

## Irregular Periods

Menopause may make it very hard to schedule when Auntie Flo comes for a visit. She may arrive early or late, come on way too strong or seem like she is hardly there, and sometimes she even says she's on her way and never shows up... how rude!

A change in your cycle is all an expected response to the hormonal changes during menopause. Many women report having "Irregular periods", where the number of days in between and during menstruation change, while other women report having everything from very light periods to extremely heavy (flooding) periods to no visible period (phantom periods; all of the accompanying symptoms of a period still occur but without visible blood or discharge) at all.

It is important to note that while a change in the menstruation cycle may be the beginning of your body preparing for menopause, you can still become pregnant while you have a cycle, even for women who experience a missed ovulation during their cycle (anovulation; menstrual bleeding without ovulation). Now that would be a surprising retirement package!

A full year without a period often is marked as the true beginning of menopause but irregular periods can fool you where they may appear to be gone, but a few months later menstruation occurs again. Fluctuating hormones are always the cause of any disruption to a menstrual cycle but several health conditions, aside from menopause, may lead to imbalanced hormones and thus irregular/absent periods and should be addressed by a doctor.