



The Peri Nation

SYMPTOM LITERACY CHECKLIST

Why Do My Ears Itch? And 11 Other Symptoms No One Told You About

Most women know about hot flashes and weight gain. But frozen shoulder? Burning mouth? Recurrent UTIs? These are perimenopause too—and your doctor probably won't connect the dots.

This checklist covers **12 categories of perimenopause symptoms**, including the unusual ones that blindsides women. Use it to track what you're experiencing and bring it to your healthcare provider.

1. VASOMOTOR SYMPTOMS (The ones everyone knows)

- ☐ Hot flashes
- ☐ Night sweats
- ☐ Sudden heat waves
- ☐ Chills after sweating

2. SLEEP DISRUPTION

- ☐ Waking up multiple times per night
- ☐ Difficulty falling back asleep
- ☐ Waking up drenched in sweat
- ☐ Exhaustion even after 8 hours of sleep
- ☐ Insomnia that came out of nowhere

3. COGNITIVE CHANGES (Not just 'brain fog')

- ☐ Difficulty finding words mid-sentence
- ☐ Forgetting things, you always remembered
- ☐ Trouble focusing during meetings
- ☐ Difficulty with spatial reasoning (getting lost, parking issues)
- ☐ Mental processing feels slower

4. MOOD & EMOTIONAL CHANGES

- ☐ Sudden irritability or rage
- ☐ Crying more easily than usual
- ☐ Anxiety that wasn't there before
- ☐ Depression or feeling flat
- ☐ Low frustration tolerance

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5. MUSCULOSKELETAL SYMPTOMS (The ones that surprise you)

- ☐ **Frozen shoulder** (adhesive capsulitis)
- ☐ Joint pain that moves around the body
- ☐ Morning stiffness
- ☐ Achilles tendon pain
- ☐ Tingling or burning in hands and feet
- ☐ New onset carpal tunnel symptoms

6. SENSORY & NEUROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS (The weird ones)

- ☐ **Itchy ears** (inside the ear canal)
- ☐ **Electric shock sensations** (like being zapped)
- ☐ **Burning mouth syndrome** (mouth/tongue burning without cause)
- ☐ Tinnitus (ringing in ears)
- ☐ Changes in taste or smell
- ☐ Heightened sensitivity to sound or light

7. SKIN, HAIR & NAILS

- ☐ **Formication** (feeling of insects crawling on skin)
- ☐ Sudden adult acne
- ☐ Dry, itchy skin everywhere or (feels like an invisible burn)
- ☐ Thinning hair on head
- ☐ Hair growth in new places (chin, upper lip)
- ☐ Thinning eyebrows
- ☐ Brittle nails

8. URINARY & VAGINAL SYMPTOMS

- ☐ **Recurrent UTIs** (or UTI symptoms without infection)
- ☐ Urinary urgency (sudden need to pee)
- ☐ Urinary frequency (peeing more often)
- ☐ Leaking when coughing, sneezing, or laughing
- ☐ Vaginal dryness
- ☐ Painful intercourse
- ☐ Changes in vaginal odor

9. DIGESTIVE CHANGES

- ☐ **New food intolerances** (dairy, gluten, etc.)
- ☐ Bloating that won't go away
- ☐ Digestive issues that appeared suddenly
- ☐ Constipation or diarrhea
- ☐ Nausea or stomach discomfort

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10. ORAL & DENTAL SYMPTOMS

- ☐ **Gum inflammation or bleeding**
- ☐ Tooth sensitivity
- ☐ Dry mouth
- ☐ Metallic taste
- ☐ Changes in Saliva production

11. CARDIOVASCULAR SYMPTOMS

- ☐ **Heart palpitations** (racing heart, skipped beats)
- ☐ Chest pressure or tightness
- ☐ Awareness of your heartbeat when resting
- ☐ Palpitations that feel different from anxiety

12. MENSTRUAL CHANGES (The ones that signal perimenopause)

- ☐ Periods becoming irregular (longer or shorter cycles)
- ☐ Heavier bleeding than usual
- ☐ Bleeding between periods
- ☐ Skipping periods for months then returning
- ☐ Periods lasting longer than 7 days
- ☐ Severe cramping that's new

WHAT TO DO WITH THIS CHECKLIST

1. Track what you're experiencing

Check off any symptoms you've had in the past 6 months, even if they seem unrelated to hormones.

2. Bring it to your healthcare provider

Don't wait for your doctor to ask. Say: "I've been experiencing these symptoms, and I believe they're related to perimenopause. I'd like to discuss treatment options."

3. Document patterns

Note when symptoms are worse (time of month, stress levels, sleep quality). This helps identify triggers.

4. Don't dismiss 'weird' symptoms

If you're experiencing itchy ears, frozen shoulder, or electric shock sensations, these are documented perimenopause symptoms. You're not imagining it.

5. Get support

You don't have to navigate this alone. The Peri Nation provides strategic support for Black women and women of color in leadership navigating perimenopause.

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IMPORTANT NOTES

- **Perimenopause can start in your late 30s** (earlier for Black women and Latinas due to discrimination-related stress)
- **Surgical menopause can happen at any age** (hysterectomy with ovary removal causes immediate menopause)
- **Black women are 2.4x more likely to undergo hysterectomy** (often due to fibroids)
- **Hispanic/Latina women** are nearly 2x more likely to undergo a hysterectomy than White women by age 45 (often due to "weathering" and earlier onset of gynecological issues)
- **Symptoms can last 5-10 years** (not just a few months)
- **You can still get pregnant during perimenopause** (irregular periods ≠ no ovulation)
- **These symptoms are REAL and treatable** (HRT, lifestyle changes, support systems)
- **Black women and women of color face longer diagnostic delays** (4.45 years vs. 3.34 years for white women)

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR DOCTOR DISMISSES YOU?

If your healthcare provider says:

- "You're too young for perimenopause"
- "This is just stress"
- "Lose weight and exercise more"
- "All women go through this, just deal with it"

You have options:

1. Get your own lab work done

Use Quest Diagnostics at-home lab testing (questhealth.com/shop-tests) to order hormone panels without a doctor's visit. Bring results to your next appointment.

2. Find a menopause specialist

- **Health in Her Hue** - Directory of Black women healthcare providers
- **Alloy Health** - Telehealth menopause care
- **Jayla Health** - Menopause care for women of color
- **Respin Health** - Menopause care platform (Halle Berry-backed)
- North American Menopause Society (NAMS) provider directory (note: cultural competence varies)

3. Get strategic support - The Peri Nation helps you advocate for yourself, navigate healthcare gaslighting, and protect your professional presence during the transition.

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READY FOR MORE SUPPORT?

MAPS Blueprint Session (\$497)

90-minute assessment where we create your personalized strategy for managing symptoms, advocating for care, protecting your presence, and sustaining your performance.

The Tender PathSM Intensive (\$1,997)

4-week foundation program with community support, expert guidance, and the tools you need to navigate the transition ahead.

Executive Membership

Intensive 1:1 support for women leading at the highest levels who need personalized strategies for critical moments. Custom pricing based on your needs.

Learn more at theperination.com

DOWNLOAD & PRINT

Save this checklist to your device or print it out. Bring it to your next healthcare appointment. Track your symptoms over time. Share it with friends who might be experiencing perimenopause without realizing it.

You're not imagining this. You're not 'too young.' And you don't have to tough it out alone.

The Peri Nation

Supporting women through perimenopause—the liminal space between who they were and who they're becoming.

www.theperination.com

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