



Dr. Jaqui Jones



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**THE MENOPAUSE
MENTOR™**

A Free Guide by Dr. Jaqui Jones, Family Medicine Physician

10 Things Every Black Woman Should Know About Menopause



Introduction

Let's be real: menopause is as natural as breathing, yet somehow we're all out here acting like it's a secret society nobody told us about. Too many Black women are navigating this journey in silence—Googling symptoms at 2 AM, wondering if we're losing our minds, getting dismissed by doctors who should know better, or just straight-up confused about what's normal and what needs attention.

Well, I'm here to break that silence. This guide is your straight-talk companion—no medical jargon that makes your eyes glaze over, no sugarcoating, and definitely no “just deal with it” energy. These are ten things you absolutely need to know so you can understand what's happening in your body, advocate for yourself like the boss you are, and not just survive this transition, but actually thrive through it. Because you deserve more than to just white-knuckle your way through hot flashes and hope for the best.



Menopause Doesn't Happen Overnight

(Unfortunately, Neither Does a Good Night's Sleep)

Here's the thing they conveniently forget to mention in health class (along with literally everything else useful): menopause isn't like flipping a light switch. You don't just wake up one day and boom—menopause. If only it were that simple.

There's this whole phase called **perimenopause** —basically menopause's long, dramatic entrance. It can start in your 40s, or sometimes even earlier if your body's an overachiever. During this time, your hormones are basically at a house party with no supervision. One month your period shows up right on time, the next month it ghosts you completely. You might get hit with random hot flashes that make you want to stick your head in the freezer, or find yourself wide awake at 3 AM wondering why you're thinking about that embarrassing thing you said in 2009.

These aren't random occurrences or signs that you're "just stressed." They're signals. Your body is talking to you, and the more you understand what it's saying, the less you'll feel blindsided. Knowledge is power, and in this case, it's also the difference between suffering in confusion and handling your business with confidence.



Black Women Often Experience Symptoms Earlier

(Because Apparently We Don't Have Enough Going On)

So here's some news that feels about as fair as a two-dollar bill: research shows that Black women tend to enter menopause earlier than other groups, and our symptoms often hit harder. Like, significantly harder. We're talking more intense hot flashes, longer perimenopause, and symptoms that last longer overall.

This isn't something we're imagining, and it's not because we're "weak" or "too sensitive." (Side note: can we retire those phrases permanently?) This is actual, documented science. There are lots of factors at play—genetics, stress (and let's be honest, being a Black woman in America comes with its own special brand of chronic stress), healthcare disparities, and more. The point is: if you're in your early-to-mid 40s and things are starting to feel... different, you're not too young.

You're not overreacting. And you're definitely not alone. Knowing this helps you prepare, get ahead of symptoms, and seek care sooner rather than waiting until you're ready to flip a table. Don't let anyone—doctor, friend, or that aunt who means well but doesn't have all the facts—tell you it's "too early" to be experiencing menopause symptoms. Your body doesn't operate on someone else's timeline.

Hot Flashes Aren't the Only Symptom

(But They Sure Do Like to Show Up Uninvited)

Okay, yes. Hot flashes are real, they're miserable, and they have terrible timing—important work meeting? Date night? In the middle of the grocery store? That's when they strike. They're like that relative who shows up to the function unannounced and makes everything about them.

But here's what they don't put on the brochure: hot flashes are just the opening act. Menopause comes with a whole roster of symptoms that can catch you completely off guard:

- Mood swings that make you feel like you're on an emotional roller coaster you never bought a ticket for
- Brain fog so thick you forget what you walked into a room for (and sometimes what you were saying mid-sentence)
- Hair changes—thinning on your head, showing up in new places you'd rather it didn't
- Skin changes that no amount of your favorite lotion seems to fix - Weight shifts even though you're eating the same and moving the same
- Vaginal dryness that nobody wants to talk about but everyone needs to know about
- Sleep problems that leave you exhausted but somehow still wired
- Joint pain that makes you sound like a bowl of Rice Krispies when you stand up

When you understand the full picture—not just the highlight reel—you can address each issue directly instead of wondering what's wrong with you. (Spoiler alert: nothing is wrong with you. Your hormones are just going through a phase. A long, complicated phase.)





Your Heart Health Matters More Than Ever

(Yes, Even More Than That Group Chat Drama)

Real talk: After menopause, your risk for heart disease increases. And for Black women, this is especially critical because we already face higher rates of cardiovascular issues even before menopause enters the chat. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, and it doesn't get nearly enough airtime.

When your estrogen levels drop, you lose some of the natural protection it provided your heart and blood vessels. This means staying on top of your heart health isn't just a good idea—it's essential.

What does that look like practically?

- **Regular check-ups:** Blood pressure, cholesterol, the works. Don't skip them.
- **Movement:** You don't have to become a marathon runner (unless that's your thing), but regular physical activity—walking, dancing, swimming, whatever you enjoy keeps your heart strong.
- **Eating well:** We're not talking about restrictive diets or deprivation. We're talking about nourishing your body with foods that support your heart—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats.
- **Stress management:** Chronic stress is terrible for your heart. Finding ways to decompress—whether that's meditation, therapy, hobbies, or just saying “no” more often—is an investment in your health.

Your heart has been working overtime for decades. Give it the attention and care it deserves.

Bone Health Deserves Attention

(Before Your Bones Start Demanding It)

Here's something else that happens when estrogen takes its exit:

01

Your bone density starts to decline. Estrogen helps keep your bones strong, so when those levels drop, your bones can become more fragile. This increases your risk for osteoporosis and fractures—things that can seriously impact your quality of life as you age.

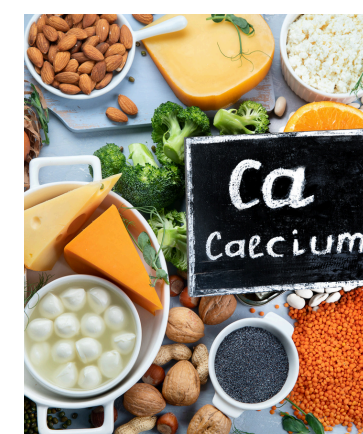


The good news? You're not powerless here. There's plenty you can do to keep your bones strong:

02

Calcium:

Aim for about 1,200 mg per day after age 50. Dairy, leafy greens, fortified foods—get it where you can.



03

Vitamin D:

This helps your body actually absorb that calcium. Sunlight, supplements, fortified foods—this vitamin is a team player you need on your roster.



04

Weight-bearing exercise:

Walking, dancing, strength training, even gardening. Activities that make your bones work against gravity help keep them dense and strong.



05

Bone density screenings:

Talk to your doctor about when you should get a baseline DEXA scan to check your bone health.



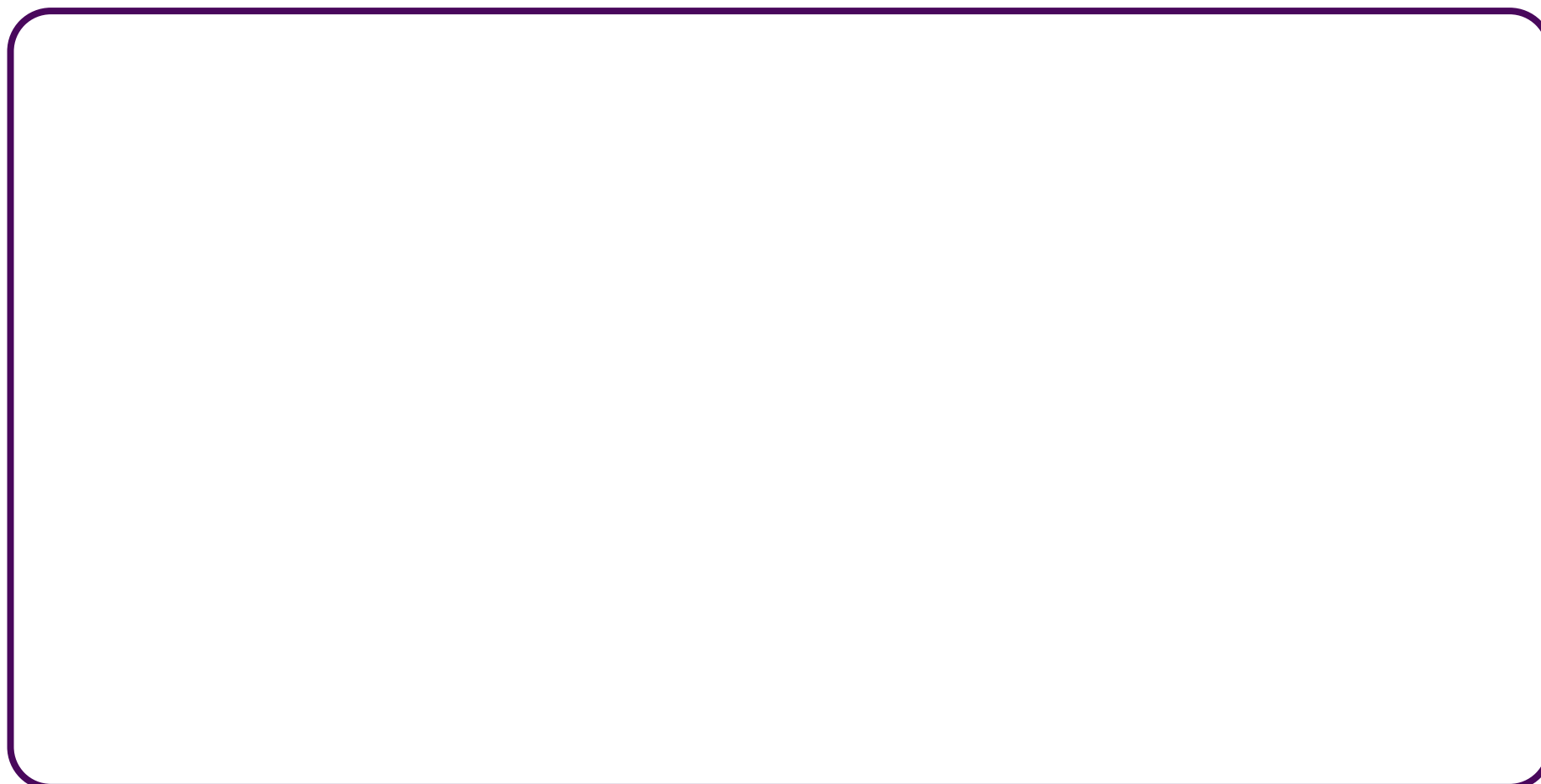
Think of this as investing in your future mobility. You want to be the woman in her 70s and 80s who's still doing her thing, not sitting on the sidelines because of a preventable fracture. Your future self is counting on the choices you make today.

Mental & Emotional Wellness Are Just as Important (Maybe Even More So)

Let's talk about something that doesn't get enough attention: menopause isn't just a physical experience. It can absolutely mess with your mental and emotional well-being, and that's not a character flaw—it's hormones doing what hormones do.

You might notice:

- Increased anxiety or feelings of being on edge for no clear reason
- Sadness or depression that seems to come out of nowhere
- Irritability that makes you want to snap at people you actually like
- A sense of loss or grief about this life transition
- Questions about identity—"Who am I if I'm not [fill in the blank]?"



All of this is valid. All of it is real. And none of it means you're "weak" or "can't handle it."

Here's the thing:

We spend so much time taking care of everyone else that we forget to check in with ourselves. Menopause can be a wake-up call—your body and mind are asking for attention.

What can help:



Therapy or counseling:

01

Talking to a professional who gets it can be life-changing.



Journaling

02

Getting thoughts out of your head and onto paper can bring clarity.



Community:

03

Connecting with other women going through the same thing reminds you that you're not alone or crazy.

Here's the thing:



Self-compassion

01

Be as kind to yourself as you would be to your best friend going through this.

Your mental health is not separate from your physical health—they're deeply connected. Taking care of your emotional well-being isn't selfish; it's necessary





You Still Have Choices for Sexual Health

(And No, Your Love Life Isn't Over)

Let's address the elephant in the room: somewhere along the line, we got the message that menopause means your sex life goes into retirement. That intimacy is just... done.

That's nonsense. Complete and utter nonsense. Yes, menopause can bring challenges to your sexual health—vaginal dryness, decreased libido, discomfort during sex, changes in how your body responds. These are real issues, and they can be frustrating.

But here's what you need to know: **they're treatable**

You have options:

5 Options

1

Lubricants and moisturizers

Water-based, silicone-based—there are excellent products that make a real difference.

2

Vaginal estrogen:

Low-dose local estrogen treatments can help with dryness and discomfort without systemic effects.

3

Hormone therapy

For some women, this can help with libido and other symptoms (talk to your doctor about what's right for you).

4

Pelvic floor therapy

Yes, it's a thing, and yes, it can help with comfort and function.

5

Culpa, mollitauteenimidculpatempor codex

Talking with your partner about what's changing and what you need can deepen intimacy in new ways.

You deserve to feel good in your body. You deserve pleasure, connection, and intimacy—whatever that looks like for you. Don't suffer in silence because you think this is “just how it is now.” It doesn't have to be. And if your doctor seems uncomfortable discussing this with you, find one who isn't. Your sexual health is part of your overall health, period.

Lifestyle Shifts Make a Big Difference

(Small Changes, Big Impact)

I'm not about to tell you to overhaul your entire life. Nobody has time or energy for that. But here's the truth: small, consistent changes in how you eat, move, sleep, and manage stress can have a massive impact on how you feel during menopause.

01

Nutrition

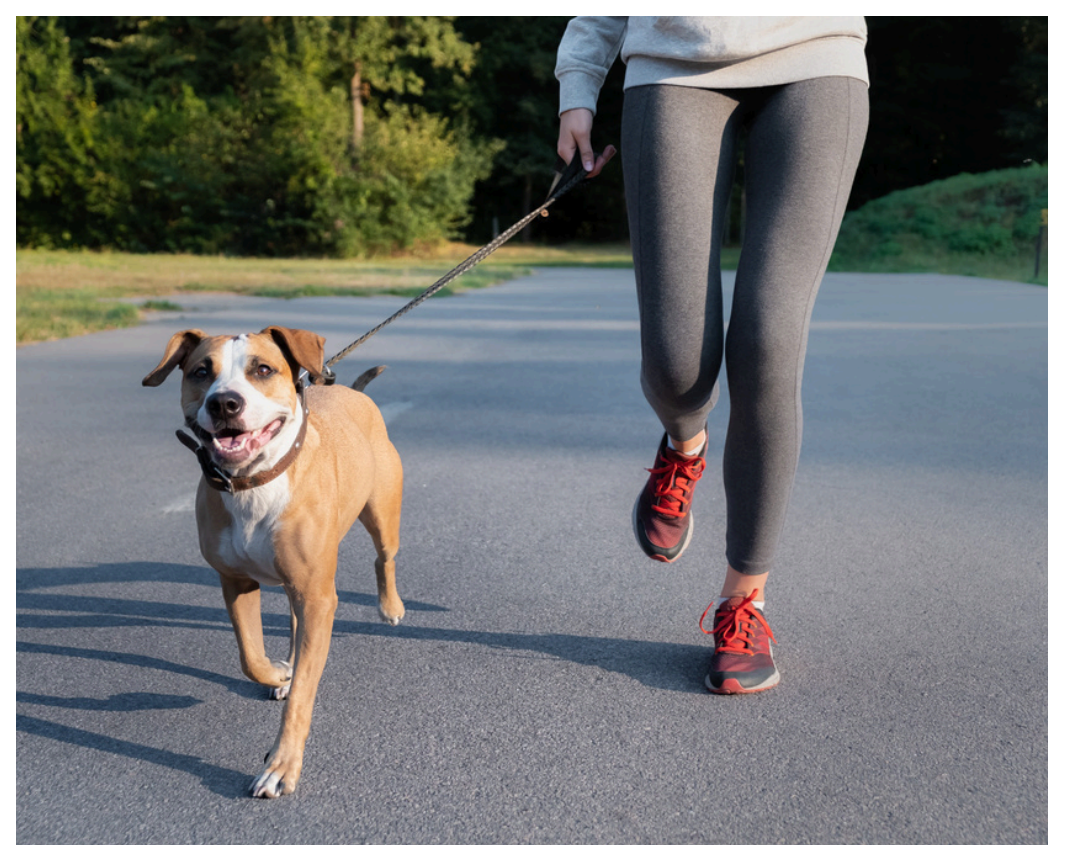
You don't need a restrictive diet or to give up everything you love. But focusing on whole foods—plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, healthy fats—gives your body the fuel it needs. Stay hydrated. Limit alcohol and caffeine if they trigger hot flashes. Notice what makes you feel good versus what makes you feel sluggish



02

Movement

Find something you actually enjoy. If you hate running, don't run. Dance in your living room. Walk with a friend. Try yoga. Lift weights. Swim. Garden. The best exercise is the one you'll actually do consistently.



03

Sleep

I know, I know—easier said than done when menopause is messing with your sleep. But creating a cool, dark, quiet sleeping environment, having a consistent bedtime routine, and limiting screens before bed can help. If sleep problems persist, talk to your doctor.



02

Stress management

Chronic stress makes every menopause symptom worse. Finding ways to decompress—meditation, deep breathing, therapy, hobbies, time in nature, saying no to things that drain you—isn't a luxury. It's survival.



You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to do everything at once. Pick one thing and start there. Build on it. Progress over perfection, always.

You Deserve to Be Heard by Your Doctor

(And If They Won't Listen, Find One Who Will)

Let me tell you something that might make you angry: too many women—especially Black women—get dismissed when they bring up menopause symptoms to their doctors. We're told we're "too young," that it's "just stress," that we should "try to relax" or "lose some weight" as if that's the answer to everything.

This is not okay. Not even a little bit. Medical gaslighting is real, and it's especially prevalent in how Black women are treated in healthcare settings. Our pain is minimized, our symptoms are dismissed, and our concerns are waved away. Here's what you need to know: You are the expert on your own body. You know when something feels off. You know what's normal for you and what isn't.

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You Deserve to Be Heard by Your Doctor

(And If They Won't Listen, Find One Who Will)

Come prepared:

Write down your symptoms, when they happen, how long they last, and how they affect your daily life.

Be specific:

Instead of “I feel bad,” say “I’m having hot flashes 10 times a day, I can’t sleep more than 4 hours, and I’m having trouble concentrating at work.”

Ask questions:

“What else could this be?” “What are my treatment options?” “Why are you ruling out menopause?”

Don't accept dismissal:

If your doctor brushes you off, say clearly: “I need you to take my concerns seriously. What can we do to address these symptoms?”

Get a second opinion:

If your doctor still won't listen, find one who will. You deserve quality care.

Bring support:

Sometimes having someone with you helps—they can take notes and back you up.

Your symptoms are real. Your concerns are valid. You deserve a healthcare provider who listens, respects you, and works with you to find solutions. If your current doctor isn't that person, they're not the right doctor for you.



This Is a Season of Power, Not Just Change

(You're Not Ending, You're Evolving)

Here's what nobody tells you about menopause: it can actually be liberating.

Yes, the symptoms are real and sometimes rough. Yes, the transition can be challenging.

But menopause isn't an ending—it's a doorway into a new chapter of your life. And that chapter can be full of clarity, confidence, and freedom you might not have experienced before.



Think about it:

- No more worrying about periods or pregnancy
- Often, a clearer sense of who you are and what you want
- Less patience for nonsense (and more courage to say so)
- Wisdom that can only come from lived experience
- The freedom to prioritize yourself in ways you maybe couldn't before

Many women report that their post-menopausal years are some of their best. They feel more comfortable in their skin, more confident in their choices, more willing to take up space and use their voice.

Is this true for everyone? No—and that's okay.

Everyone's journey is different. But the narrative that menopause is just loss and decline? That's incomplete and, honestly, insulting. You're not withering. You're not becoming irrelevant. You're stepping into a season where you get to define what matters, what you'll tolerate, and how you'll spend your energy. This is your time. Not to fade into the background, but to shine in ways you choose.

The wisdom you've accumulated, the strength you've developed, the grace you've learned—all of it comes with you into this next chapter. Menopause doesn't diminish you. If anything, it can reveal just how powerful you've always been.

Closing & Next Steps

(Because You Don't Have to Do This Alone)

Look, I'll be straight with you: navigating menopause can feel overwhelming. There's a lot happening in your body, a lot to learn, and sometimes not enough support. But here's what I want you to walk away knowing—you don't have to do this alone, and you absolutely don't have to suffer in silence.** You deserve real answers from people who understand both the medicine and the experience. You deserve treatment options that actually work for your life. You deserve support that meets you where you are—not where someone thinks you should be.

This guide is just the beginning. If you want to go deeper—if you're ready for personalized guidance, community with other women who get it, or just someone in your corner who will listen and help you create a plan that actually works for your life—I'm here for that.

Here's what you can do next:

➔ **Download the full resource guide**

More detailed information, practical tips, and resources you can actually use

➔ **Join the community**

Connect with other women navigating this same journey—share experiences, ask questions, and support each other

➔ **Schedule a consultation:**

Let's talk about your specific symptoms, concerns, and goals, and create a personalized plan to help you thrive

Menopause is a natural part of life, but that doesn't mean you have to just "tough it out."

You deserve to feel good in your body, to have your concerns taken seriously, and to move through this transition with confidence. You've been strong your whole life—for your family, your community, your work.

Now it's time to channel some of that strength toward taking care of yourself. Not because you have to earn it, but because you deserve it. Let's navigate this season together—with honesty, support, and a whole lot of grace.

You've got this. And I've got you.

Dr. Jaqui Jones

Family Medicine Physician

Your partner in health, not just another doctor

