



What is POI?



Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) is a condition where the ovaries stop working as they normally would before the age of 40. This can affect periods, hormones, fertility, bone health, heart health, and emotional wellbeing.

How Common is POI?

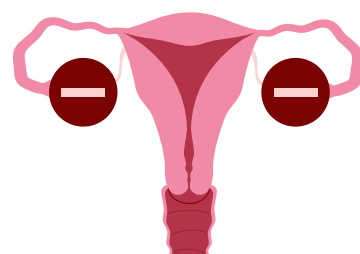
Recent research has suggested POI is more common than we previously thought, with recent figures suggesting it could affect around 3.5%.

Around **1 in 30** people experience POI before the age of 40.

If you are diagnosed with POI, it's important to remember you are not alone - even if it feels that way at first.

What are the Symptoms of POI?

- Irregular periods or absence of periods
- Vaginal or urinary symptoms like dryness, itching, and increased UTIs
- Fatigue
- Brain fog
- Sleep difficulties and muscle/joint pains
- Mood changes
- Hot flushes or night sweats
- Reduced libido
- Difficulty conceiving



Symptoms can vary widely from person to person. Some people notice changes quickly, while for others symptoms develop slowly over time. You don't need to have all of these symptoms for POI to be present.

Causes of POI

- Autoimmune conditions
- Genetic conditions (eg., Turner Syndrome)
- Cancer treatment (Chemotherapy or radiotherapy)
- Surgery to remove the ovaries

In most cases though, the cause of POI remains unknown. This uncertainty can be frustrating — but it is very common, and it does not change the fact that support and treatment can make a real difference.

How is POI Diagnosed?

- Blood tests
- Ultrasound scan
- Clinical history

Diagnosis can sometimes take time, and some people experience delays before receiving clear answers

*Note:
If symptoms persist, it is okay to keep asking questions and seek further support.*





Why Does POI Matter?

POI is about much more than periods or fertility alone. Lower hormone levels at a younger age can affect:

- Bone health
- Heart and metabolic health – it may affect cholesterol levels and blood sugar regulation
- Brain and cognitive health
- Sexual health
- Emotional health and identity
- Impact on fertility



Early recognition and treatment can help protect long-term health.

Treatment and management:

- Hormone replacement therapy – this may be HRT or the oral contraceptive pill
- Bone and heart health monitoring
- Fertility options
- Psychological and emotional support

For bone health, consider vitamin D supplements if you don't get enough sunshine. Your GP can test your vitamin D level. A diet rich in calcium and weight bearing/resistance exercises are also important for bone and muscle health.

The Emotional Impact of POI

POI can affect how someone feels about themselves and their future. These reactions are normal. Emotional support is just as important as physical care.

People may experience issues with:

- Sense of identity
- Grief and loss
- Relationships
- Confidence and self-image
- Aging too soon



Next Steps:

If you think POI may be affecting you, or someone you care about:

- Speak with a healthcare professional, especially if periods are irregular or stop before age 40
- Ask about hormone treatment and long-term health monitoring. Remember, you do not have to stop taking HRT once you reach the average age of menopause.
- Seek out support groups or trusted organisations for reliable information (see resources)

You deserve to be listened to, believed, and supported. Using a menopause symptom tracker could help when you have a discussion with your doctor. You can access one on the [mref.uk](https://www.mref.uk) [here](#).





Useful Resources:

Fertility:

<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/>

The Daisy Network:

<https://daisynetwork.org/>

Turner Syndrome

<https://tss.org.uk/?srsltid=AfmBOorsZ-tTw8PQHmPFWeN9kQijsj2gJPrQ8o5Ar7xWY4YczHBsvurh>

