

Menopause: Enjoying life's second act

Menopause. In the past, just hearing the word made some people cringe. But negativity around this time in a woman's life is fading as more people celebrate what's ahead.

The end of your childbearing years can be a positive time, once you find ways to cope with the physical side effects of the transition.



Photo above by Xavieramau, below by Alvarez, courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on menopause:

1 Menopause is a point in time 12 months after a woman's last menstrual period. The average age of menopause is 51, but it can vary widely.

2 In the years before menopause, you will go through



perimenopause. Women may have hot flashes, mood swings, night sweats or brain fog during this time. These are signs that you're body is changing.

3 Your health care team can help you with symptoms. Steer away from risky products hyped online and talk to your doctor about things like prescription drugs, diet, stress reduction and other ways to cope.

4 Beyond hormonal changes, the transition to menopause can raise risk factors for heart disease.

Pay attention to your weight, diet and find time to exercise. Get your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked regularly.

5 Look to the future! Once your symptoms pass, you'll have more freedom to do the things you've always wanted to. Enjoy this time!



>> For more tips and tools, visit www.menopause.org