

FREE GUIDE

Women 40 to 59

Cholesterol, blood sugar, thyroid and iron, around the time of the menopause.

Blood tests for women from 40 to 59

Around the menopause some numbers change, such as cholesterol, and they give no symptoms. A blood test shows them, so you can talk them through with your GP.

It can

- ✓ Show your cholesterol and blood sugar as the menopause comes
- ✓ Show how your thyroid is working, when symptoms overlap
- ✓ Give you numbers to talk through with your GP

It cannot

- ✗ Confirm the menopause: there is no routine test for it
- ✗ Show your bone density: that is a DEXA scan
- ✗ Decide on hormone therapy: that is a decision with your GP

WHY IT MATTERS

01

From 40, the NHS itself checks your risk

From 40 to 74 the NHS offers a Health Check every 5 years, with a cholesterol test, and possibly a blood sugar test. Your own results help if you have not been invited yet, or want to follow your numbers in between.^[1]

02

Cholesterol tends to rise around your last period

In a study that followed 1,054 women for 10 years, total and LDL cholesterol rose sharply in the year before and the year after the last period. The NHS lists the menopause among the things that make high cholesterol more likely.^[2, 3]

03

There is no routine test for the menopause

The NHS says there is no routine test for perimenopause and menopause. The useful tests at this stage look at what changes with it, such as cholesterol and blood sugar.^[4]

WHY IT MATTERS

04

A slow thyroid is more common in women, and can feel like the menopause

In a 20 year UK study, women had about six times as many new cases as men, and the risk rose with age. Tiredness, weight and mood can come from either; a TSH test helps tell them apart.^[5, 6]

05

While you still have periods, they count for iron

Heavy periods are a very common cause of low iron, and your GP will often ask for a blood test if your periods are heavy.^[7, 8]

What usually makes sense, and when to repeat it

TEST	WHY	WHEN TO REPEAT
Cholesterol profile	Cholesterol tends to rise around the menopause, and it does not cause symptoms. ^[1, 2, 3]	Every 5 years at the NHS Health Check; more often if your GP advises.
HbA1c (average blood sugar)	Blood sugar can be part of the NHS Health Check from 40. Type 2 diabetes does not always cause symptoms. ^[1, 9]	Every 5 years at the NHS Health Check, or as your GP advises.
TSH and free T4 (thyroid)	An underactive thyroid is more common in women, and its symptoms can look like the menopause. ^[5, 6]	If you have symptoms, or as your GP advises.
Ferritin and full blood count	Heavy periods are a very common cause of low iron. Ferritin shows your stores; the blood count shows anaemia. ^[7, 8, 10]	With heavy periods or tiredness; again as your GP advises.
Vitamin D, 25(OH)D	From October to early March, UK sunlight is not enough to make vitamin D. Women also lose bone quickly in the first years after the menopause. ^[11, 12]	Once in late winter.
Kidney function (creatinine, eGFR)	Early kidney disease usually has no symptoms, and kidney risk is part of what the NHS Health Check looks at. ^[1, 13]	With your cholesterol.
Sexual health screen	The NHS suggests a test once a year or with a new partner, at any age. ^[14]	With a new partner.

What to do with your result

Your result arrives in your account, with reference ranges. A value outside the range, or a symptom with a normal result, is a conversation with your GP: treatment and supplements are their call. Repeat the same test later to compare.

SOURCES

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Scan for the full page, the tests that cover these markers, a short video and the guided check-up.

bpr.clinic/blood-tests/for/women-40-59

General information, not personal medical advice. Talk to your GP about your own situation. Questions: hello@bpr.clinic or message us in the BPR app.

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