18 October – World Menopause Day; 2026 theme: 'Chronic Pain at Midlife'

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News

World Menopause Day is observed every year on 18 October; in 2026 it falls on a Sunday. It is led by the International Menopause Society (IMS). The 2026 theme is 'Chronic Pain at Midlife' – recognising persistent pain in midlife women, improving research and providing evidence-based care.

Key facts

Date	18 October (annual)
Led by	International Menopause Society (IMS)
2026 theme	Chronic Pain at Midlife
2025 theme	Lifestyle Medicine
Definition (WHO)	12 consecutive months without menstruation; usually at 45–55 years
IMS Congress 2026	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (30 Sep – 3 Oct)

Background

- Science: menopause is a natural event in which ovarian function declines and the hormones oestrogen and progesterone fall. The transition before it is 'perimenopause'. Symptoms: hot flushes, night sweats, sleeplessness, mood changes, joint and back pain.

- Health risks: oestrogen protects bone; its fall reduces bone density and raises the risk of osteoporosis and fractures, and also of heart disease. Calcium, vitamin D and exercise are advised; doctors may give menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) where needed.
- Polity: in Dr. Jaya Thakur v. Union of India (30 Jan 2026; Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan), the Supreme Court held menstrual health in schools to be part of Article 21 (life and dignity) and ordered free oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkins and separate toilets for girls in all schools – government, aided and private.

Tamil Nadu link: under the menstrual hygiene programme started in 2011 under the late CM J. Jayalalithaa, adolescent girls get free sanitary napkins; it ran in rural areas for nine years and was extended to urban areas in 2020; postnatal mothers and women prisoners are also covered.

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