# What Is Menopause?

Menopause Step-by-Step
WEBINAR SERIES

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## Physiology of menopause

- Oocyte depletion of the ovary is the basis of reproductive senescence.
- At birth, the ovary contains approximately one million follicles.
- Follicular atresia starts before birth and occurs continuously, even during pregnancy and oral contraceptive use.
- Atresia accelerates with increasing age.
- Estradiol secretion is no longer adequate to stimulate the uterine lining, and menopause occurs.

## Hormone changes and menopause

- Progressive decline of ovarian follicle numbers results in reduced inhibin secreted by the granulosa cells.
- Inhibin inhibits the synthesis and release of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) from the pituitary gland.
- The decline in estradiol production because of diminishing ovarian follicles also reduces pituitary negative feedback and FSH increase further.
- Ovarian progesterone secretion declines before menopause.

## Symptoms related to menopause

- Symptoms vary in severity and from person to person.
- Perimenopause—the years before menopause when menstrual cycles start to change up to 1 year after the final menstrual period (FMP).
- Symptoms start during the late menopause transition and can last several years after the FMP.