# Understanding Mood Changes

*How Hormonal Changes Can Affect Your Emotional Well-Being*

## 1. Irritability, Anger & Emotional Reactivity

- Many women report a shorter fuse, feeling more easily annoyed, angry, or overwhelmed by everyday stressors.
- Clinical reviews describe this as mood instability or "perimenopausal irritability," often with heightened emotional intensity and sensitivity.
- Contributing factors can include hormonal fluctuations, poor sleep from night sweats, and the cumulative stress of midlife roles.

## 2. Depression & Persistent Low Mood

- The risk of depressive symptoms and major depression can rise during perimenopause, and some studies show a 2–3 fold increase in major depressive episodes.
- Symptoms may include tearfulness, hopelessness, loss of interest, fatigue, and brain fog, and may occur without a clear cyclical pattern.
- Risk may be higher in women with a history of PMS or PMDD, postpartum depression, prior depression, severe vasomotor symptoms, or chronic insomnia.

## 3. Anxiety, Worry & Panic-Type Symptoms

- Anxiety symptoms are reported by many women in the menopausal transition, with common experiences including constant worrying, restlessness, muscle tension, and sleep disturbance.
- Some women experience new-onset anxiety or panic attacks, even if they have never had significant anxiety before.
- Anxiety may be linked to fluctuating estrogen and progesterone, sleep fragmentation, and the physiological stress of hot flashes and night sweats.

### *When to seek support*

Persistent or severe emotional symptoms deserve professional assessment. Speak with a qualified healthcare professional if symptoms interfere with daily life, relationships, work, or sleep.

# Understanding
# BRAIN FUNCTION CHANGES

*Memory, Concentration & Cognitive Changes During Menopause*

## WHY YOUR BRAIN MAY FEEL DIFFERENT

During the menopause transition, hormonal fluctuations, sleep disruption and mood symptoms may affect memory, concentration and mental processing. These changes are common and often temporary, and can improve with hormone stabilization and other contributing factors (such as sleep).

### 1 Memory Lapses & Forgetfulness

Common to forget recent conversations, misplace items, miss appointments, or walk into a room and forget why.

Objective testing shows small but measurable declines in verbal learning and episodic memory from pre- to early perimenopause and into early postmenopause.

### 2 Difficulty Concentrating & Brain Fog

Many describe a "cotton wool" feeling, losing their train of thonght, being esaily distracted, or struggling to follow a book, meeting or conversation.

Often linked to fluctuating estrogen, sleep disruption from night sweats, and mood symptoms (anxiety or depression).

### 3 Slower Thinking & Word-Finding Problems

It can take longer to process information, and it may be harder to retrieve words or names ("tip of the tongue" experiences).

These changes are typically related to fluctuating estcogen, nlegp disruption (e g, night sweats) and mood symptoms, rather than neurodegenerative disease in most cases.

**IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER**

These changes do not automatically indicate dementia or another neurodegenerative condition, Persistent, worsening or disruptive symptoms should be medically asvessed.