

Hot flushes or sweating

Hot flushes and sweats are the most common [symptoms of the menopause](#).

The ovaries produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone. These hormones control your periods (monthly cycle).

During the menopause, the ovaries stop making these hormones. This means your periods become less regular and stop. For most people, this happens between the ages of 45 and 55.

Some cancer treatments may cause an early menopause or side effects similar to menopausal symptoms.

- [Chemotherapy](#) may cause an early menopause. This is more likely to happen if you are closer to your natural menopause.
- [Surgery](#) that removes the ovaries will cause a permanent menopause.
- [Radiotherapy to the pelvis](#) can also cause an early menopause.
- [Breast cancer](#) treatment usually involves [hormonal therapy](#). Hormonal treatments may cause menopausal symptoms or a temporary menopause. This is because these treatments block the effects of oestrogen on breast cancer cells, or reduce oestrogen in the body.
- Hormonal therapy is also used to treat [prostate cancer](#). A side effect of the drugs used is hot flushes and sweats.

Tips for managing hot flushes and sweats

- Keep a record of when you have flushes to see if something triggers them.
- Wear natural fabrics, such as cotton.
- Dress in layers, so you can remove clothes when you need to.
- Use cotton sheets and pillows that are designed to keep you cool.
- Have layers of bedding that you can easily take off during the night.
- Keep the room temperature cool or use a fan.
- Have cold drinks rather than hot ones, and drink less alcohol.
- If you smoke, [stop or smoke less](#).
- If you are overweight, lose weight, if it is suitable for you to.
- Try [complementary therapies](#), such as controlled breathing or yoga.
- Talk to your doctor about medicines to reduce hot flushes and sweats.

If you are thinking of starting a complementary therapy, talk to your cancer doctor or specialist nurse. Some complementary therapies may interfere with your breast cancer medicines.

Macmillan Cancer Support resources

We have more information on our [website](#), including audiobooks. Or you can order our free booklets and leaflets on be.macmillan.org.uk such as:

- [Understanding breast cancer in women](#)
- [Understanding early \(localised\) prostate cancer](#)
- [Understanding locally advanced prostate cancer](#)
- [Understanding advanced \(metastatic\) prostate cancer](#)
- [Cancer and complementary therapies.](#)

We produce information in a [range of formats](#) and [languages](#). To order these, visit our website or call our support line.

Further Macmillan support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. Or visit macmillan.org.uk where you can [chat to us online](#).

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us in English the language you would like to use.

Or if you want to share your experiences or ask questions, you can find others who understand on our [Online Community](#).

Other useful contact details

- The British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA) – visit www.bcma.co.uk
- Daisy Network – visit www.daisynetwork.org

Notes and questions
