

# Do I have POI?

## What is POI?

**Premature/Primary\* ovarian insufficiency (POI) happens when your ovaries stop working normally before you turn 40.** POI leads to fewer or no eggs being released and lower production of hormones (such as estrogen) from the ovary. This will impact your fertility, your periods will stop and you may experience menopausal symptoms like hot flushes. This is different to natural menopause which usually happens around age 50.



It affects 4 out of every 100 women.



It can impact both your physical and emotional health.



There is no cure, but you can manage it.

## Questions to Ask Yourself

Do your periods come irregularly, not at all, or only sometimes?

Do you have symptoms like hot flushes or night sweats?

Are you having trouble getting pregnant?

Have you had both ovaries surgically removed before age 40?

If you said yes to any of these questions, see your doctor. If you are using hormonal contraception then this can hide the symptoms of POI.

If yes, then you have POI & no more tests to diagnose POI are needed.

## Symptoms Can Be Different For Each Woman:

Irregular menstrual periods or no periods for at least 4 months (using hormonal contraception can hide these symptoms).



Some women may have menopausal symptoms like hot flushes, night sweats, trouble sleeping, or vaginal dryness. Other women may have none of these.



Mood swings, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, feeling mentally 'foggy'.



Problems with sex, like pain or low desire.



Trouble getting pregnant.

## Diagnosis

For women who still have their ovaries, POI is diagnosed if you have **both**:

1

Irregular or no periods for at least four months (when you are not using hormonal contraception)



2

A blood test showing high levels of a hormone called FSH (follicle stimulating hormone)

**You do not need to have menopausal symptoms** to be diagnosed with POI.

**A blood test showing low levels of estrogen** can help confirm POI but is not essential.

**If the diagnosis is unclear, the FSH test should be repeated** after 4-6 weeks, or a blood test for another hormone called AMH (anti-mullerian hormone) may be done.

**See your doctor if you are unsure about whether you have POI.**

**Ask Early Menopause**



The free **Ask Early Menopause App** provides comprehensive, high quality POI and early menopause information, women's stories and support tools that are based on the latest evidence ([www.askearlymenopause.org](http://www.askearlymenopause.org)).

Information from the updated **2024 ESHRE POI guideline:**

([www.eshre.eu/Guidelines-and-Legal/Guidelines/Premature-ovarian-insufficiency](http://www.eshre.eu/Guidelines-and-Legal/Guidelines/Premature-ovarian-insufficiency))

© **Monash University**

\*Primary ovarian insufficiency is the term for POI often used in North America