



my



menopause  
(vol.6)

# why is talking about menopause so damn hard?

somewhere between freely flowing in our period underwear and using vibrators for mental wellness, the personal has become public (and also politically motivated - go figure!). for people with vaginas, sharing these intimate moments can be liberating and freeing—but for others, it may be uncomfortable and difficult to make the personal... relational.

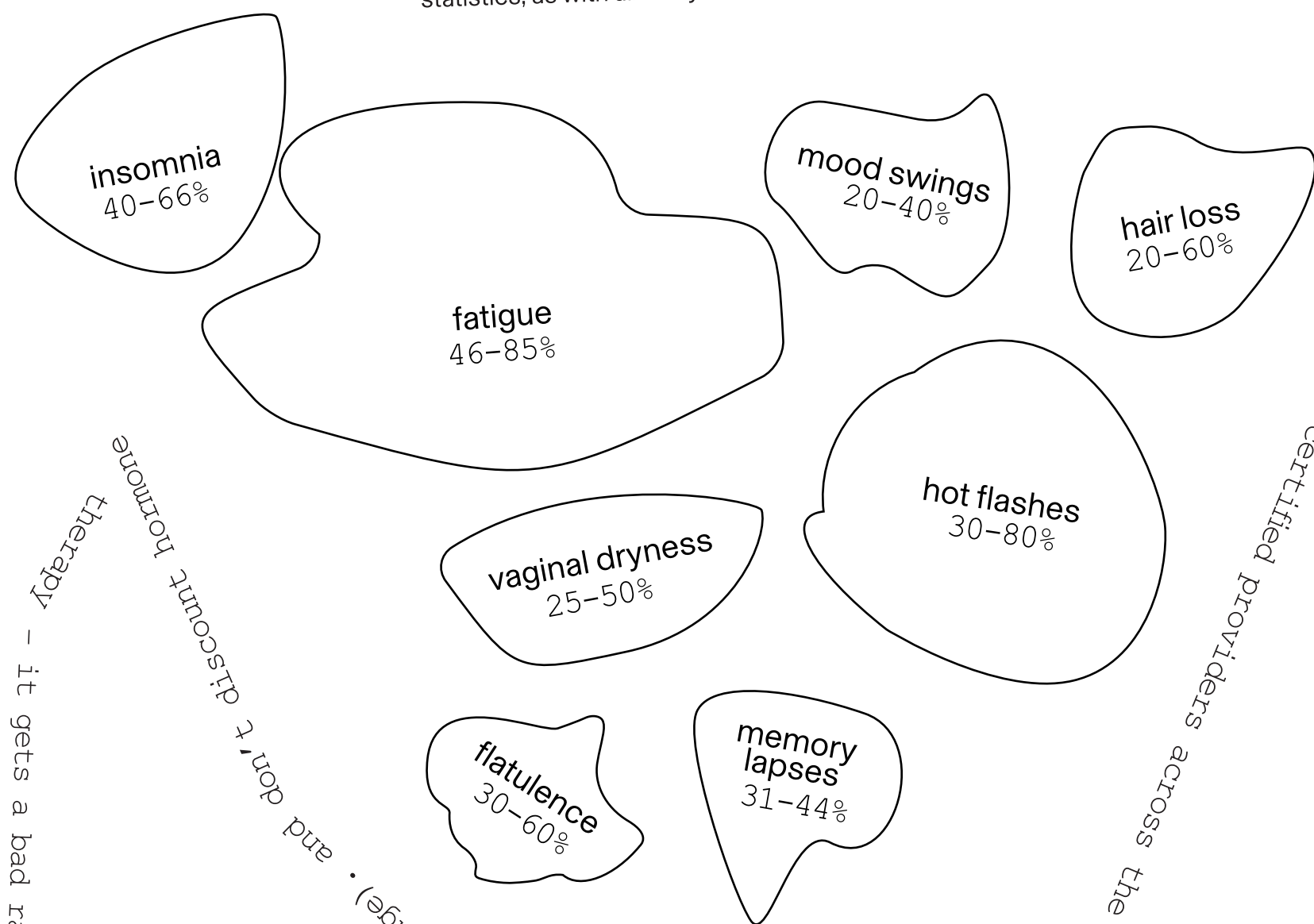
these topics can be tender—especially menopause. we all reach the end of our ~fertile period~ at different life moments. whether our romantic destiny didn't take us where we imagined, we're grappling with the decision of having more kids, facing inconvenient career moments, going on hormones, feeling anxious about our own or a family member's diseases/conditions, or simply concerned about the changes in our appearance—graying hair, skin, and body changes... menopause can be hard. considering that most of us will spend up to 1/3 of our lives in menopause, it's no wonder more people are trying to shift this narrative.

so here we go - menopause - our tender topic of the moment. let's break it down, let's talk it through.

## ii. common symptoms

many of us learn to recognize the transition into menopause by its symptoms. the most well-known are vasomotor symptoms, like hot flashes and night sweats, which occur when the ovaries are not producing as much estrogen and progesterone as before. this transition can sometimes mimic that of other menopausal people in your family, so if possible ask them about their experiences, as it may follow a similar pattern.

not all will experience symptoms and even if they do, they may not be as severe as others. below are some statistics; as with all analytical data, it should be interpreted through your own human lens:



therapy - it gets a bad rap, but it could be a viable option to ease your transition. and don't discount hormone therapy (link available on our resources page).

## i. a shift

reaching menopause is similar to reaching your first menstruation; some even like to refer to it as your second puberty... but with more wisdom and pizzazz. each person experiences the transition to menopause differently. with more attention, understanding and knowledge around what might happen, this transition can be less painful, traumatizing, and isolating. there are many terms about menopause that make this process confusing. we will simplify. there are four hormonal phases in a person with a vagina's life: premenstrual, premenopausal, perimenopausal, and menopausal.

**premenstrual:** the years before your period begins - a phase when you have a set number of follicles (sacs that contain eggs) in your ovaries.

**premenopausal:** your ovulating years - a phase where during each menstrual cycle, some follicles are released, the shedding of the uterine lining. these cycles tend to last until you run out of follicles in the ovaries, which leads to menopause.

**perimenopausal:** often confused with menopause - the timeframe where one is still having a menstrual cycle (although it may be irregular). this transition is frequently identified by symptoms (think hot flashes and night sweats) related to declining and fluctuating hormone levels.

**menopausal:** a phase that begins after 12 consecutive months without a menstrual bleed.

## iii. how we menopause

a curated collection of thoughts and experiences from our community, those who have experienced or are experiencing the transition into menopause.

“ i took on a lover 14 years younger than me. i feel like a vampire, but in a good way. if i were a man, i would call it a midlife crisis. as a woman, it feels like a heady concoction of revenge and conquest. ”

“ find a menopause buddy. someone that you can dissect every part of it with. not a medical provider - although they are a wealth of knowledge, you need someone who you can ugly cry with when things feel hard but also clink glasses with when you want to talk about how you just discovered a new sex position that makes you sing! ”

“ the more you can heal trauma, nourish your body, spirit and mind through healthy habits the easier this transition may be. don't let people tell you it's all in your head. your symptoms are valid. find the right people to help you! ”

“ it has been very challenging. i have always said that i was born to be 19 years old. for the first time in my life, i feel like my body is betraying me and forcing me to think like a ~grownup~. i am trying hard not to think of this as the end of my life as i know it, but it is a daily struggle. ”

“ lube lube and more lube. self care in that area becomes a necessity and will make you feel so much better. find some good products that make you feel cared for. ”

note: we do our best to address the most common symptoms associated with menopause; however, each transition is unique. it is important to find a trusted clinician who specializes in the care of menopausal patients to get the best treatment for your own symptoms.

for more information on menopause and our other body manuals, check out our resources pages at [oddbody.com](http://oddbody.com).  
disclaimer: although we do our best to include the most accurate and unbiased information, at the end of the day oddbody does not provide medical advice. before making any medical decisions, please consult with a professional. please note: due to a lack of gender expansive research and readily-available data on menopause, our manual mostly covers menopause as experienced by cisgender women (people who were assigned female at birth and identify as women).  
special thanks to our medical expert - obgyn and certified menopause practitioner of the north american menopause society (nams) - who we worked with in consultation of medical facts.  
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