



Early Menopause

QUESTION PROMPT LIST

This question prompt list (QPL) is for women with early menopause (EM) and premature ovarian insufficiency (POI). These are all questions that are OK to ask your doctor or health professional. You may have been diagnosed recently or a long time ago. It is for women of all ages and backgrounds.

You can use this QPL to ask a few questions that are important to you now. You don't have to ask the questions exactly the way they are written here, you can adapt them. Some of the questions may not apply to you as EM affects different women in different ways.

How do I use the QPL?

1. Part 1 contains the list of questions and Part 2 contains links to further information. The following websites have information about EM/POI and also hints about finding information on the internet. In Part 2 there are other websites listed with each topic which can be helpful but may not be specific to EM/POI. We suggest you look at one or more of these sites first. Then think about the questions that are most important to you right now. Also, if you read something on the internet that you don't understand then you can ask your doctor about it.

General early menopause information

Australian websites:

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/premature-and-early-menopause

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/premature-early-menopause

International websites:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/early-menopause

www.hormone.org/menopausemap/premature_menopause.html

www.patient.info/health/menopause-hrt/premature-ovarian-insufficiency

www.menopause.org/for-women/expert-answers-to-frequently-asked-questions-about-menopause/perimenopause-premature-menopause-faqs

www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/womens-health/primary-ovarian-insufficiency

www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/premature-ovarian-failure/symptoms-causes/syc-20354683

Spontaneous POI

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/742-spontaneous-premature-ovarian-insufficiency

www.eshre.eu/~media/sitecore-files/Guidelines/POI/ESHRE-POI-GUIDELINE_Patient-version_noniatrogenic-POI.pdf

Medically-induced POI

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/319-early-menopause-due-to-chemotherapy-radiotherapy

www.eshre.eu/~media/sitecore-files/Guidelines/POI/ESHRE-POI-GUIDELINE_Patient-version_iatrogenic-POI.pdf

www.bcna.org.au/media/5850/hormone-therapy-and-breast-cancer-booklet-112017.pdf

www.canceraustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/bcmc-breast-cancer-early-menopause-v2_504af03adb71c.pdf

Finding menopause information on the internet

<https://healthtalkaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Fact-Sheet-Using-the-internet-to-research-menopause-related-information.pdf>

Early Menopause: Women's Experiences Healthtalk Australia digital resource

www.healthtalkaustralia.org/early-menopause-experiences-and-perspectives-of-women-and-health-professionals/overview-womens-experiences/resources-and-information-for-women/

2. There still needs to be time for your doctor or health professional to do any physical checks, ask questions also, and talk with you about the management plan that's best for you. So even if you have lots of questions, try 1-3 to start with. Talk with your doctor about other options for having your questions answered. Sometimes you can book a longer appointment or you can see someone else at the clinic like the practice nurse. Your doctor might give you a referral to a different type of health professional depending on your questions
3. Keep your QPL with your other health documents. Look at it before any EM/POI related appointment. Different questions might be important to you at different times, so mark the tick boxes relevant to you so you can use the QPL again and again. You might want to give a copy of your QPL to your health professional to keep in your record too.
4. The following links provide a glossary of terms related to menopause that may be helpful

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/381-glossary-of-terms

www.menopause.org/for-women/menopause-glossary

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PART 1 – QUESTION PROMPT LIST

Causes, diagnosis, symptoms

What is early menopause?

- How does EM differ from natural menopause?
- What are the differences between premature ovarian insufficiency (POI), premature ovarian failure, premature menopause and early menopause?
- How common are EM and POI?
- Can EM/POI be prevented?

Causes of early menopause

- What are the causes of EM/POI?
- Is EM/POI an inherited disease (run in families)?
- Will my daughter(s) also develop EM/POI?
- Should my daughter be told to have children early?
- Are genetic tests needed in women with EM/POI?
- What increases my risk of EM/POI?
- What is medically induced EM/POI?
- What is spontaneous EM/POI?

Diagnosis

- How is EM/POI diagnosed?
- I have irregular periods. Do I have EM/POI?
- What tests do I need to have to diagnose EM/POI?
- How many times do I need to do the tests for diagnosis?
- What do my test results mean?
- What tests do I need to do to find the cause of EM/POI?

Symptoms

- What are the symptoms of EM/POI?
- Do all women with EM/POI experience symptoms?

- Are menopause symptoms more severe in EM/POI compared with menopause at a usual age (about 50 years)?
- What are hot flushes?
- How long will I have hot flushes?
- I have difficulty sleeping. Is it a sign of EM/POI?
- What body changes are associated with EM/POI?
- Does EM/POI cause hair and skin changes?
- Does EM/POI cause changes in urinary or vaginal symptoms?
- Does EM/POI cause changes in sexual function?
- Does EM/POI cause mood changes?
- Are there any special symptoms or signs associated with different causes of EM/POI?
- Can my menstrual period come back after they have stopped?

Sexual, urinary and vaginal health

Sexual, urinary and vaginal symptoms:

- What are the effects of EM/POI on sexuality and urinary/vaginal function?

Treatments for sexual, urinary and vaginal symptoms:

- What is the best treatment for vaginal pain, dryness and discomfort?
- Can lubricants and moisturizers help vaginal discomforts?
- What can I do if sex is painful?
- Can I use more than one treatment?
- Can I have vaginal oestrogen treatment (creams or tablets) in addition to other forms of HRT?
- Does vaginal estrogen treatment (creams or tablets) work as well as other types of HRT?
- Are the side-effects of different hormonal treatments, vaginal, oral or transdermal (through the skin e.g. patches or gel) the same?
- I have heard about laser therapy for vaginal symptoms. What is it and how does it work?
- How can I improve my sexual relationship?
- What is testosterone therapy for sexual function problems?

Psychological effects of early menopause

- Does EM/POI have effects on mood (anxiety, depression)?

- How do I know if I have anxiety or depression?
- I feel tired and have stress most of the time. Is it related to EM?
- How I can improve my self-esteem?
- What are the best treatment options for depression and anxiety?
- Do I need to see a psychologist?
- Can EM affect my relationship?
- What are the psychological effects of infertility associated with EM/POI?

Fertility

- Does EM/POI make it more difficult to get pregnant?
- Is there any chance of pregnancy (without medical help)?
- Do women with EM/POI need to use contraception if they do not want to get pregnant?
- How is infertility treated in EM/POI?
- What is the best treatment option for fertility?
- Can I use assisted reproductive techniques?
- How long should I try to become pregnant before seeing a fertility doctor?
- Do I need to try to become pregnant now or I can wait until I become ready?
- Should I consider freezing my eggs, or is too late?
- How would I know if I am pregnant when taking HRT?
- What are the psychological effects of infertility associated with EM/POI?

Long term effects of early menopause

- What are the long-term effects of EM/POI on my health?
- Are EM/POI effects more severe than menopause at the usual age (about 50 years)?

Brain health

- I have difficulty concentrating. Is it related to EM/POI?
- I have memory problems. Is it related to EM/POI?
- What can I do to improve my brain health?
- Do women with EM have an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease?

- Can HRT decrease my risk of Alzheimer's disease?

Bone health

- Are women with EM/POI at risk of bone loss?
- How common is bone loss in EM/POI?
- What are the risk factors for bone loss in women with EM/POI?
- Does family history change my risk of bone loss?
- Can any medications cause bone loss?
- What are the symptoms of bone loss?
- Are there any tests to check for bone loss and how often should I have tests?
- Is there an increased risk of bone fracture (breaking of bone) later in life?

Prevention and treatment of bone loss

- How can I prevent bone loss (decreased bone density/osteoporosis)?
- What is the best treatment for bone loss?
- Does a healthy lifestyle improve bone health?
- What is the best diet for preventing bone loss?
- What are the best sources of calcium and vitamin D?
- How much calcium do I need to have in my diet?
- Do I need to use any supplements (calcium, vitamin D) to prevent/treat bone loss and are they safe?
- Is it safe to use dietary supplements?
- Do I need to be more active or exercise more to prevent/treat bone loss?
- Is there any specific exercise for bone protection?
- What exercises or activities should I avoid?
- Which health professional should I see for more support about physical activity or exercise?

Heart and metabolic health

- Do women gain weight after menopause?
- Are women with EM/POI at higher risk of heart disease/stroke?
- How do I check my risk of heart disease/stroke?
- How can I reduce my risk of heart disease/stroke?

- What lifestyle changes help reduce my risk of heart disease/stroke?
- What medications reduce my risk of heart disease/stroke?

Breast health

- I have breast cancer- What are my EM treatment options?
- Does EM/POI affect my risk of breast cancer?
- What if I take HRT - how does that effect my breast cancer risk?
- I have family history of breast cancer. Can I take HRT?

Treatment of early menopause

- What are the treatments for EM/POI?
- Do I need treatment if I do not have any symptoms?
- What is the aim of the treatment?
- Do symptoms get better without any treatment?

Hormonal Replacement Therapy (HRT) or Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT)

Overview:

- What is HRT/ MHT?
- What do hormones do and why are they used for EM/POI?
- What are the different types of HRT?
- How effective is HRT?
- Is it necessary to have treatment right now or I can start later?
- Is HRT the best option for EM management?
- Can HRT be affected by other medicines?
- What are compounded bio-identical hormones and are they safe?
- Are there medical conditions where HRT is not safe for me?
- What is abnormal bleeding on HRT?
- Should I report unexpected/abnormal bleeding when taking HRT?
- What happens if I can't or don't want to take HRT?

Risks of HRT:

- What are the risks of HRT?

- Does HRT increase the risk of cancer in women with EM/POI?
- I have cancer. Is there any risk of cancer recurrence with HRT?
- Does HRT cause weight gain?
- I am overweight/obese. Can I use HRT?
- I have high blood pressure. Can I take HRT?
- Is HRT safe for women with a history of blood clots (venous thromboembolism)?
- Is HRT safe for women with a family history of blood clots (venous thromboembolism)?
- I get migraines. Can I take HRT?
- Who do I need to contact if any side-effects occur?
- How often should I have a check-up while taking HRT?
- What should I do if I can't take HRT?

Benefits of HRT:

- What are the benefits of HRT?
- Can HRT help to relieve hot flashes?
- How long should I use HRT for?
- Will hot flashes occur again if I stop treatment?
- Can HRT treat mood disorders and depression?
- Can HRT improve quality of life?
- Can HRT prevent bone loss and heart disease?

Non-hormonal treatments

- What are non-hormonal treatment options?
- What is the best non-hormonal treatment for reducing menopause symptoms?
- Are non-hormonal treatments as effective as hormonal medications?
- Are non-hormonal treatments effective and safe for women treated for breast or uterine cancer?
- Is there any over-the-counter non-hormonal treatment for EM/POI?

Lifestyle changes

- Is EM associated with weight gain?
- What is the ideal weight for me?
- Can a healthy diet prevent or treat signs of EM/POI?

- Is there one best diet for EM?
- Should I stop smoking?
- Do I need to reduce alcohol intake?
- Do I need to follow a regular exercise?
- Do I need to see a dietician?

Complementary medicine

- Do complementary therapies (such as traditional Chinese medicine, herbal medicine, acupuncture and lifestyle changes) help to relieve menopause symptoms?
- Can complementary treatments prevent bone loss and heart disease?
- Are complementary treatments safe?
- Are there over-the-counter products available for EM/POI?
- Should I see a complementary practitioner?

Support groups and where to seek help

- Is there an EM/POI support group?
- How can I get support from other people?
- How often should I see my doctor (GP, specialist)?
- How do I find a health professional that has a particular interest in EM/POI?

Additional questions

PART 2 – LINKS TO INFORMATION

Causes, diagnosis, symptoms

What is early menopause?

www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/womens-health/primary-ovarian-insufficiency

Causes of early menopause

Spontaneous:

www.eshre.eu/-/media/sitecore-files/Guidelines/POI/ESHRE-POI-GUIDELINE_Patient-version_noniatrogenic-POI.pdf

Medically induced:

www.eshre.eu/-/media/sitecore-files/Guidelines/POI/ESHRE-POI-GUIDELINE_Patient-version_iatrogenic-POI.pdf

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/756-surgical-menopause

www.counterpart.org.au/podcasts/menopause-after-cancer/ (podcast)

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/menopause-after-cancer

Diagnosis

www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/womens-health/amenorrhea

www.eshre.eu/-/media/sitecore-files/Guidelines/POI/ESHRE-POI-GUIDELINE_Patient-version_noniatrogenic-POI.pdf

Symptoms

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos/what-are-the-symptoms (video)

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/menopause-symptoms

Hot flushes:

www.reproductivefacts.org/resources/infographic-gallery/images/anatomy-of-a-hot-flash

Difficulty sleeping:

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/949-sleep-disturbance-and-the-menopause2

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos-for-women-from-nams/776-the-menopausal-transition-as-a-risk-factor-for-sleep-apnea-in-women (video)

Body changes:

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/533-menopause-and-body-changes

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/menopause-and-weight-gain

Hair/skin changes:

www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopausal-hair-loss

Sexual, urinary and vaginal health

Sexual, urinary and vaginal symptoms:

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/749-stress-and-urge-urinary-incontinence-in-women

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/722-sexual-difficulties-in-the-menopause

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/sex

www.breastcancer.org/treatment/side_effects/libido_loss

www.menopause.org/for-women/sexual-health-menopause-online

Treatments for sexual, urinary and vaginal symptoms:

www.jeanhailes.org.au/contents/documents/Resources/Booklets/The_vulva.pdf

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/376-vulvovaginal-symptoms-after-menopause

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/817-vaginal-health-after-breast-cancer-a-guide-for-patients

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/menopause-management

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos-for-women-from-nams/816-vaginal-health (video)

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos/will-it-affect-my-sex-life (video)

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos-for-women-from-nams (video)

Psychological effects of early menopause

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/570-mood-problems-at-menopause

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/mental-health-emotions

www.menopause.org/for-women/menopauseflashes/mental-health-at-menopause/depression-menopause

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos-for-women-from-nams (video)

www.beyondblue.org.au

www.breast-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/living/emotional-changes

Fertility

www.healthtalkaustralia.org/early-menopause-experiences-and-perspectives-of-women-and-health-professionals/overview-womens-experiences/resources-and-information-for-women/#a5

www.canceraustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/bcmc-breast-cancer-early-menopause-v2_504af03adb71c.pdf

www.bcna.org.au/media/4448/bcn1189_fertility-cover2017-web.pdf

www.breast-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/living/physical-changes/fertility

[www.cancer.org.au/content/about_cancer/ebooks/livingwithcancer/Fertility and cancer booklet May 2016.pdf](http://www.cancer.org.au/content/about_cancer/ebooks/livingwithcancer/Fertility_and_cancer_booklet_May_2016.pdf)

www.reproductivefacts.org/resources/educational-videos/videos/full-length-videos/videos/fertility-preservation-for-cancer-patients (video)

www.reproductivefacts.org/faqs/faqs-about-the-psychological-component-of-infertility

Long term effects of early menopause

Brain health

www.breastcancer.org/research-news/20130801

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos-for-women-from-nams (video)

Bone health

www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1515187/Early-Menopause_POI-and-Osteoporosis.pdf

https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1515186/FACT-SHEET_Early-Menopause-POI-and-Osteoporosis.pdf

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/self-assessment-tools/know-your-bones

www.bcna.org.au/news/2014/02/new-bone-health-and-breast-cancer-fact-sheet

Prevention and treatment of bone loss

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/228-calcium-supplements-patient-guide

www.bcna.org.au/news/2014/02/new-bone-health-and-breast-cancer-fact-sheet

www.hormone.org/diseases-and-conditions/bone-health/vitamin-d-and-calcium

www.bcna.org.au/media/6468/exercise-and-breast-cancer-booklet-web.pdf

www.menopause.org/for-women/menopauseflashes/bone-health-and-heart-health/bone-health-exercise-is-a-key-component

www.osteoporosis.org.au/exercise

Heart and metabolic health

Weight gain:

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/menopause-and-weight-gain

www.breastcancer.org/tips/menopausal/treat/weight-gain

www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/womens-health/in-depth/menopause-weight-gain/art-20046058

www.newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/weight-gain-and-menopause-mayo-clinic-radio-health-minute (podcast)

Risk of heart disease/stroke:

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/self-assessment-tools/cardiovascular-disease

www.breastcancer.org/tips/menopausal/longterm_conc/heart

www.menopause.org/for-women/menopauseflashes/bone-health-and-heart-health/keeping-your-heart-healthy-at-menopause

www.menopause.org/for-women/menopauseflashes/exercise-and-diet

www.patient.info/health/menopause-hrt/features/your-diet-and-the-menopause

Breast health

www.canceraustralia.gov.au

www.bcna.org.au/media/5850/hormone-therapy-and-breast-cancer-booklet-112017.pdf

www.canceraustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/bcmc-breast-cancer-early-menopause-v2_504af03adb71c.pdf

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/600-nonhormonal-treatments-for-menopausal-symptoms

www.petermac.org/iprevent

Treatment of early menopause

Hormonal Replacement Therapy (HRT) or Menopausal Hormone Therapy (MHT)

Overview:

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ConditionsAndTreatments/hormone-replacement-therapy-hrt-and-menopause

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos/what-is-menopausal-hormone-therapy-hrt

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/menopause-management

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/267-combined-menopausal-hormone-therapy-mht

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/552-oestrogen-only-mht

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/212-bioidentical-hormones-for-menopausal-symptoms

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/1025-postmenopausal-bleeding-including-breakthrough-on-mht-hrt

Risks and benefits of HRT:

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/fact-sheets/what-is-menopausal-hormone-therapy-mht-and-is-it-safe

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos/is-menopausal-hormone-therapy-hrt-safe (video)

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/799-risks-and-benefits-of-mht-hrt

www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/hrt-know-benefits-risks

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/524-venous-thrombosis-thromboembolism-risk

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/560-migraine-headaches-menopause-and-mht-hrt

Non-hormonal treatments

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos/non-hormonal-treatment-options (video)

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos-for-women-from-nams/598-nonhormonal-therapy (video)

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/600-nonhormonal-treatments-for-menopausal-symptoms

Lifestyle changes

www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/menopause/menopause-management

www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/healthy-menopause

www.breastcancer.org/tips/menopausal/treat/weight-gain

www.menopause.org/for-women/menopauseflashes/exercise-and-diet/drink-to-your-health-at-menopause-or-not

Complementary medicine

www.menopause.org.au/health-info/menopause-videos/complementary-therapies

www.menopause.org.au/hp/information-sheets/734-complementary-and-herbal-therapies-for-hot-flashes

www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/cognitive-behaviour-therapy-cbt-menopausal-symptoms

www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/complementaryalternative-therapies-menopausal-women

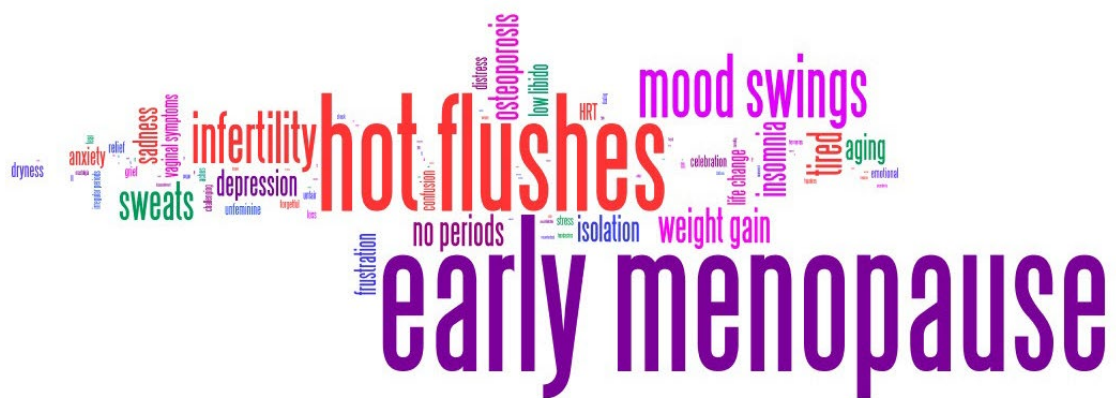
[www.menopause.org/docs/default-source/2013/what midlife women should know about hormone-therapy-alternatives.pdf](http://www.menopause.org/docs/default-source/2013/what%20midlife%20women%20should%20know%20about%20hormone-therapy-alternatives.pdf)

www.menopause.org/for-women/menopauseflashes/menopause-symptoms-and-treatments/natural-remedies-for-hot-flashes

Support groups and where to seek help

www.canceraustralia.gov.au/affected-cancer/cancer-support-organisations

www.bcna.org.au/media/3684/bcn1198_partnerbooklet-2016_online.pdf



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