



Nicola Williams Counselling

Definition of Menopause and Perimenopause

Menopause

Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. You reach menopause when you have not had a period for 12 months. The average age for menopause is 51. It can happen earlier naturally for reasons such as surgery to remove ovaries or the uterus or genetic reasons. However, sometimes the reason is unknown. If you are under 45 it is classed as early menopause and if you are under 40 it is classed as Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI).

Perimenopause

Perimenopause is used to describe the time before the menopause when you have menopausal symptoms but you are still having periods. During this time periods typically change and can be less frequent or more frequent and might be lighter or heavier due to fluctuating hormones. Perimenopause symptoms can start to happen up to **10 years** before the menopause. If you are over 45 then the symptoms you are experiencing can be used to diagnose perimenopause.