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new chapter of
brilliance and
resilience.

MENOPOWER

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Personal Story Template



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Story Title: ‘Too Young to Be Heard: My Perimenopause Journey’

Background Information (optional – anonymized if needed)

- Age range: 44 (started symptoms at 34)
- Country/region: not specified
- Employment sector or life context: not specified
- Stage of menopause: perimenopause

Personal story

My journey with perimenopause began unexpectedly in 2014, when I was 34 and pregnant with my first child. During a routine 12-week scan, doctors discovered a 10cm dermoid cyst on my ovary. It wasn't until three months after giving birth that I could have the cyst removed — along with one ovary and one fallopian tube. I consider myself lucky it was caught before it ruptured.

Two years later, after the birth of my second child, I noticed a significant decline in my emotional wellbeing. My premenstrual symptoms became unbearable — I felt out of control, almost as if I were going mad. I suspected PMDD (premenstrual dysphoric disorder), but my doctor dismissed it. I was prescribed anti-anxiety medication and fitted with a hormonal coil, which made things worse. I had it removed after five months.

I persisted by logging my symptoms using an app for a year, and eventually found a doctor who listened. They prescribed HRT — oestrogen patches and progesterone tablets — which significantly improved my mood. For the first time in a long while, I felt like myself again. I felt relieved and validated.

But relief was short-lived. A year and a half later, my periods became so heavy and prolonged that I was afraid to leave the house. After a series of humiliating leaks, I returned to the doctor and was again told to try the coil. This time, after some adjustment, my periods stopped — which felt like a blessing.

However, new symptoms emerged: irregular bleeding, abdominal pain, and another deep mood crash. A scan finally revealed that my remaining ovary was “tired and small” — I was deep in perimenopause. For the first time, I felt vindicated. I wasn't imagining things. They also found a benign polyp in my womb, which was thankfully removed. I'm still awaiting a scan for another cyst.

More awareness is desperately needed. My sister also had dermoid cysts but wasn't diagnosed until she collapsed in pain. Even after my own surgery, I was never offered routine scans — even when I asked. I have two daughters, and I want better for them.

Key takeaways

- Perimenopause can start at a much younger age than many doctors assume.
- Dismissal of symptoms due to age delays diagnosis and treatment.
- Tracking symptoms over time can be a powerful tool in getting heard.
- HRT can be life-changing — but navigating options takes persistence.
- Routine scans could detect gynecological issues earlier and reduce long-term harm.

Reflections/Message to others:

"I was always ignored because I was 'too young', but I wasn't. I want it to be different for my daughters. The 'Change' needs to change."

Supplementary Material

- Website: <https://themenopausecharity.org/helens-story/>



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