Perimenopause and mental health in one page

What it is

What is perimenopause?

Perimenopause is the stretch of years before your final period, as your hormones change. It can bring mood swings, anxiety, poor sleep and brain fog, as well as hot flushes. In Australia it usually starts around 47 and lasts 4 to 6 years.

- Perimenopause is the lead-up to your final period
- In Australia perimenopause usually starts around 47
- Perimenopause lasts 4 to 6 years on average

The signs

What are the symptoms of perimenopause?

Mood swings, irritability, low mood, anxiety, poor sleep and brain fog are the common mental symptoms of perimenopause. Hot flushes, night sweats and changing periods are the physical side. Symptoms range from none at all to severe.

- Mood swings and irritability are common in perimenopause
- Anxiety and low mood can start in perimenopause
- Brain fog means trouble focusing and remembering

How a diagnosis happens

Which blood tests will my GP order?

Over 45 with symptoms, usually none. Guidelines identify perimenopause from your symptoms and your cycle, and a hormone panel is unlikely to change your care. Blood tests are mainly for people under 45.

Medication

Is menopausal hormone therapy on the PBS?

Yes, the main forms are on the PBS: patches, gel, tablets, a progesterone capsule, a gel-and-capsule pack and a vaginal pessary. You pay up to $25.00 a script, or $7.70 concession, from 1 January 2026.

Who diagnoses and who prescribes

Who can prescribe hormone therapy or an antidepressant?

No source we read says you need a specialist. Medicines on the PBS can only be prescribed by doctors, dentists, optometrists, midwives and nurse practitioners approved under the National Health Act. We found no state rule on who may start hormone therapy or an antidepressant. No medicine is approved for perimenopausal depression, so these are all used off-label.

- No source says you need a specialist
- PBS medicines need an approved prescriber
- No state rule on who starts them was found

Who can prescribe, and on what conditions, differs by state and territory. See the pages on your state at haihealth.au/blog/perimenopause.

What it costs

What does perimenopause care cost?

No national total exists. Medicare publishes a benefit for each piece and the PBS a co-payment. The gap on each visit or test is set by the provider, so ask before you book.

In danger? Call 000. Lifeline 13 11 14, text 0477 13 11 14, or chat online.

Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467. Free counselling by phone or video, any hour.

Navigation, not diagnosis: this site is general information and is not a substitute for professional advice. Written by Hai from published sources. No clinician has reviewed these pages.

From haihealth.au/blog/perimenopause, 28 October 2026