



Below the Belly Button:

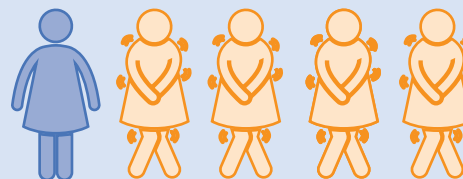
What skin, vaginal & bladder issues might happen during perimenopause & menopause?



If you have a spinal cord injury (SCI), you may have drier skin, bladder leaks, or vaginal discomfort. These symptoms often get worse during perimenopause and menopause due to a drop in estrogen. But don't ignore symptoms. They are not just a part of aging, they can be treated!

Did you know?

Up to 4 in 5 menopausal women have vaginal or urinary symptoms.



What skin and vaginal bladder issues might happen during perimenopause and menopause?

Skin

- Drier, thinner and sensitive more fragile skin.
- Slower healing of cuts and scrapes.
- More often pressure injuries, bruises, or folliculitis (Inflammation of hair roots), especially in areas you sit on a lot.



Bladder Area

- Peeing more often.
- Sudden strong urges to pee.
- Burning or pain when peeing.
- More bladder infections (UTIs).
- Leaking pee.
- Feeling like you didn't pee everything out.
- Harder or painful catheterizing.



Pelvic floor

- Prolapse (dropping pelvic organs).
- Pelvic pain.
- Feeling of pressure or bulging in your vagina.
- Vaginal & urinary symptoms.
- Constipation or bowel trouble.



Vaginal Area

- Burning, dryness, pain, and bleeding specifically during sex.
- Changes in sensation or less pleasure.
- Yeast infections may be more common.



What checkups should I ask my healthcare providers about for my skin, bladder, and vaginal health?



- Regular seating clinic assessment for fitting to avoid pressure injury.
- Full exam for your skin, bladder and vaginal area.

What lifestyle modification can help symptoms?

Skin Check

Daily self skin check or ask someone to take photos of hard-to-see areas.



Avoid Smoking

Smoking slows healing and worsens skin health, try to avoid it.



Safe Transfers

Be careful during transfers to avoid rubbing or scraping your skin.



Hydration & Nutrition

Drink plenty of water and eat healthy, balanced foods.



Gentle Cleansing

Use mild soap and apply moisturizer regularly.



Communication

Stay open with your partner and care team about any concerns.



Are there treatments for vaginal and urinary symptoms?

Estrogen creams, moisturizers, lubricants, and pelvic floor therapy.
Talk with your provider to find what works best for you.



Health Tips

- ✓ **Prevention is the Key!** See your healthcare provider regularly for skin, bladder, and vaginal health. With SCI, symptoms aren't always obvious.
- ✓ **With support and care from your healthcare providers**, symptoms can improve, but long-term management is often needed.
- ✓ **Lifestyle modification can help** prevent or ease symptoms.
- ✓ **Treatments are available.** Ask your provider what's best for you.

Reminder



You're not alone. Changes in your body are normal, but you don't have to suffer in silence. Talk to your healthcare provider early. Listen to your body, ask questions, and get the support you deserve.

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The information in these handouts are not intended to replace medical advice. Readers are advised to discuss their individual circumstances with their doctor & rehab care team.



To learn more visit www.scifragments.ca

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