

# PERI-MENOPAUSE QUESTIONNAIRE

DO YOU HAVE, OR HAVE YOU  
EXPERIENCED, IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS

- Feeling far less jolly about doing the grocery shopping, laundry, dishes and cooking than you did a few years ago?
- A preference for social isolation combined with wardrobe malfunction (you're newly introverted, reluctant to wear anything other than your yoga pants if you have to leave the house)?
- A need to unbutton your jeans to make room for the roll around your waist, which seemed to materialize overnight?
- Emotional instability—for the first time in your life, you burst into tears at work when your kid calls with an adolescent crisis and you're in a crucial meeting?
- A lack of satisfaction with exercise, since it doesn't seem to affect your weight?
- A general feeling of blah or reclusiveness; do you find yourself watching the clock and wondering when it might be socially acceptable to extricate yourself from normal activities and retire for the evening?
- A problem sleeping (indiscriminate debates and ruminations awakening you in the middle of the night?)
- You're tired of feeling overwhelmed by your body's changes and feel so lost and confused by your body?

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- A habit of waking up so sweaty that you need to change your night gown and sheets and perhaps even your husband or partner?
- Struggle with brain fog, lack of focus and concentration?
- A lack of attention to personal grooming habits (you really don't care how attractive you look)
- An attitude toward your children that's more ambivalent than it once was?
- A menstrual period so unpredictable that you don't know whether you're in for spotting or flooding, or some weird combination of the two?
- Sudden forgetfulness when walking into a room (knowing you had a purpose but searching for clues as to what it was)
- A continual doubting of your own instincts and insights?
- More frequent announcements to the family that "Mum's going to take a nap now" or "Mum needs a time-out"?
- A preference for chocolate or a glass of wine over sex (which frankly, may just be your lowest priority)?
- A notion that an anti-anxiety pill sounds increasingly appealing?
- An opinion that addressing your mood issues by giving up sugar, alcohol and flour, taking various supplements and hormonal tweaking sounds like way too much work?

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## RESULTS

If you have 5 or more of these thoughts or feelings most of the time – whether you've yet to reach middle age (ages forty to sixty five) or are staring at it through the rear view mirror – welcome to peri-menopause.

This means your ovaries have started to sputter and are no longer manufacturing the same, predictable and consistent levels of the sex hormones – estrogen and progesterone – that they used to.

To make matters worse, your brain is less responsive to the hormones your ovaries still do produce – a phenomenon of the middle-aged female brain – and the happy brain chemicals such as serotonin may head south. Some women sail through perimenopause with a nary a worry; others believe they are going crazy. Both are a normal reaction to the midlife hormonal flux known as perimenopause.

When women hit forty, they're often shocked by dramatic hormonal changes that affect everything from memory to sex. These changes didn't sneak up on them overnight. That's right; your estrogen, testosterone and growth hormone started to fade, albeit slowly, up to two decades before you started feeling forgetful, sleepy and sick of sex. When you're in your twenties, these changes are often imperceptible – but they signal the body's first steps toward what most women experience in their fourth decade, peri-menopause: the stage of life, usually lasting a decade that heralds the shift from regular menstrual cycles to utter hormonal chaos.