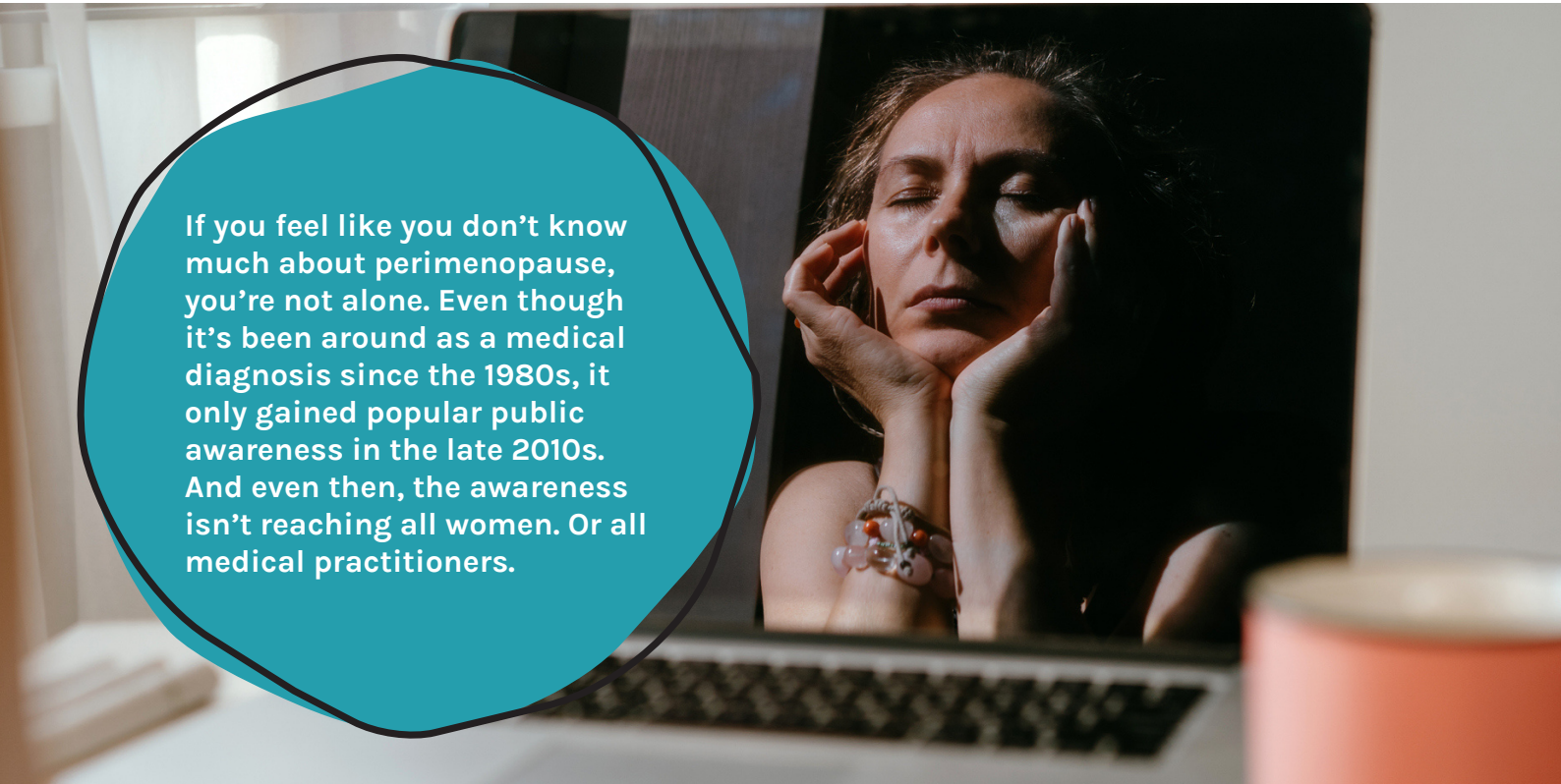




Helping navigate the complex world of *perimenopause*.

A woman with dark hair is sitting at a desk, looking at a laptop screen. Her hands are resting on her face, and she appears to be tired or stressed. The background is slightly blurred, showing a desk lamp and some papers.

If you feel like you don't know much about perimenopause, you're not alone. Even though it's been around as a medical diagnosis since the 1980s, it only gained popular public awareness in the late 2010s. And even then, the awareness isn't reaching all women. Or all medical practitioners.

Often, women are misdiagnosed and only through persistence do they find the treatment and advice that's right. An all-too-common complaint from women just looking for answers from the medical system.

"Perimenopause feels like a roller coaster you didn't choose to get on".

- user on reddit

A cursory glance at the [perimenopause subreddit](#) offers hundreds of examples of this, playing out around the world. The frustration is prevalent and warranted.

"It's ridiculous we have to go through all of this to find relief and be educated. This is something that isn't talked about and needs to be."

- user on reddit

So, to help raise awareness and offer insights and advice for dealing with perimenopause, we consulted with Roxanne Nathan, a clinical manager at Human Psychology. She starts with a quick explanation of perimenopause.

"Perimenopause is the natural transition phase leading up to menopause, when a person's ovaries gradually make less estrogen and progesterone. It typically starts anywhere from the 40s. But it can start slightly earlier, or slightly later, and last anywhere between four to ten years. It ends when 12 months have passed since the last menstrual cycle."

Importantly, Roxanne notes, the timings and symptoms can vary widely, so individual experience can be vastly different. It's also not something that can be prevented or avoided.

Here are some of the common symptoms:

- unusual period timings; longer/shorter, lighter/heavier or months without
- hot flushes and night sweats, trouble sleeping and tiredness
- headaches, muscle aches and joint pain
- vaginal dryness and sore breasts
- changes in sexual desire
- weight gain
- mood swings, low mood or depression
- anxiety

Where do I start if I think I'm experiencing perimenopause?

Roxanne recommends finding a GP who can answer your questions. If your GP lacks the expertise, ask if they have a colleague who could help. It's also critical that you listen to your body and don't be dismissive of potential symptoms. Roxanne says many women tend to just 'push through' because they're busy and haven't taken the time to focus on their health, especially if their focussed on looking after their parents and/or children;

"Don't dismiss odd feelings within your body. Take a moment to be mindful see if it's something you should pay more attention to".

Where to begin if you suspect you might have perimenopause:

- Pay attention to physical and mental irregularities
- Download a helpful checklist of symptoms (like [this one](#))
- Book a GP appointment to discuss treatment
- Get a blood test to determine hormone levels
- Take a pregnancy test

There are medical treatments, such as hormone replacement therapy (HRT), prescription and non-prescription medicines, as well as physical therapy (if needed) but keeping healthy is also key to reducing symptoms and ageing well. Limiting alcohol, being active, getting enough sleep, and eating well can (in many cases) help you manage the symptoms.

Support and resources

If you're looking for more information about perimenopause, there are resources available to read and places you can contact. [This](#) government website has an extensive list of links and resources. As always, a good place to turn to is your EAP. If you're with Assure you can speak to a qualified clinician (through Wellbeing Gateway) who can guide you through your options.

Something on your mind?

If you require counselling, coaching or support, our clinicians are here to help. Call, chat or request an appointment online.

Looking for more resources?



Register for [Wellbeing Gateway](#). Your mental health and wellbeing companion.

assureprograms.com.au

| AU 1800 808 374

| NZ 0800 808 374

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