🏥 What is Menopause?

Menopause is the natural stage in life when your periods stop due to the ovaries no longer producing eggs. This happens because of a gradual decline in **estrogen and progesterone** levels. It usually occurs between the ages of **45 and 55**.

🔍 How Do I Know I'm Menopausal?

You are considered **menopausal** if you have had **no periods for 12 consecutive months**. Some women may experience symptoms before menopause (perimenopause), while others transition without symptoms.

⚠️ What is Surgical or Medical Menopause?

Surgical or medical menopause occurs when menopause happens **earlier than expected** due to: ✅ **Surgical removal of both ovaries** (before natural menopause) ✅ **Medical treatments** such as chemotherapy or medications that stop ovulation (used for cancer or endometriosis treatment)

🔥 What Are the Symptoms of Menopause?

Symptoms vary for every woman and may begin **before, during, or after menopause**.

Physical Symptoms

✅ **Hot flushes & night sweats** ✅ **Vaginal dryness & discomfort** ✅ **Urinary urgency** ✅ **Dry skin & hair changes** ✅ **Sleep disturbances** ✅ **Increased risk of osteoporosis & heart disease**

Emotional & Cognitive Symptoms

✅ **Mood swings & anxiety** ✅ **Irritability & forgetfulness** ✅ **Trouble concentrating** ✅ **Loss of libido**

🩺 What Can Help Relieve Symptoms?

✅ **Healthy lifestyle changes**: A balanced diet, regular exercise, and quitting smoking can improve symptoms and reduce health risks. ✅ **Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT, also known as HRT)**: The most effective treatment for moderate to severe symptoms. ✅ **Non-**

hormonal options: Herbal remedies, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and some medications may help with symptoms.

💊 Can I Use Hormone Therapy (MHT/HRT)?

MHT is recommended if you have **distressing symptoms** and no major health risks. You may NOT be able to use HRT if you have: ❌ A history of **hormone-dependent cancer** ❌ A history of **blood clots (VTE/PE)** or thrombophilia ❌ **Uncontrolled high blood pressure** or previous **stroke** ❌ **Unexplained vaginal bleeding**

HRT should be **prescribed at the lowest effective dose** and reviewed regularly with your doctor.

⏳ How Long Can I Take HRT?

There is **no fixed time limit** for taking HRT. If symptoms persist and there are no contraindications, HRT can be continued as long as needed. You can try stopping **every few years** to see if symptoms return.

⚠️ What Are the Risks of HRT?

🔹 **Heart Health**: If started **within 10 years of menopause**, HRT may be protective against heart disease. However, starting **after age 60** may increase cardiovascular risks. 🔹 **Stroke Risk**: HRT slightly increases stroke risk, but this is **rare before age 60** and is mainly linked to **oral** HRT. **Transdermal (patch) HRT does not increase stroke risk.** 🔹 **Blood Clots**: Oral HRT slightly increases clot risk, but **transdermal estradiol (patch, gel, spray) does not.** 🔹 **Breast Cancer**: HRT slightly increases breast cancer risk, but this risk is **lower than the risks linked to obesity, alcohol, and lack of exercise.** 🔹 **Ovarian Cancer**: A very small increase in risk, lower than breast cancer risk. 🔹 **Cognitive Health**: No proven major benefit or risk of HRT on memory or brain function.

📚 Further Information & Support

For more details on menopause, visit: 📌 **Australasian Menopause Society (AMS)**: www.menopause.org.au 📌 **RANZCOG (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists)**: www.ranzcog.edu.au 📌 **Your GP or healthcare provider**

🔷 **Menopause is a natural transition. If symptoms are affecting your quality of life, consult your doctor for the best management options.** 💙