



MENOGUIDE

individualising menopause assessment

Information Guide





What is menopause?

Menopause is when your periods stop due to lower hormone levels. The timing will differ for every woman, but usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55. It can sometimes naturally happen earlier or for reasons such as surgery to remove the ovaries (oophorectomy) or the uterus (hysterectomy), cancer treatments like chemotherapy, or a genetic reason.

Perimenopause is typically defined as when you experience menopausal symptoms before your periods have stopped. You reach menopause when you have not had a period for 12 months. Menopause and perimenopause can cause symptoms like anxiety, mood swings, brain fog, hot flashes and irregular periods. These symptoms can start years before your periods stop and carry on afterwards.



What is MenoGuide?

MenoGuide is an innovative menopause test, currently in development. It is hoped that when it formally launches it can indicate where you are on your menopause journey and inform individualised treatment plans for both you and your healthcare professional. Currently the test is in development and you are taking part in pilot research so any information provided to you will be on a research use only basis.



What is MenoGuide used for?

When it is launched formally it is anticipated that MenoGuide will be used to help to identify where a woman is on her transition from Pre to Peri menopause and to provide information on vaginal health status. It can also be adopted as a monitoring tool to help a healthcare professional measure the impact of a treatment intervention they have made. These treatments could range from a Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) prescription to lifestyle advice depending on your individual symptoms and situation.



How does the MenoGuide test work?

Simply complete an online questionnaire and then a urine sample collection kit will be sent to you via Royal Mail. You provide a urine sample and post this back to us using the Royal Mail reply paid service. Your sample is then processed at our laboratory facilities and a report will be generated and emailed to you. During the pilot phase any data provided in the report will be for your information only.



What does MenoGuide measure?

The test looks at the microbiome, in particular the bacteria present in the vagina, using a technique called next generation sequencing. Through our laboratory tests we can measure and identify all the different species naturally present in the vagina and the relative abundance of each bacteria.

We use all of this information to obtain a Vaginal Microbiome Measurement (VMM), assign a community state type depending on the dominance of one of the *lactobacilli* species and the overall total of the endogenous *lactobacilli* present in the sample. We use all the information to assign a menopause phase. During the pilot phase any data provided in the report will be for your information only.



What is the vaginal microbiome?

The vaginal microbiome, also referred to as the vaginome, is a collective term for the microbes found in the vagina. The presence of certain bacteria protect you and your vagina against other pathogenic bacteria, which could cause bacterial infection if the protective bacteria were not present and dominant. Unlike the gut microbiome, which harbours up to 1,000 different types of bacteria that have different functions, the vaginal microbiome is dominated by a type of bacteria called *lactobacillus*. During the perimenopausal stage, the level of the hormone oestrogen starts to decrease which causes a thinning of the vaginal epithelial layer and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of *lactobacilli*.



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Is it the same as a hormone test?

MenoGuide is not a hormone test, it is a microbiome test. We measure the types and amounts of bacteria present in the vaginal microbiome. During pre menopause this is typically populated with one dominant bacteria, but as oestrogen is reduced during peri menopause the presence of other bacteria can be found. The types and ratio of these bacteria can be mapped and used to identify if a woman is entering perimenopause.



What happens once I take the MenoGuide test?

During the pilot phase any data provided to you will be for your information only as MenoGuide isn't yet a diagnostic test. You will be sent your report via email and these have been prepared and signed off by a practising medical doctor. Depending on what your individual results show will depend what action, if any is needed.



How will I get my results?

Your results will be emailed to you directly or sent straight to your healthcare professional depending on how you signed up for the test. During the pilot phase any information provided will be for information only as this isn't currently a diagnostic, although your participation in this research phase will contribute to developing MenoGuide into a diagnostic test



Am I suitable to take the MenoGuide test?

During the pilot research stage, anyone assigned female at birth and over 38 years of age is eligible to participate.

At the current time please note this is not a diagnostic test and any data provided is for information purposes only.

www.menoguide.co.uk

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