're actually asking:

Why don't I feel like myself anymore?

03

The symptoms nobody warned you about

Most women know about hot flashes. Nobody seems quite as prepared for the moment when their shoulder starts hurting, their skin gets weird, their gums feel different, or foods they've eaten for twenty years suddenly aren't sitting well.

And now you're wondering, is THIS part of menopause too? Sometimes hormonal changes may be part of the picture. Sometimes something else is going on.

That's why symptoms deserve attention rather than assumptions.

Joints

Aches, stiffness and musculoskeletal symptoms are commonly reported in midlife, and for some women that even shows up as a frozen shoulder. That doesn't mean every sore shoulder is estrogen. It means a new, persistent change is worth paying attention to.

Skin

Skin can become drier and change in texture with age and around menopause. So yes, you may look in the mirror one morning and think, *when did THAT happen?*

Heart palpitations

Some women report palpitations during perimenopause and menopause. New, persistent or concerning heart symptoms deserve medical evaluation, not a shrug.

Digestion

Digestion feels different for a lot of women in midlife. I don't assume every digestive symptom is hormonal. I pay attention when it shows up alongside shifts in sleep, energy, blood sugar or weight.

Allergies & sensitivities

Estrogen and histamine appear to interact, and some women notice new or worsening food sensitivities and seasonal allergies during this transition. It's a pattern worth naming, even though the research here is still developing.

Gum & dry mouth changes

Declining estrogen can affect mucous membranes throughout the body, not only vaginally. Gum sensitivity, dry mouth and taste changes are real, if rarely discussed, symptoms of this transition.

Mood, and not feeling quite yourself

Mood changes and sleep problems are commonly reported during the menopause transition.¹ And when you're also not sleeping, your body is changing, your energy isn't what it was, and you don't recognize yourself in the mirror some days... that's a lot.

You don't need to dismiss it as "just menopause."

*And you don't need a louder symptom
to deserve a better look.*

04

This matters beyond how you feel today

I don't tell women this to scare them. I tell them because midlife is an important time to pay attention to health that will matter for decades.

Bone health

Estrogen plays an important role in bone health, and bone loss becomes an important consideration around and after menopause. Strength training, nutrition and appropriate screening can all matter here.⁴

Cardiovascular health

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States. The menopause transition is a period when cardiovascular risk factors can change, including cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar and body composition.^{2,3}

Brain + mood

Your brain isn't separate from this conversation. Sleep, mood, cognition and hormonal changes overlap in complicated ways. Long-term brain health matters, and so does how you're feeling NOW.

Metabolic health

Blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar are worth paying attention to during midlife, alongside sleep, movement and nutrition.^{2,3}

Maybe the foods you used to eat don't affect you the same way anymore.

Maybe weight is accumulating differently. Maybe your energy crashes after meals.

Not panic

and not

"Just getting older"

There is a big space between those two reactions.

That's where information helps.

Test, don't guess.

Standard blood testing can be useful. Depending on the clinical question, I may also use other tools to gather additional information.

DUTCH COMPLETE

One tool I use to look at hormone metabolites and patterns of cortisol across the day. I read results alongside your symptoms, history, medications and the rest of what is happening in your body.

It's not a crystal ball. No test is. Because the goal isn't to collect prettier lab reports.

It's to understand what the data means for YOU.



Want to see what your body has been telling you?

This is why I created the Clarity Hormone Plan. It's a focused first step for women who want to see their own hormone data, understand what it means in plain language and leave knowing what to do next.

No six-month commitment. No giant supplement stack. No report dropped into your inbox that leaves you Googling every other word.

THE CLARITY HORMONE PLAN

DUTCH Complete. Your at-home hormone and cortisol test.

Personalized written analysis. I go through your results and explain what stands out and what it may mean in the context of YOU.

30-minute Results Reveal. We meet by video and walk through the results together. Bring your questions.

Foundational food + lifestyle guidance. Practical places to start based on what we're seeing.

Targeted supplement starting points. When appropriate, a short list. Usually three to five. Not a kitchen counter full of bottles.

\$499

One payment. No commitment to a larger program.

Start with the Clarity Hormone Plan

And if this gives you the information you were looking for and you stop there?
Great. If your results make you want to look deeper at gut health, blood sugar, nutrition and the larger picture, we can talk about that too. We build on what we've already learned rather than starting over.

You know your body better than anyone.
If it's been telling you something has changed, I think it's worth listening.

Not ready to test yet? Keep this guide. Pay attention to the patterns you're noticing, and come back to it when you're ready.

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Bedient Functional Health · Virtual functional health consultations

REFERENCES

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3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Women and Heart Disease. Updated 2024.
4. The Menopause Society. Management of Osteoporosis in Postmenopausal Women, Position Statement / patient resources. 2021.

Important health note: This guide is for educational purposes only and is not a diagnosis or a substitute for individualized medical care. New, severe, persistent or concerning symptoms should be discussed with an appropriate healthcare professional.