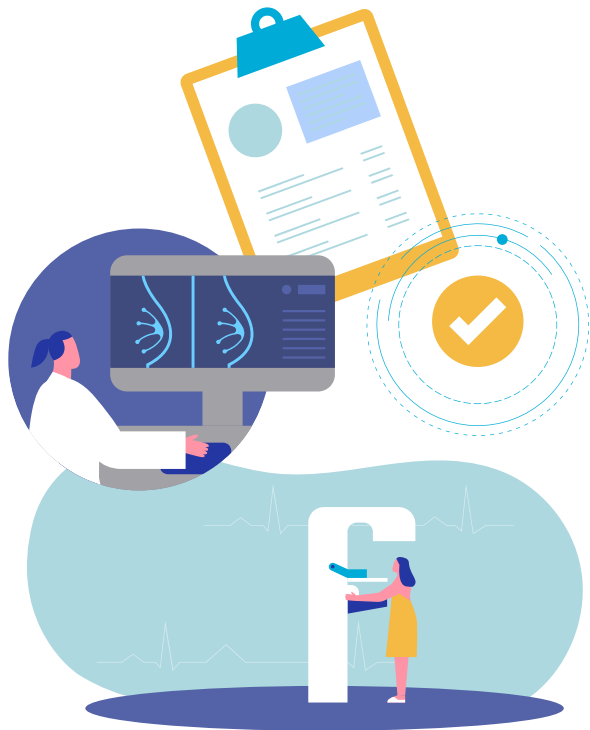


It's important to keep up with your regular check-ups, which include screenings such as:

- Mammograms starting at age 45 for most people (or earlier for people with risk factors)
- Colonoscopy starting at age 45 for most people (or earlier for people with a family history or symptoms)
- Bone density test starting at age 65 to check for thinning bones, osteoporosis, which is more common in people after menopause
- Pap tests for cervical cancer, which can stop at age 65 if you have a history of normal Pap tests and are negative for HPV (human papillomavirus)

Note: The risk of some gynecologic cancers, including vulvar, uterine, and ovarian cancer, increases with age. This is another reason to continue to have regular check-ups.



Women Veterans Call Center

The Women Veterans Call Center (WVCC) is your guide to VA. All calls are answered by women, many of whom are Veterans themselves, who will help you navigate VA, answer your questions about VA services and benefits available to you, and connect you with the Women Veterans Program Manager at your local VA medical center. This service is free, and you can call as many times as you need.

Call or text us at 855-VA-WOMEN (855-829-6636). WVCC representatives are available Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. ET. You can also chat with us online and learn more by visiting <https://www.womenshealth.va.gov>



WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

HEALTHY REPRODUCTIVE AGING



Am I Eligible for VA Health Care?

Everyone's situation is unique and so is their eligibility. To find out if you are eligible to enroll, visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility>

Apply Online or By Mail

Go to <https://www.va.gov/health-care/how-to-apply>

Apply in Person

Visit the nearest VA medical center or clinic. You can locate your nearest VA health facility at <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

Apply by Phone

To apply for VA benefits you may have earned—such as preventative care, inpatient and urgent care services—call 1-877-222-8387

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–8 p.m. ET.
Veterans Benefits Administration 1-800-827-1000
www.vba.va.gov

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & AGING



As you age, your body's production of estrogen and progesterone, two reproductive hormones, lessens over time. The changes in hormone levels lead to perimenopause and menopause. Typically beginning in your 30s or 40s, perimenopause is a time when the amount of hormones made by the ovaries goes up and down. This results in a variety of symptoms, the most common are changes in menstrual bleeding.

Although changes in menstrual bleeding are normal during perimenopause, you should still report changes in bleeding to your health care provider. Other symptoms that may occur during perimenopause include hot flashes, sleep problems, and vaginal and urinary changes. If you stop having your menstrual period before age 40, contact your VA primary care provider to find out if you're going through menopause or if there is another cause for your missed menstrual periods.

Menopause is a normal process that occurs when people stop having menstrual periods. Although it marks the end of the reproductive years, your reproductive health care needs don't stop at menopause.

SYMPTOMS OF REPRODUCTIVE AGING

The changes in hormone levels associated with aging affect people differently. Some people are not bothered by symptoms, while others need medical treatment to manage symptoms. Some of these, such as hot flashes and mood changes, are associated with menopause. They often lessen with time.

Some reproductive health conditions are common with aging and are treatable:

- Vaginal atrophy (thinning of vaginal tissue), dryness, irritation
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Decreased vaginal lubrication during sexual intercourse
- Vaginal discharge—thin, watery, yellow or gray
- Shortening and tightening of the vaginal canal
- Pelvic muscle changes, which can cause leakage of urine and decreased control of bowel movements/flatulence
- Changes in sexual function

It can be difficult or embarrassing to talk about these issues, but it's important to know that they are common and that they are treatable. VA is here to help you achieve all your health goals. Your VA health care provider can help you find relief and treatment for these and other conditions.

