

# Early onset of menopause and diabetes may limit life span

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Only in science fiction novels can scientists predict people's lifespans. However, researchers have advanced the understanding of those risk factors that adversely affect mortality rates. A new study concludes that women who experienced early menopause lived shorter lives and spent fewer years without diabetes than women who experienced normal or late menopause. Study results are published online in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

It is a well-accepted fact in the medical community that both [diabetes](#) and early onset of natural menopause may be associated with early death. Emerging evidence shows an association between age at menopause and diabetes, with studies reporting almost a two-fold increased risk of type 2 diabetes with early onset of menopause. To date, however, there are no other known studies that have quantified (calculated the number of years lived with and without diabetes) the combined association of [early menopause](#) and type 2 diabetes with [life](#) expectancy.

In this study involving 3,650 postmenopausal women, the difference in life expectancy was compared in women experiencing early, normal, and late menopause, as well as in those with and without diabetes. Compared with late menopause (defined as menopause that occurs at age 55 years and older), the difference in life expectancy for women who experienced early menopause (defined as menopause that occurs at age 44 years or younger) was -3.5 years overall and -4.6 years in women without diabetes. Compared with age at normal menopause (defined as menopause that occurs at 45-54 years of age), the difference in life

expectancy for women who experienced early menopause was -3.1 years overall and -3.3 years in women without diabetes.

Results of this study are reported in the article "Age at natural menopause and [life expectancy](#) with and without type 2 diabetes." The authors suggest the need for future research to examine the mechanisms behind this association to help tailor prevention and treatment strategies that improve [women's](#) health across all age categories of menopause.

"Early age at natural menopause may be linked to earlier mortality," says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director. "Women with early natural menopause were found to have a shorter lifespan, were more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes, and lived fewer years without diabetes than those with [menopause](#) occurring after age 45 or even after age 55."

**More information:** Eralda Asllanaj et al, Age at natural menopause and life expectancy with and without type 2 diabetes, *Menopause* (2018). DOI: [10.1097/GME.0000000000001246](https://doi.org/10.1097/GME.0000000000001246)

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