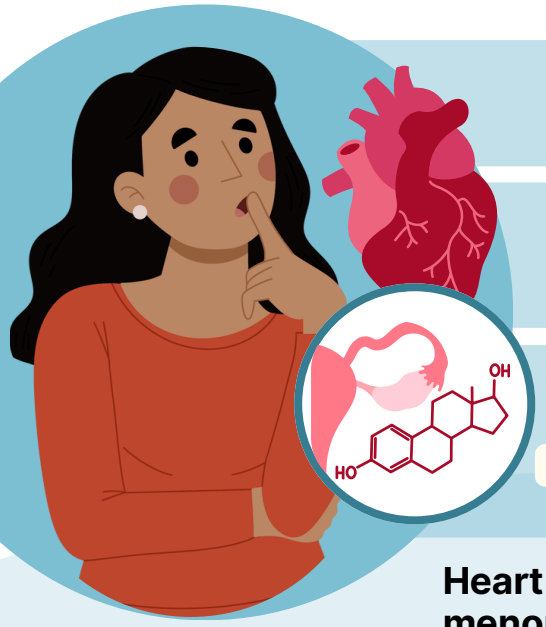
Estrogen and the Heart



WHO

All women — usually between ages 45–55, though it can happen earlier in some women, especially those with a family history or higher stress.

WHAT

Menopause is the natural end of menstrual cycles, when the body produces less estrogen and progesterone. **Estrogen helps protect blood vessels and cholesterol balance,** so when levels drop, heart risk increases.

WHY

The loss of estrogen affects blood vessels, cholesterol, and metabolism, raising the risk of:

- Heart disease and stroke
- Hot flashes and sleep changes
- Bone loss and joint pain
- Mood swings and anxiety

Heart disease becomes more common after menopause, but prevention can begin early.

WHEN

Begin check-ups early , or sooner if symptoms appear.

Early 40s

Screen for **blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose** during the menopausal transition.

Every 6-12 months

Ask your provider about **thyroid and bone health tests** — these often change during this stage too.

PREVENTION (Lifestyle Medicine)



- Eat **soy-rich foods** (like tofu, soy milk, or edamame) to support hormone balance.
- Add **heart-healthy fats (olive oil, nuts, avocado, salmon).**
- **Avoid smoking and limit alcohol.**
- Practice **stress management** — journaling, yoga, breathing, prayer, or time outdoors.
- Do **weight-bearing exercises** (walking, resistance bands, or light weights).
- **Prioritize sleep and stay socially connected** for mental wellness.

NUMBERS (How to Read Them)

Menopause

12 months without a period

FSH

Typical FSH range: **30 mIU/mL or higher**.

High FSH + no periods usually confirms menopause.

Tip

Menopause is measured by time and change — not just one lab number. It does end — symptoms ease over time, so stay in the know and keep up with your checkups to protect your heart and overall health.