



OUR BODIES OURSELVES TODAY

AT SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

The Crones are Coming! Perimenopause and Menopause August 2024

A Note from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I think it's safe to say that going through perimenopause doesn't usually put us in a *better* mood. When we combine our mildly-to-severely disruptive symptoms with the utter ignorance of those who should be helping us through it, we may even find ourselves in some of the worst moods of our lives.



Today we have better medical options for our perimenopausal symptoms than in decades past, but clinical practice largely has yet to catch up with even these modest advances in research. We are still too often told that our very real perimenopausal symptoms are “all in our heads.”

Starting in the 1970s, feminists began to reclaim the Crone as a symbol of strength, survival, and hard-won wisdom in the final third (or more) of life that is post-menopausal. These feminists rejected the loathing of women's aging that is so widespread in both medicine and the culture at large. They wielded Crone Power. Whether we look forward or back to menopause, the Crone can guide us through it—embracing our aging bodies, being *done* with people pleasing, shedding insecurities, boldly sharing our hard-won wisdom.

This month's newsletter offers practical help with finding good perimenopause healthcare; an interview with menopause pioneer Nina Coslov; a short documentary about some indigenous women's approaches to menopause; and an opportunity for menopause activism. Also, you'll find exciting past and upcoming events and meet three of our wonderful interns. Finally, speaking of boldly sharing hard-won wisdom, we are thrilled to announce our **new, fully redesigned Our Bodies Ourselves Today website**. I hope that, whatever else you're dealing with, it gives your mood a lift.

Onward!

Amy



Our Brand New Website!

We've been working hard on a new, redesigned **Our Bodies Ourselves** website, which is more accessible and more easily searchable, with new features and a whole new look. And the time to celebrate it is nearly here! We're hosting a hybrid **New Website Reveal party** on:

Thursday, September 26th

5pm–7:30pm EST

Suffolk University, Boston, Massachusetts

~ and remotely via Zoom ~

Please visit our completely redesigned website at:

<http://ourbodiesourselves.org>.

And if you'd like an invitation to celebrate with us, just email us at contact@ourbodiesourselfestoday.org

[Support Our Work--Donate Now!](#)

Explore Our Resources

Finding Supportive Healthcare during Perimenopause

Finding a health care provider who understands the latest research on perimenopause – and can actually help us manage our symptoms – can be extremely frustrating. This resource from *Women Living Better* provides practical suggestions for locating a provider with up-to-date knowledge of perimenopause and for optimizing our health care visits. It also includes a “perimenopause snapshot” tool, which can help us to track and summarize our specific symptoms. Sharing the snapshot with a healthcare provider can assist us—or a loved one—in getting what we need from a perimenopausal medical appointment.



[Read the full article](#)

And [check out our other menopause & perimenopause resources](#)

[Meet Our Content Experts](#)



Nina Coslov, menopause and perimenopause expert

This month, we spoke with **Nina Coslov** (she/her), a founder of the digital resource "Women Living Better." We've partnered with Nina to republish highlights from that resource, in order to bring more high quality information about perimenopause and menopause to Our Bodies Ourselves Today.

How have *Our Bodies Ourselves*, and *Our Bodies Ourselves Today*, figured in your life so far?

I had THE book. I bought it in college in the early 90s and it was a go-to resource for me. I remember thinking, "why don't I know this"? I had that same thought when early changes associated with perimenopause were upon me in my early 40s. At every stage we need information for our changing bodies.

What's a crucial issue related to menopause that we need to understand better?

We need to understand more about earliest part of the path to menopause before very noticeable changes to our cycles and periods. The ethos is that perimenopause starts when you skip a period, or cycles are noticeable irregular. However, for most of us, there are subtle changes to our cycle lengths (usually shortening) long before that which we don't notice if we aren't tracking our cycles. And, for some of us sleep disturbance, mood changes begin with these subtle changes.

What gives you hope, in the realm of women's health?

The explosion of activity I've witnessed in the past 10 years since I've been building "Women Living Better"; new models of care, more research, new technologies, new products, and lots more media attention. People are paying attention to midlife women — both the reproductive transition we make and our health. It's about time!

[More about Nina Coslov and "Women Living Better"](#)

Truths about Menopause



[Indigenous Women's Stories about Menopause](#)

In Cree filmmaker Jules Arita Koostachin's short documentary "KaYaMenTa," a group of Indigenous women elders share their experiences with perimenopause and menopause. Speaking with candor and humor, they highlight the mainstream silence around menopause, the impact of stress and trauma, and natural treatments for their symptoms.

[Watch This Video](#)

Meet Our Interns!



Three Suffolk University students interned with Our Bodies Ourselves Today as part of the university's Summer Career Development program. Pictured in the photo, right to left: Lizzy Ajayi, Gwyn Hiller, and Hannah Kelleher. Here's what they had to say about their experience:

Hannah Kelleher: The opportunity to intern with OBOST and dive deeper into their mission and history has been incredibly rewarding. As a political science student at Suffolk University, I find the history of collective action and knowledge that OBOST represents both inspiring and important. Providing accurate information to women and gender-expansive individuals is crucial in understanding and safeguarding one's rights.

Through my experience with OBOST, I had the opportunity to explore various resources on topics such as birth control, contraception, rape culture, and gender-based violence. In particular, my content research on gender-based violence illuminated the alarming persistence of technology-facilitated violence in our increasingly online world. According to a study by the Economist Intelligence Unit, 50% of women respondents reported feeling unsafe sharing their opinions on the internet. This self-censorship among women and gender-expansive people significantly impacts the representation of political, economic, and societal issues affecting these groups. Consequently, the collective knowledge and resources provided by Our Bodies Ourselves Today are more crucial than ever, and I am grateful to have had a small part in this legacy!

Arinola (Lizzy) Ajayi: Through this experience, I was able to engage in different activities that taught me the importance of a mission, a moral, and a framework when it comes to activist work. For example, when researching for resources to be nominated for the website, it was crucial that we remained true to the mission of OBOST which is to educate and advocate for the health, reproductive justice,

and rights to women and gender expansive people. When searching for things to include on the website, we had guidelines that made sure the resource represented those values, even down to who funds and facilitates the resource. I was able to understand that activism cannot and must not be surface level. Even things that seem minute, can have bigger impacts than expected. Advocacy and education must be approached with care and sensitivity.

Gwyn Hiller: Beyond personal growth (the personal is professional?), working with OBOST has increased the standards by which I scrutinize the sources I consume and the messages I am implicitly putting out into the world. OBOST is an organization with a well-documented feminist history, and that gives it great power and legitimacy; as a result, when we link to a source we are giving it, and subsequently its publisher, greater power. Being a part of that nomination process gave me a better understanding of the ethical burden of responsibility publications, journalists, and knowledge repositories must uphold. And on an individual level, it helped me to understand the power behind what I promote, and the importance of what might otherwise look like slow, bureaucratic minutiae.

Organizing for Change: Menopause



Rock My Menopause

Rock My Menopause is a campaign by the Primary Care Women's Health Forum (PCWHF) that strives to challenge the taboo around menopause. It educates the public about perimenopause symptoms and empowers people to speak confidently with their doctors (and others) about menopause. Their resources include fact sheets, a Facebook support group, social media campaigns, and workplace training.

[More about Rock My Menopause](#)

News and Events



Uterine Fibroid Awareness

In honor of Uterine Fibroid Awareness Month, Our Bodies Ourselves Today program associate [Grace Koch](#) spoke as a panelist at the Boston EmPOWERed Patient Brunch on July 20th. The brunch was organized by Boston Medical Center's Fibroid Center, The White Dress Project, and the Resilient Sisterhood Project.

[Read more on our website](#)

Pictured: Lilly Marcellin, Dr. Yvonne Gomez-Carrion, Grace Koch, and Tess Carrington Waite at the event



Clara Bingham in Conversation with Our Bodies Ourselves Founders at the Cambridge Public Library

Monday, September 23, 2024
6:00pm EDT
Cambridge Public Library
449 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02138

Harvard Book Store and the Cambridge Public Library welcome Clara Bingham—award-winning journalist and the author of "Witness to the Revolution," "Women on the Hill"—for a discussion of her new book "The Movement: How Women's Liberation Transformed America 1963–1973." She will be in conversation with Our Bodies Ourselves **founders** Judy Norsigian, Joan Ditzion, Jane Pincus, and Norma Swenson—co-authors of the groundbreaking book "Our Bodies, Ourselves."

RSVP for free to this event or choose the "Book-Included" ticket to reserve a copy of "The Movement" to pick up at the event. A book signing will follow the presentation.

[Register to Attend the Conversation](#)

Your accurate *and* inclusive
guide to health, sexuality, *and*
reproductive justice

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