

For 82% of Women, Perimenopause Wasn't the First Answer

The Gap Between the First Symptom and the First Answer

this is Menopause

About This Data

For most women, perimenopause isn't the first answer. Something else gets the blame before it does.

ThisIsMenopause commissioned this survey because we wanted to understand what actually happens in the months (or years) before a woman connects her symptoms to perimenopause, what happens when she finally raises it with a healthcare provider, and what would have made that process easier.

This survey was commissioned by ThisIsMenopause and conducted online among 1,000 women ages 35–59 in the perimenopause stage across the United States. Respondents were recruited from a Qualtrics panel. The survey was fielded in July 2026.



Key Findings

- 1 Perimenopause usually isn't the first answer.** 82% initially attributed their first perimenopause symptoms to something else, most often stress, burnout, or anxiety. Only 14% recognized what was happening right away.
- 2 It rarely clicks fast.** 33% experienced symptoms for more than 6 months before realizing they had entered perimenopause.
- 3 Seeking help doesn't always resolve it.** 72% faced some form of pushback from healthcare providers, friends or family, most commonly being told it was just aging (40%). Even when women did raise it with their physician, only 55% found the conversation helpful.
- 4 Women carry the burden of starting the conversation.** 76% initiated the discussion with their healthcare provider themselves; only 21% say their healthcare provider brought it up first.

- 5 64% felt their healthcare provider was knowledgeable about perimenopause.** Among the improvements women wanted most: a healthcare provider with more training in menopause (26%) and a referral to a specialist (16%).
- 6 Preparation would make a real difference.** 42% say having something in hand — a discussion guide, symptom tracker, or quiz results — would have made the conversation more productive.
- 7 Women fill the gap with each other.** 48% say talking to other women navigating perimenopause helped them make sense of it, and 59% say a social network built for this would be helpful.

How Women Miss the Signs



Perimenopause often shows up as mood changes, sleep problems, and fatigue rather than the hot flashes women expect, and even once a woman raises it with a healthcare provider, the response is inconsistent. Given how unpredictable the symptoms are and how uneven the clinical response can be, the confusion tracks.

82% initially attributed their first perimenopause symptoms to something else — most often stress, anxiety, or depression. This speaks to the fact that perimenopause often coincides with the most stressful part of a woman's life where she may be juggling a career, kids, aging parents, and chronic health conditions. It also speaks to a gap in information and education around perimenopause.

14%

recognized right away that their symptoms were perimenopause.

FOR THE REST, IT TOOK TIME:

53% took 1 to 6 months to make the connection

17% took 7 to 12 months

10% took 1 to 2 years

6% took more than 2 years

"I wish I had known it can be a long process and hard to understand the symptoms."

— SURVEY RESPONDENT

A woman with dark skin, wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans, is holding a large white speech bubble in front of her face. The speech bubble contains text about survey results. The background is a solid pink color with a pattern of white dots in the top left corner.

72%

faced one or more hurdles or pushback from healthcare providers, friends or family as they tried to make sense of their symptoms.

The Pushback Women Face

WHAT WOMEN WERE TOLD:

- 40%** — that it's just a part of aging
- 27%** — that there's not much that can be done to ease symptoms
- 25%** — that their symptoms weren't severe or worrisome
- 24%** — that they were too young to be entering perimenopause (rising to 47% among women in their 30s)
- 13%** — that their symptoms weren't related to menopause

"I wish people wouldn't be so dismissive of age. I think many women begin having symptoms in their mid to late 30s and are told it must be some other issue."

— SURVEY RESPONDENT



The Healthcare Provider's Office Gap

815 of the 1,000 women surveyed discussed their perimenopause symptoms with a healthcare provider. The figures below are based on that group unless noted.

76% say they were the ones who had to bring up perimenopause first. Only 21% say their healthcare provider raised it.

55% found the conversation helpful. As questions lingered, 60% did additional research on their own after the appointment and 43% reached out to other women

**53%
vs
19%** Among women who said their provider took their symptoms seriously, 53% found the conversation helpful. Among those who didn't feel taken seriously, only 19% did.

49% discussed treatment options with their healthcare provider during that visit. The conversation often isn't the end of the search.

What Would Help

42% say being prepared ahead of time — a discussion guide, symptom tracker, or quiz results — would have made their healthcare provider conversation more productive.

43% wish their healthcare providers had discussed treatment options more.

Among women who saw a healthcare provider, the most requested improvements for more productive conversations were:

- 30%** — more discussion of the pros and cons of different treatments
- 26%** — a healthcare provider with more training in menopause
- 24%** — more time to discuss treatments
- 24%** — more time to discuss symptoms
- 23%** — materials to take home
- 21%** — a discussion guide of good questions to ask



Where Women Turn Instead



"I've heard to get HRT and to not get HRT because it's unsafe. It took me until the last couple months to hear there are safe choices."

— SURVEY RESPONDENT



"Receiving conflicting information regarding the safety of hormone replacement therapy, largely due to older 2002 studies that exaggerated risk of heart disease."

— SURVEY RESPONDENT

This is **Menopause**

Women report that they find information unreliable (57%), conflicting (38%) or generally unhelpful, even in conversations with their healthcare providers (45%). So, it's not surprising that women turn to other women.

48% say conversations with other women going through perimenopause helped them make sense of what was happening.

47% say conversations with post-menopausal family members helped.

59% say a social network for women navigating perimenopause would be helpful.

57% have not found it easy to find reliable, trustworthy information.

55% say the most trustworthy menopause resources are ones with easy-to-understand treatment information, 51% prefer no commercial agenda and 39% want expert-reviewed content.

38% have come across conflicting information about how to treat their symptoms — especially around hormone therapy.

Why We Built This

ThisIsMenopause is a free online community that helps women walk into their healthcare provider's office with better questions, and trust their own judgment about what to do next.

These numbers matched what we kept hearing anecdotally: women missing the signs, unsure where to even start asking questions. So we ran the survey to see if the data held up, and it did.

That's why the platform works the way it does. The symptom checker exists because women need a place to catalog everything they're feeling, not just the symptoms they think are worth mentioning, and see how those symptoms are typically treated, with a clear signal that says "this might be perimenopause." The medically-reviewed content exists because 42% of women told us they would have had a better appointment if they'd walked in prepared. And the community exists because women needed to feel seen first, before they needed a healthcare provider's appointment, and talking to other women going through it is still the thing they say helps most.



METHODOLOGY

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