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Approach menopause with knowledge and resources through Ovia+ [1]

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Perimenopause and menopause may be natural, but this significant hormonal shift can present physical, mental and emotional disruptions. Symptoms may be harder to manage if you're unaware of what to expect or don't recognize them as menopause-related.

enrolled in any of CU's health plans can take advantage of Ovia+, a reproductive health app that helps users navigate menopause and perimenopause – at no cost. App users can leverage tools like cycle and symptom tracking, health insights and tips. You can even reach out to health coaches who can respond to your specific questions.

Ovia Health by Labcorp's Care Team will host an Oct. 14 webinar [3] to help attendees better understand menopause and perimenopause, how to manage common symptoms and the tools available through Ovia+.

The puzzle of menopause

There's more to menopause than hot flashes. The estrogen decline that begins in perimenopause can cause changes in sleep patterns, energy levels, muscle retention, bone density and more.

"I was chatting with someone who was experiencing a lot of joint pain and frozen shoulder," said Jhoeny Lamonde, a registered nurse and health coach with Ovia Health, "Which is now becoming more known, but they were having myriad symptoms that seemed like they were not connected."

Once that individual was aware their joint problems could be related to menopause, she was empowered to speak with her health care provider to explore treatment options.

Likewise, people may experience changes in mood, energy level, temper and mental health.

"The mood changes are directly associated with the hormonal fluctuations that are more common in perimenopause," said Elaine Bishop, a registered nurse certified in inpatient obstetric care as well as a menopause society certified practitioner and a health coach with Ovia Health. "The onset of mood changes is more common earlier in the process and hopefully things kind of even out as you become postmenopausal."

Mood changes may not look how you expect. For example, depression symptoms might lean toward a loss of interest in things you used to enjoy, not just sadness or low energy.

"The important thing is remembering to bring these little things up to your providers so that

you can talk about treatment options—because they exist and that's ultimately the important piece," Bishop said.

People going through perimenopause and menopause have an array of treatment options, including but not limited to hormone replacement therapy. Tracking your symptoms and implementing lifestyle and habit changes can help alleviate symptoms and compliment any medication you choose to take. That's where Ovia comes in.

Ovia Health offers two app options [4] — Ovia+ and Ovia Parenting. Ovia+ offers resources and Care Team support for individuals navigating any stage of their reproductive cycle from cycle tracking to pregnancy, postpartum, perimenopause and menopause. Ovia Parenting [5] offers support for parents with children from infancy to age 17.

Register for the Oct. 14 webinar

Ovia Health's health practitioners help take the mystery out of menopause in their webinar, " Navigating Perimenopause and Menopause: Managing Symptoms with Ovia [6]," at 11 a.m. (MT) Oct. 14.

Topics covered:

- Understanding the difference between perimenopause and menopause.
- Managing common symptoms.
- How Ovia+ can support you.

Perimenopause and menopause symptoms can be complex, but understanding menopause changes and symptoms empowers patients to knowledgeably speak with their physician—and to advocate for the treatment that's right for them.

"Not much menopausal education happens for health care providers even in women's health settings," Bishop said. "They're lucky if they get like an hour lecture on it in school, so providers don't really feel comfortable inviting questions about symptoms."

For many, knowledge is the first step.

"How validating is it for a person to be like, 'I'm not crazy. All these little things that have been suddenly happening to me over this amount of time, and I've been bringing them up and people have been dismissive.' Suddenly, it all clicks together," Lamonde said.

"For some people, that's enough for them to kind of deal with it. For others, getting educated on what treatment options are available help you see if that's a good fit for you. If you can live with these symptoms, that's great. This is all individualized, it's what works for you — but not having the knowledge and not having the options is the problem."

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