

Hot flushes or sweating

Hot flushes and sweats is the most common menopausal symptom.

Before menopause, the ovaries produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone. These hormones control a woman's periods (monthly cycle). During the menopause, regular periods gradually stop as the ovaries stop making these hormones. For most women, this happens naturally between the ages of 45 and 55.

Some cancer treatments can cause an early menopause for some women, or side effects similar to menopausal symptoms.

Chemotherapy may cause an early menopause. This is more likely to happen in women who are closer to their natural menopause.

Surgery that removes the ovaries will cause a permanent menopause.

Breast cancer treatment often involves hormonal therapy. In women, 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 for breast cancer in men can also cause hot flushes and sweats.

Hormonal therapy for prostate cancer can cause hormonal symptoms for some men, including hot flushes and sweats.

Tips to help with hot flushes and sweats

- Keep a record of when you have flushes to see whether something triggers them. This can help you avoid 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 in bed.
- 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.

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

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resource:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The British Complementary Medicine Association (BCMA) 	<p>www.bcma.co.uk</p> <p>Tel 0845 345 5977</p> <p>Email office@bcma.co.uk</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Daisy Network 	<p>www.daisynetwork.org.uk</p> <p>Email daisy@daisynetwork.org.uk</p>

Further information

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/breast-cancer/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/menopausal-symptoms

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/prostate-cancer/early-prostate-cancer/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/hormonal-symptoms/managing-symptoms

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk

- Understanding breast cancer in women
- Understanding early (localised) prostate cancer
- Understanding locally advanced prostate cancer
- Understanding advanced (metastatic) prostate cancer

More information and support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, or visit macmillan.org.uk

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.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these, visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.