

# The Perimenopause Mouth-Body Checklist

*The early signs I look for in my practice, the labs worth asking for, and the small habits that protect you through the transition.*

If something in your body has felt slightly off lately and you can't quite name it, you're not imagining it. Perimenopause can start as early as your mid-thirties, and the earliest signs rarely show up where you'd think to look.

**Use this checklist two ways:** First, to notice the patterns your body may already be showing you. Second, to walk into your next doctor or dentist appointment with the right questions and the right labs to ask for.

## 01 Signs In Your Mouth

*Check any that have appeared or worsened in the last 12 months.*

- Gums that suddenly bleed, despite the same brushing and flossing routine you've always had
- Persistent dry mouth, especially at night or first thing in the morning
- New cavities after years (or decades) of not getting them
- A burning, tingling, or metallic sensation in your mouth with no clear cause
- Map-like patches on your tongue (geographic tongue)
- Teeth that feel sensitive when they didn't used to
- New chips, cracks, or flat edges on your teeth
- Soreness in your jaw or around the ears when you wake up

## 02 Signs In Your Sleep & Energy

- Waking up tired, even after a full night in bed
- Morning headaches that don't fully explain themselves
- Brain fog or difficulty finding words, especially in the morning
- Snoring that's new, louder, or more frequent than it used to be
- Waking up around 3 or 4 AM and struggling to fall back asleep
- Neck and shoulder tension that won't resolve no matter what you try
- Night sweats or waking up overheated

## 03 Signs In Your Body & Cycle

- Periods that are shorter, longer, heavier, or less predictable than they used to be
- New mood changes, irritability, or anxiety, especially in the week or two before your period
- Weight gain, particularly around your midsection, without a clear change in diet or exercise
- Hair thinning or changes in texture
- Skin that feels drier, more reactive, or less elastic
- Joint aches or stiffness that came on without a specific injury



## 04 Labs & Assessments to Ask Your Doctor For

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*If you've checked a handful of boxes above, these are the conversations worth starting.*

- FSH (Follicle-Stimulating Hormone)** — rises as ovarian function changes
- Estradiol** — the primary form of estrogen; often fluctuates wildly in perimenopause
- Progesterone** — typically declines before estrogen does
- Full thyroid panel** — TSH, Free T3, Free T4, thyroid antibodies (symptoms often overlap with perimenopause)
- Vitamin D** — critical for bone, mood, and immune function
- B12, ferritin, and iron panel** — low levels mimic perimenopausal fatigue
- Fasting glucose and HbA1c** — insulin resistance often shows up in this window
- At-home sleep study or airway assessment** — disrupted sleep drives most of the other symptoms

## 05 Questions to Bring to Your Dentist

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- Do you offer airway and sleep screening as part of a comprehensive exam?
- Am I showing early signs of clenching or grinding that wasn't there before?
- Has my gum health changed in ways that might signal something systemic?
- Is my saliva production normal for my age, or is there evidence of chronic dry mouth?
- Can you recommend a mouthwash that won't disrupt my oral microbiome?

## 06 Small Daily Habits That Actually Compound

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- Hydrate first thing in the morning, before coffee, to support saliva
- Swap harsh antiseptic mouthwash for a microbiome-friendly alternative
- Protect sleep like a non-negotiable: consistent bedtime, cool room, no screens in the last hour
- Eat protein with every meal to protect muscle mass and blood sugar
- Strength train two to three times a week; it's the most protective thing you can do for bone density
- Schedule dental cleanings every six months (don't skip during busy seasons)
- If you snore, address it. Snoring is a symptom, not a sound

### Don't Wait. Book An Appointment If...

- Your partner has told you you've stopped breathing or gasped in your sleep
- A tooth has cracked, chipped, or suddenly feels loose when you bite into something
- Bleeding, swollen gums are no longer responding to good hygiene
- You've had a sore jaw, ear pain, or clicking for more than a few weeks
- Your fatigue and brain fog are interfering with work or family life

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*Keep Smiling,*

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This checklist is a consumer-friendly adaptation based on published clinical research, not a validated diagnostic instrument. It's intended for education and self-awareness. If you're checking several boxes, bring this to your next appointment with your primary care doctor, OB-GYN, or a functional dentist trained in airway and sleep screening.

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