



Our Geels: Pavee Beoirs,
Menopause and
Your **Heart Health**



**Irish Heart
Foundation**

The National Stroke & Heart Charity



PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

**her
heart
matters**

#HerHeartMatters



How does the menopause affect my heart health?

A woman's risk of heart disease and stroke increases as she moves into menopause ('change of life').

In Ireland, 1 in 4 women dies from heart disease and stroke.



What is the menopause?

The menopause is the stage in life when your periods stop. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55, but it can also happen earlier or later.

Menopause can cause:

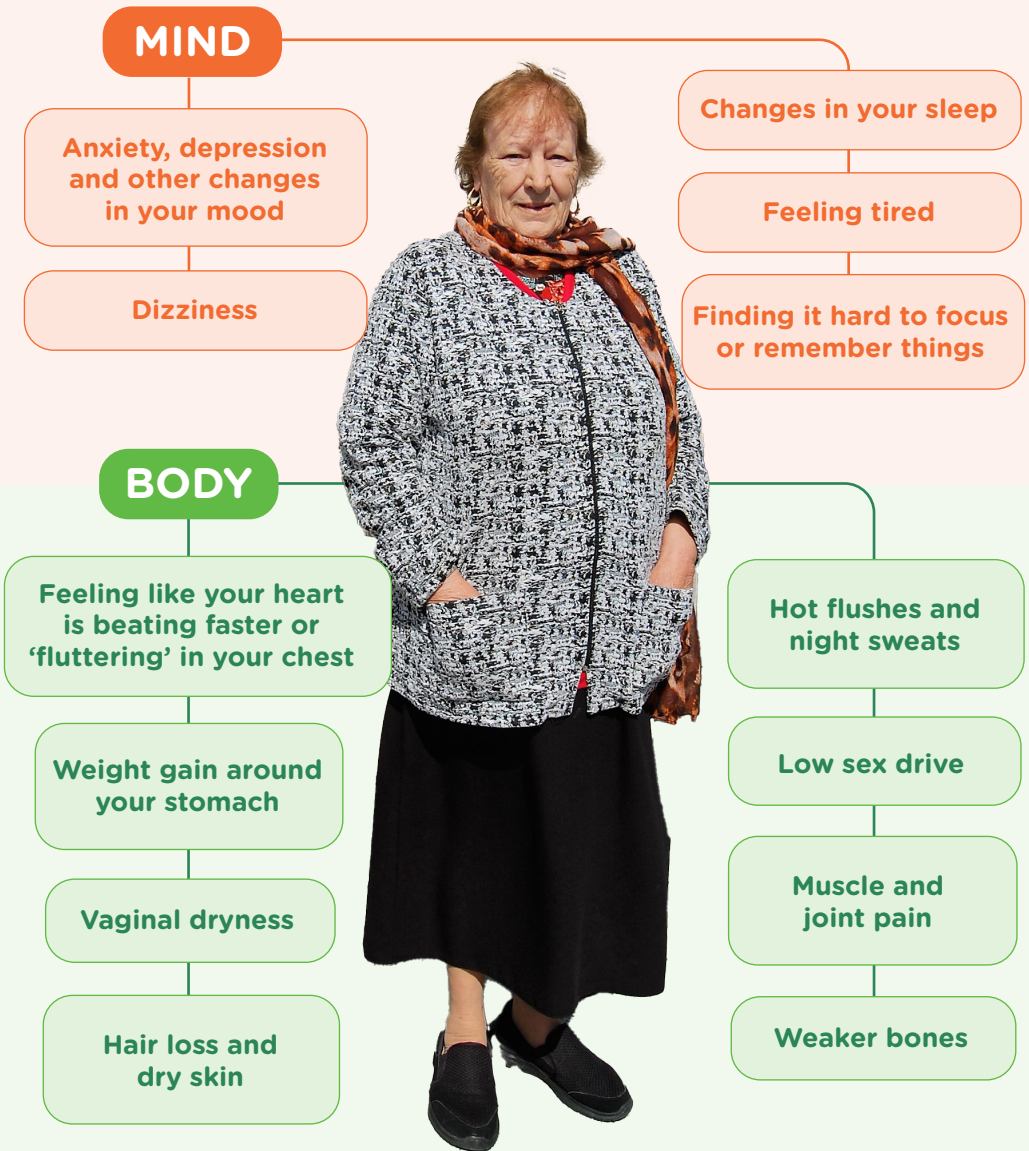
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol
- changes in your body weight

These changes increase your risk of heart disease and stroke. Heart disease means all diseases of your heart (like heart attack and angina). It's important to get your heart health checked regularly by your GP.



How can I tell if I'm going through the menopause?

During menopause your body goes through a lot of changes.



These changes can be hard. Talk to your Primary Healthcare for Travellers project or your GP if you need support.

Does heart health run in families?

If someone in your family has heart disease, you are more likely to get it.

How can I look after my heart health?

The good news is that small changes to your lifestyle can prevent more than 80% of early heart disease and stroke. Here are 6 ways you can keep your heart healthy during menopause.



1. Eat a healthy diet

Try eating more fruits and vegetables, and eat at regular times during the day. Drink water throughout the day too.



2. Move more

Try to get out and about for at least a half hour every day – this could be a fast walk with a friend. Every bit of movement you can do counts.



3. Stop smoking

Smoking puts you at risk of heart disease. When you stop smoking, your mental and physical health improves. There are lots of supports to help you stop smoking, you can call the **National Smokers' Quitline on 1800 201 203 (free)** or free text **QUIT to 50100**. You can also link in with your local Traveller Primary Health Care project.



4. Cut down on alcohol

Drinking lots of alcohol increases blood pressure and can damage your liver and heart. If you do drink, space it out over a week and keep 2 to 3 days alcohol free. Don't drink lots of alcohol in one sitting and try drinking a glass of water between each alcoholic drink. The recommended limits for alcohol are:

For men: 17 standard drinks a week

For women: 11 standard drinks a week



Half pint = 1 standard drink



Shot of spirit (35.5ml) = 1 standard drink



Pint of beer = 2 standard drinks



Glass of wine (250ml) = 2.5 standard drinks



Bottle of wine (750ml) = 7 standard drinks



5. Know your numbers

The only way to know if you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol is to get your levels checked. Your cholesterol and your blood pressure can be checked by your GP. Some chemists can also do this for you. When you are getting checked, ask your GP or chemist for your result and when you need to get tested again.



6. Aim for your best weight

Your best weight is the healthiest weight you can be while living a life you can truly enjoy. Your GP can talk to you about the help and supports that are right for you.



Where can I find support and help?

Your local Traveller Primary Health Care project, chemist and GP are all there to support you. They can give you advice, explain things if you are worried and signpost you to health services.



You can visit your GP to get your cholesterol and blood pressure checked. They can also give you advice on managing your weight and how to stop smoking.



What questions can I ask my GP?

- How do I know if I'm going through the menopause?
- What treatments are available for me?
- Is there anything I can do to help with my sleep issues/hot flushes/ (any symptom you are struggling with)?
- How often should I have my blood pressure/cholesterol checked?
- Can you give me some information I can take away to read?
- What is the name of the medication you're prescribing me and what does it do?

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The Irish Heart Foundation is a community of people who fight to protect the cardiovascular health of everyone in Ireland.

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