

Premature ovarian insufficiency PIL

This downloadable patient information leaflet can be shared with your patients to advise them on diagnosis, treatment and management of premature ovarian insufficiency.

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www.pcwhf.co.uk/HLHH

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Premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency (POI) is when your periods stop before the age of 40 years. It means that the ovaries are not working well and it affects less than 1% of women. This early drop in hormones is associated with many troublesome symptoms and health conditions if left untreated.

USEFUL FACTS

DIAGNOSIS

- Symptoms and hormonal blood test 6 weeks apart

SYMPTOMS

- Mood changes
- Fatigue
- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Irregular periods
- Reduced libido

CAUSES

- Surgical removal of ovaries
- After Chemo/Radiotherapy
- Genetics
- Autoimmune diseases
- Infection

RISKS

If left untreated, there's an increased risk of long-term health conditions such as heart disease and thinning of the bones.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

The good news is that there are lots of options available to help treat this condition. Your doctor or nurse may refer you to a specialist with expertise in this field. The aim is to replace the hormone levels until at least the natural age of menopause, which in the UK is roughly around 51 years.



One option is to take hormone replacement therapy (HRT). In most women, the benefits of HRT far outweigh the risks, especially in POI. Often higher doses are needed in younger women to help with symptoms.



Combined hormonal contraception is an alternative which is particularly good if you are also sexually active, as there is a very small chance that the ovaries can kick start at any point. The intrauterine system or 'coil' is also great at this, and can be combined with oestrogen to replace the hormones that you need.



Stopping smoking, reducing alcohol and exercising regularly are also essential, as is optimising your bone health. Looking after your mental health is really important too, you may be feeling upset or alone with this diagnosis but there's a lot of support available to help.



For women who would like to have a family, a referral to the fertility clinic can be arranged. There are various options including the possibility of using donor eggs.

► For more information on POI, visit The Daisy Network, a UK based charity to support women who have premature ovarian insufficiency. www.daisynetwork.org.uk