



pause*me***not**TM

HOW TO TALK ABOUT MENOPAUSE WITH TEENS

*If thanks but no thanks is your gut response to the thought of
a talk about menopause with teens, you're not alone ...*

PAUSEMENOT.COM

YOU'VE GOT THIS.

THE BASICS OF TALKING TO
YOUR TEEN ABOUT MENOPAUSE

BY

pause*me***not**[™]

YOUR **GO-TO SOURCE**
FOR ALL THINGS
MENOPAUSE





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DIGGING INTO THE DISCUSSION IS CRITICAL.

The Four S's: Secrecy, Shame, Silence, and Stigma have made menopause a taboo topic.

The reality is that society pressures women with anti-aging and diet culture messages. Doctors promote prescription meds instead of informing us about the variety of menopause treatment options.

And, if you're like me, you got "the talk" about puberty but menopause has been mums the word.

So, why would we get all gabby about this last stop on our reproductive journey with our teens when we, ourselves, haven't even been able to voice our concerns or issues let alone get the education we need?



WELCOME TO THE "M" TALK

With 25 million people entering menopause every year around the globe, a lot of us are in the dark. And, when one generation is in the dark, guess who else ends up in the dark? Yep! You guessed it. The next generation of menopausal mavens and the men that will be their friends, colleagues, partners, spouses, etc.—including today's teens.

How would the conversation go? “Hey, [insert your teen's name here]! Want to talk about the big M? What do you know about it? Oh me? The person going through it who you expect to be an expert? I’ve got nothing.”

The good news? We—YOU!—can bring menopause into the light, smashing the taboo and changing the narrative. As you do, you'll help break the cycle and empower tomorrow's travelers on the menopausal journey and the people who support them, including their teens who only pretend they want nothing to do with them.

But before you can talk to your teens about this issue, YOU have to get the facts. Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start! So what IS menopause?



PERSONAL TESTIMONIAL

“

“Nearly 10 years ago, I started waking up in the middle of the night drenched in sweat. To say I was a hot mess is an understatement. I went to three different doctors, including my OBGYN, to find out what was going on. Not one doctor asked questions to see if I might be in perimenopause. I had never heard the term ‘night sweats’ before so Dr. Google couldn’t even work its magic. It wasn’t until a friend opened up about her sleep problems due to hot flashes (another term new to me) that I started getting answers. It’s never too early to start talking about menopause. Communication is the key!”

— Jamie F., Age 52

”



**“WHEN WE
[ENTER MENOPAUSE]
EVEN JUST BASICALLY
EDUCATED ABOUT IT
AND REALISTICALLY
PREPARED AND
SUPPORTED, WE WILL
HAVE BETTER EXPERIENCES.”**

— Heather Corinna, Author,
[“What the Fresh Hell Is This?”](#)

*affiliate link

01

WHAT ARE THE MENOPAUSE BASICS?

Menopause ... Maybe your mother mentioned it in passing. Maybe you heard about it in a commercial. Oh! Wait! Just kidding. Why would medical companies inform you about relief for menopause, when they could focus all their energy on Erectile Dysfunction? *insert eye roll* Or, perhaps you've heard the not-so-funny-yet-very-degrading jokes about menopausal women. Because what's funnier than mocking women who can no longer get pregnant, and therefore serve their one purpose in life, amirite?! The sad reality? If you've heard anything about menopause at all, it was likely about being able to celebrate an end to that very-special-but-actually-just-dreadful *time of the month*.

The truth is that up until very recently, the M-word has been a taboo topic.

Let's change that by putting our sarcasm aside and diving into the facts.





In clinical terms, and according to the [National Institute of Aging](#), “menopause is a point in time 12 months after a woman's last period. The years leading up to that point, when women may have changes in their monthly cycles, hot flashes, or other symptoms, are called the menopausal transition, or perimenopause.” According to [Healthline](#), “menopause occurs when a woman hasn’t menstruated in 12 consecutive months and can no longer become pregnant naturally.”

The menopausal journey is about much more than waving goodbye to menstruation. It's more than a journey; it's a trip. Here's a quick review in laypeople's terms:

Sometimes, most often between 45-55 (with the average onset age being 51), you'll start experiencing seemingly unrelated symptoms. I'm talking about irregular periods that, when they do arrive, could be so heavy they look like a crime scene in your underwear (cue the famous Law & Order sound effect—jung jung!). Or, you could be leading an important work meeting, be in the middle of a sentence, and all of a sudden forget what you were saying. Hello, brain fog, bad to meet you! And, what about feeling like you're going out of your mind from raging hormonal highs and lows? Yikes! And I haven't even begun to delve into the raging inferno that are hot flashes and their tied-at-the-hip-like-two-12-year-old-BFFs-at-their-first-middle-school-dance, insomnia.

“

Menopause sounds scary. And to be honest, the symptoms leading up to it are no joke.

”



Just like you experienced everything from acne and weight gain to mood swings during puberty and perhaps pregnancy, menopause is a normal phase of life that also has common symptoms, such as:

- Bone loss, causing brittle bones
- Cognitive issues: Brain fog, memory loss, etc.
- Hot flashes and night sweats
- Irregular periods
- Itching (vaginal and generalized)
- Mood changes
- Sex issues: Low libido, painful intercourse
- Sleep problems
- Thinning hair and dry skin
- Vaginal dryness/bladder control issues
- Weight gain and slowed metabolism

For more information, check out our "[10 Most Common Menopause Symptoms](#)" article.

Now that we're clear on what menopause is and the common symptoms that can show up during this life phase, let's get clarity around why we should talk to our teens about it.

2

WHY SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT MENOPAUSE WITH TEENS?

I can't tell you how many times I've heard people ask: "Why would I need to have the 'M' talk when my teens are 30-ish years away from going through The Change?"

But, what's preventing us from mumbling the M-word is much deeper than that.

The discomfort starts when people choose silence over talking to each other or to their partners about their "lady bits." Furthermore, keeping menopause hush-hush is reinforced when mainstream media cares more about men getting it up than the low libido or painful sex many menopausal mavens experience. It's difficult to even think about talking to our teens about the final reproductive stage when we're barely able to chat about our anatomy. Let's face it! Menopause, and all that goes along with it, is taboo. So ...

Let's kick the taboo to the curb.



If teens understand that menstruation and menopause are normal parts of life that may be something to be annoyed by, but aren't something to be feared, the more comfortable they will be with their own bodies.

WHY SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT MENOPAUSE WITH TEENS?

The more we, as parents—or as family members, teachers, leaders, mentors—keep menopause a secret from today's teens, the greater the shame, silence, and stigma associated with it. Adversely, the more we normalize the convo, the more empowered people going through menopause feel and the more connected they will be to each other.

In short, connection is the antidote to isolation and shame. If teens understand that menstruation and menopause are normal parts of life that may be something to be annoyed by, but aren't something to be feared, the more comfortable they will be with their own bodies. Even better, the safer they'll feel asking questions and seeking help from professionals and loved ones. Don't you wish it was that easy for you?!

In Heather Corinna's refreshing view on menopause in her recently released book, *"What Fresh Hell Is This?"*, she states: "How we experience menopause is about a lot of things: genetics, our health and whole life histories, and our current, physical, emotional, social, and other conditions. But it's also irritatingly clear, including from a great deal of empirical evidence, that our attitudes do also play a part ... how we understand menopause and the menopausal transition is often wrong, and how we feel about it and ourselves in it is often demoralizing. If our ideas, attitudes, and feelings are primarily fearful or otherwise negative, if they mostly make us feel bad or doomed, the hate-on the globe as a whole has long had for the people who experience menopause has likely played a starring role."

Preach it, sister!



3

WHEN SHOULD I HAVE “THE TALK” WITH MY TEENS?

When I mention having “the talk” with your teens, what comes to mind? I immediately think of three things.

First, the sex talk my dad had with me and my brother when we were kids (how did my mom get out of that one?).

Second, I’m transported back in time to my 5th grade maturation class. (By the way, who came up with that name? Nothing like making an already awkward class sound even more intimidating, amirite?!).

Third, and perhaps my favorite, I think of that song from Grease 2.

Reproduction/ Where does the pollen go? Am I dating myself? Who cares, it’s a great song. But I digress.

Who's with me?



"This subject has been **taboo** for so long that many older people haven't even talked to their spouses about their sexual problems, let alone a physician."



A MESSAGE FROM:

LEAD AUTHOR, DR. STACY TESSER LINDAU
A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO GYNECOLOGIST



Back in the day, sex-ed talks were typically formal, one-time, educational events chock full of red faces, laughter, and burning questions like, “ Why am I doing this? Did my PARENTS really do this?! How can I end this as fast as possible???”

When you talk about menopause with teens (or even with your non-menopausal adult children), the goal isn't to drop a huge M Bomb and vanish like the last 50% off widescreen TV on Black Friday. It's not a one-time event where the goal is to educate and then return to radio silence. Making discussions about menopause mainstream can only happen if we weave the topic into everyday convos as naturally as we might bring up the bizarre behavior of the contestants on Netflix's latest sex-crazed reality show.

Easy peasy, right? Actually, yes!

Get straight to the point. Don't plan or schedule the conversation. Don't be formal about it. Bring it up when it makes sense and is most natural for your teen(s).

It's like a spider in your bathtub, it may show up at an unexpected time and seem scary, but you're the one in control with the power to make the stigma go “squish.”

HOW DO I TALK TO MY TEENS ABOUT MY HOOHA WITHOUT TRAUMATIZING THEM?

First off, hooha is slang. The actual terms are “vagina” and “vulva.” Gauge what is most comfortable for your teen but don’t be afraid to use the real names for body parts. Additionally, the seven tips on the next page will help you talk about menopause in a way that leaves your teens trauma-free.

With your teen as your guide, you will clue in quickly when you enter the (cue Twilight Zone theme music) Oversharing Zone. The key is to watch and listen. Their body language and words will tell you when it’s time for you to drop more clues or when you should zip your lips. Building trust means honoring their desire to discuss or discontinue the dialogue. Creating safety around the topic of menopause leads to empowered and connected teens, who grow into empowered and connected adults.

You can do this!



SEVEN WAYS TO CREATE SAFETY WHEN TALKING ABOUT MENOPAUSE WITH TEENS

1. Avoid the Four S's

There is no better way to create a safe environment to talk about menopause with your teens than to, well, make the conversation about menopause safe. But how do you do that?

As parents and leaders, today's teens look to us to set the stage for what's safe to talk about, even if publicly they refuse to acknowledge our presence. (Mooooooooom, stooooop it!)

Leading by example and avoiding the Four S's—Secrecy, Shame, Silence, and Stigma—creates Safety. (Ooh, a fifth "S"!) This is as simple as doing the opposite of the Four S's:

- Be open to your teen's questions and convos while making yourself available as their go-to source.
- Without getting all judgy, acknowledge your own feelings, symptoms, and the pain associated with your menopause experience. Start by validating yourself with your thoughts.
- Say it loud and proud in front of your teens. Be vulnerable about the changes you're experiencing and ask your teens to share how the changes may be impacting them. Help them feel that you're all in this together.
- In front of your teens, validate and recognize other people going through The Big M. This helps fellow menopausers feel seen, heard, and safe when expressing their feelings or asking questions. And, your example will not only help normalize the topic but also teach your teens how to treat others.



2. Normalize the Convo When Talking About Menopause With Teens

You might be thinking: “Make menopause commonplace in everyday conversation? I can’t even get my teen to listen to me when I talk to them about stuff they don’t hate talking about. This seems as implausible as expecting my rapidly growing teenager to fit into the same sneakers for more than 10 months.”

These phrases will ease your teens into menopausal conversations:

- (When you forget something) Can you repeat that? Thanks to my new BFF, menopause, I have a bit of brain fog today.
- I’m heading to bed a bit early tonight. Menopause has been zapping my energy and stealing my ZZZs.
- Oops! I didn’t mean to get so testy. The Big M (you know, menopause) is giving me the worst mood swings lately.
- Anyone have a hanky handy? These hot flashes are causing me to sweat harder than you do when your teacher pulls a pop quiz and you haven’t done the reading. (That’s right, I know about that. It happened to me, too!)
- I’m feeling a little down. The Big Change (what people call menopause) does a number on your emotions and I’m really feeling it today.
- My joint pain is no joke. Gotta love menopause. Who wants to “Move it! Move it!” with me? Oh, you don’t know that song? I’m asking if anyone wants to go for a walk.



3. Drop Clues

Becoming Professor Mom and lecturing or oversharing, second only to chatting about your vaginal dryness, is the fastest way to get either a blank stare from your teen or cause them to apply for emancipation.

Resist the temptation to go into full-on presentation mode with pie charts and bar graphs, explaining menopause's symptoms and stats. Keep information short and simple. After all, they get enough schoolwork in, well, school.

If you get a quizzical look or a question like "What's menopause?" or "What on earth is the Big M or the Big Change?", score! This is your teen(s) giving you an "in." Take the opportunity to educate in simple ways by sharing basic facts like these:

- Menopause means going without a period for 12 months or more.
- You know how you got the birds-and-the-bees talk as a kid? That was about the first part of the reproductive journey—puberty. Well, menopause is the final stage in the reproductive journey. It's when Aunt Flo stops her monthly visits. Phew!
- The menopause transition usually takes place between the ages of 45-55 but it can arrive or end earlier or later.
- People going through menopause experience lots of health challenges that can impact their lives and the lives of those around them.
- Though millions of people go through menopause each year, no two people start their journey at the same time and experience it in the same way.
- The most common menopause symptoms are hot flashes, irregular periods, sleep issues, fatigue, brain fog, and vaginal dryness. (See? I told you there was a reason I was in a bad mood.)



4. Poke Fun At Yourself

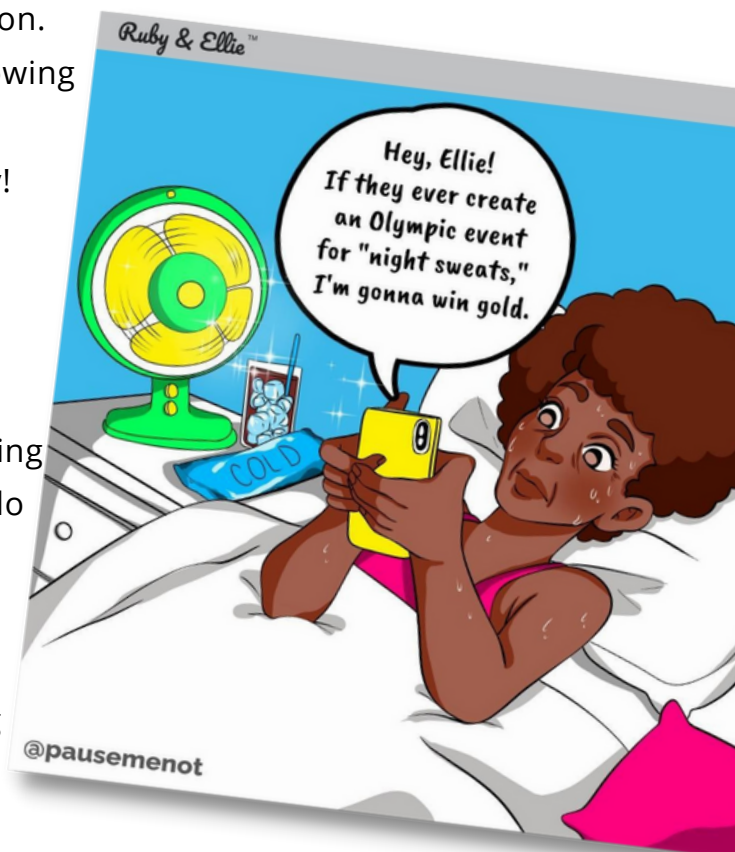
Just like a bunch of reed sticks in a glass of essential oils, humor is a great diffuser.

Don't let the severity of your symptoms turn you into a Serious Sally. Addressing the menopausal elephant in the room with laughter will lighten everyone's outlook, possibly even yours.

The key is to poke fun at yourself while still showing self-respect. Here are some positive ways to do that:

- I cannot find my keys. AGAIN! (Shake fist at the sky like a vengeful hero in an action movie.) Menopause!!!
- What was I saying again? #ShortTermMemoryLoss is brought to you by the Big Change (menopause). But hey, I remembered how to properly use a hashtag!
- Even a little menopause weight can't hold me back. Aren't you glad there is even more of me to love?
- LOL! Check out my chin hair. I'm going to need to carry a pair of tweezers with me everywhere from now on. At least my leg and armpit hair aren't growing at the same speed they always did.
- You're looking at one hot mama. Literally! I'm having a hot flash!

Friendly tip! Keep your humor light, fun, and positive. Derogatory jokes against women, trans men, their bodies, their health, the aging process, the reproductive process, and sex do nothing to help teens embrace menopause with a positive attitude. On the contrary, hurtful memes and comments reinforce the message that women are only useful during puberty and pregnancy, and are useless after menopause.



5. Relate With Others

Treating your teens as equals is a way to strengthen your relationship and improve your communication.

When you share experiences they can relate to, your teens will be more apt to engage in, what may feel like to them, awkward conversations. Here are some conversation starters you can use to spark dialogue.

To Your Menstruating Teenager

- Give me a sec to change. You know Aunt Flo? Well, she sure is a'flowin today. Gotta love the Big Change. You know, menopause!
- How do we get a bikini body? We put our body in a bikini. If my menopausal a** can do it, so can yours.
- Love handles, feeling bloated? They've got nothing on us. We're team #BodyLove.

To Your Teen With Growing Pains

- Oh! I hate when my joints ache. Hormones are no respecter of persons. They get you whether you're 15 or 51. Thanks, puberty and menopause!

To a Daughter Who Has Gone Through Pregnancy

- Even though pregnancy and menopause are no laughing matter, they've still got us peeing our pants!
- I just flew in from the Island of Pregnancy & Menopause, and gee, are my boobs sore!

To a Daughter Who Just Had a Baby

- I haven't seen this much blood since, well, since I had YOU.
- I haven't seen this much blood since the last time I watched CSI: Miami/Law Order/Dexter.



6. Use a Jumping Off Point to Make Menopausal Mentions

If you don't regularly talk about other taboo-like topics such as sex, drugs, and Aunt Flo and all of her baggage, your teens may get a little suspicious or at a minimum, embarrassed, when you start bringing up menopause.

So, start small by using a jumping off point—a subject that allows you to slide menopause into the conversation.

Here are some examples:

- *Dogs in heat.* Oooh! Look! [Insert dog's name here] is in heat. Not even female dogs get out of going things like periods. Can you believe mine will be stopping here soon? For real! No more periods. Woo hoo! Thanks, menopause!
- *Animals who experience menopause.* Did you know that whales and narwhals are the only animals that go through menopause? Lots of animals with ovaries have periods but whales and narwhals are the only known animals to go through menopause. Most can have babies until they die. Isn't that interesting?
- *Period syncing.* True or false? Women sync their periods when they live together. (Answer: False. Recent studies proved this is a myth. What other biological myths have you heard?)
- *Hair growth.* Did you know that in the final reproductive stage, menopause, our hair shifts from growing so much on our arms, legs, and under our arms, but grows more in our nose, ears, and especially on our chins.



7. Make Redundancy Your New BFF

Redundancy is your friend. As you drop clues (see number 3 on page 20), your teens will piece together more and more information. Then, when they need it, they won't be clueless.

The truth is that your teens' menopausal knowledge can and should grow over time. They don't need all the facts at once.

Here are statements to consider dropping into conversation regularly and when it's natural:

- (To a Teen Having a Period) Ouch! Your pain is real. Remember! This is phase 1 of your reproductive journey. One day, thanks to the Big Change (menopause), you won't have periods anymore. Hurrah!
- Think about it! 25 Million menopausal people around the world haven't had their period in a year or more and won't ever have it again. You'll get there too someday. Hard to believe, huh?
- Just like no one goes through puberty in the same way, no one experiences menopause the same. The good news is that people share many common symptoms, so no one has to feel alone.
- Growing is a journey for all of us! Just like you progress through puberty until you hit adulthood, people AFAB progress through the menopause transition. Each phase has unique symptoms.



How many menopausal adults does it take to screw in a lightbulb? None. Someone else should do that job. We're exhausted!



REMINDER:

- Drop bitesize clues. Resist the temptation to ramble on about all the facts or to get all formal by breaking out a PowerPoint presentation. Share one nugget at a time.
- If your teens ask you questions, answer them directly and concisely. If you get confused looks, ask if you can help clarify.
- If you overshare, apologize and redirect the conversation to something you will immediately bond over.

TIP! Taboo topics are always easier to tackle when you relate and insert humor.

WHERE DO I FIND OTHER MENOPAUSE RESOURCES?

Sharing your personal experiences is the best place to start when talking to teens about menopause. The next best place? Credible information or places to connect with other people going through menopause like these resources:

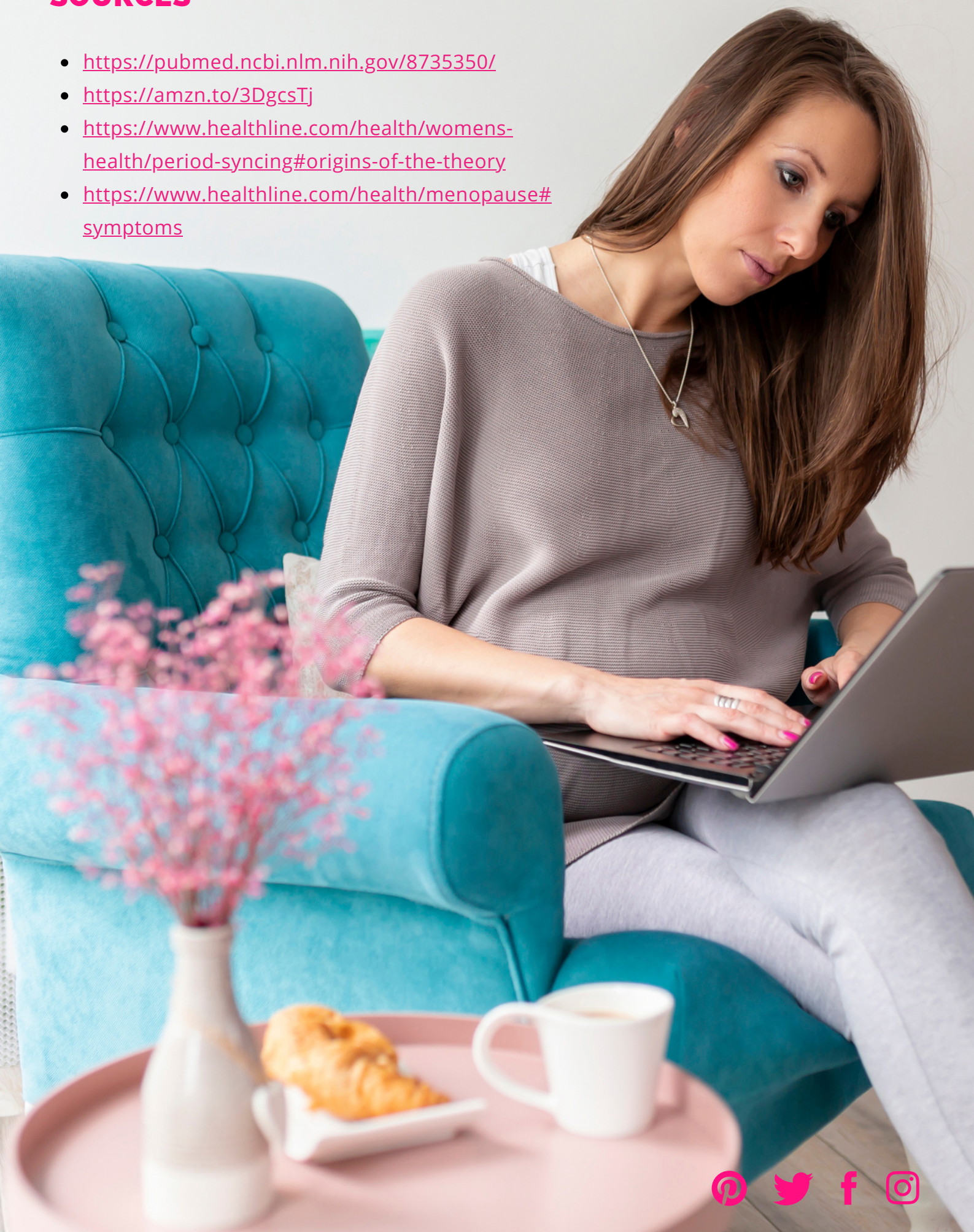
- [The PauseMeNot blog](#). Read the latest and greatest articles chock-full of menopause-related information and resources on our website.
- The PauseMeNot social media channels. Get quick tips on our fun, informative, and community-focused platforms: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and [Twitter](#).
- [Ruby & Ellie menopause-related comics](#). Find humorous Instagram Stories related to The Change.
- [Books by experts](#). Check out our round-up with reviews of the 15 top-selling menopause books.
- [Listen to podcasts](#). See our lineup with reviews of popular menopause podcasts.
- Credible health-related websites. Search online to find basic menopause posts on sites like Healthline, WebMD, etc.
- eBooks. Download our [FREE eBooks](#) on a variety of menopause-related topics.
- Online communities. Connect in our [FREE Private Facebook Group](#).
- Blogs. Read personal stories in [these blog posts about menopause](#).
- [Menopause apps](#). Access our must-download menopause apps.

Friendly tip! If you need help navigating social media, your teens can probably help you with that. This may be another way to break the ice and start a conversation!



SOURCES

- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/8735350/>
- <https://amzn.to/3DgcsTj>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/womens-health/period-syncing#origins-of-the-theory>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/menopause#symptoms>



WHAT IS **pausemenot**?

Learning that most women enter the stages of menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 with the average age being 51, PauseMeNot founder, Jyl Johnson Pattee, set out in her mid-forties to find a one-stop-shop where she could gather information, get educated, connect with women in a similar life situation, and purchase the best of the best products to minimize the effects of menopause's many symptoms. She found that few sites existed and none that offered an all-in-one experience. Worse, she experienced the taboo when talking to or asking friends questions about menopause—an issue that impacts 25 million women globally each year—6,000 each day in the US alone.



Jyl Johnson Pattee

So, Jyl is on a mission to break the taboo by starting a candid conversation about menopause. PauseMeNot focuses on empowering women with the information, education, connection, and product reviews they need to make the most of midlife by living with a “don’t let your limitations limit you” attitude while moving through menopause. Both a community and a movement, PauseMeNot aims to become B Corp certified by giving a percentage of its revenue to charities that support menopause-aged women and involving women in underserved populations on its leadership team, advisory board, and contributor lineup.

According to Jyl, “Women feel a lot of pressure to look, feel, and act like they’re 29 as they move through the aging process. But, when we have information available to make positive choices, like learning to love and take care of our bodies through all stages of life, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in our homes and communities as well as around the globe regardless of our age. After all, empowered women empower the world.”



YOU MIGHT BE THINKING ...

"Wow! Menopause could take me on quite the physical and emotional journey. Scary!" But, don't worry! When life gives you lemons, think of all the delicious, sweet lemonade you'll be able to enjoy. At PauseMeNot, our motto is "don't let your limitations limit you."

Though many treatments exist for the variety of symptoms people may experience in the menopausal stage of life (and we recommend checking with a healthcare professional to create a plan that works for you), mindset is the most powerful and first step any woman should take.

Adopting a #PauseMeNot attitude is key to laying a foundation of empowerment during menopause—a foundation that includes education, action, connection, and giving back so you can make positive choices for you and your body and so you can, in turn, empower other women to do the same.

So, don't put those dancing shoes, rock climbing gear, sky diving aspirations, or bucket lists away. Your most adventure-filled, fun, connected, #pausemenot-style life is just beginning!

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**Don't let your
limitations limit you.**

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MENOPAUSE, VISIT:**

PAUSEMENOT.COM

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER.

