



# Menopause and Your Heart Health

## **Produced by the Irish Heart Foundation | 2025**

This is an Easy Read resource about the impact menopause has on the heart health of women. It provides practical guidance for those who want to learn how to look after their heart health.

For more information or to donate, visit **[irisheart.ie](https://www.irisheart.ie)**

## **Acknowledgements**

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# How to use this book



- **Read slowly.**
- **Look at the pictures.**
- **Read with someone.**

# Part 1:

## Important words

Before we start, let's learn  
some important words.

## Menopause



Menopause is when your periods stop.

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Menopause usually happens when you are around 50 years old.

Menopause is normal.

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Your period may get heavier or lighter than before.

Your period may be longer or shorter.

Your period may not come every month.

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You may suddenly feel very hot.

This can be called a hot flash.

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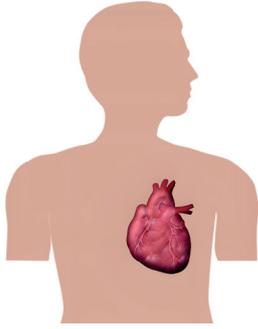


It may be hard to fall asleep.

You may feel more tired.

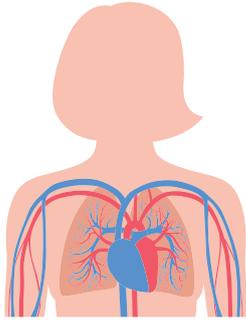
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## Heart disease



Heart disease happens when your heart is sick or not working well.

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Your heart pumps blood around your body.

When you have heart disease, it may not pump very well.

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When you have heart disease, your chest may hurt.

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Breathing may be hard.

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You may feel very tired and sick.

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## Heart attack



Heart attack is an example of heart disease.

Heart attack is when your heart cannot get blood because of a blockage.

When your heart cannot get blood, your heart gets hurt.

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When you have a heart attack, you may have chest pain.

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You may find it hard to breathe.

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You may feel dizzy.

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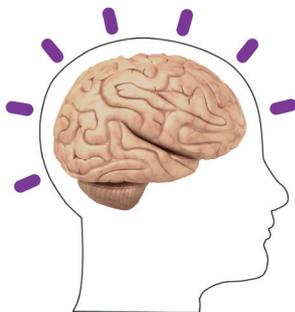
You may sweat.



If you think you are having a heart attack, get help right away.

Call **999** or **112** for help.

## Stroke



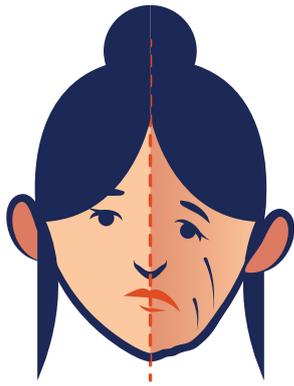
Your brain needs blood to work.

When blood cannot get to your brain, your brain gets hurt and you may have a stroke.

**ACT**  
**F.A.S.T**

**F.A.S.T** is an easy way to remember stroke symptoms.

Each letter tells you what to look out for.



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### **F is for Face.**

One side of your face does not move like the other side.

One side of your face looks lower than the other side.

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### **A is for Arms.**

You cannot hold both arms up.

One arm drops down or feels weak.

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### **S is for Speech.**

Your words sound strange.

People cannot understand you.

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### **T is for Time. Get help right away.**

Call **999** or **112** and get an ambulance.

Act **F.A.S.T.** A stroke is an emergency.

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## High blood pressure



High blood pressure is when your blood pushes too hard in your body.

High blood pressure can cause heart disease and stroke.

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You may not know if you have high blood pressure.

Get your blood pressure checked regularly.

You can get your blood pressure checked at the doctors or the pharmacy.

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You can get your blood pressure checked with a blood pressure monitor.

The blood pressure monitor has a cuff that goes around your arm.

It is not painful.

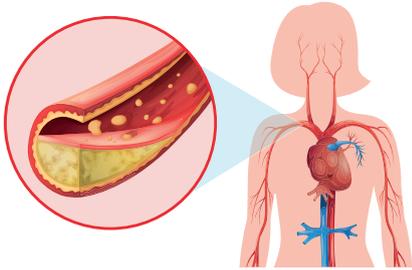
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Talk to your doctor about how to manage your blood pressure.

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## High cholesterol



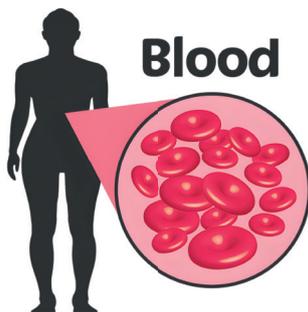
Cholesterol is a type of fat in your blood.

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Bad cholesterol (called LDL cholesterol) builds up in your blood and causes problems.

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High cholesterol is when you have too much bad cholesterol in your blood.

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Talk to your doctor about how to manage your cholesterol.

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## Best weight



Your best weight is the healthiest weight you can be while also living a life you can truly enjoy.

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## Healthy changes



Healthy changes are things you can do to help your heart and blood pressure.

They make your body feel stronger and healthier.

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# Part 2:

## Menopause and heart health



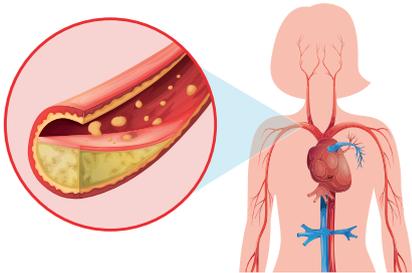
## Menopause and heart health

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Menopause can cause high blood pressure.

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Menopause can cause high cholesterol.

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Menopause can cause changes to your body weight.

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These changes make you more likely to have heart disease and stroke.



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By making healthy changes to your lifestyle, you can protect yourself.

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# Part 3:

## Healthy changes



## Eat well

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Eat more fruit and vegetables.

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Try to eat oily fish once a week.

Salmon, mackerel, herring, trout and sardines are types of oily fish.

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Try not to have fried or sugary foods like chips, pizza, biscuits and cakes too often.

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What fruits and vegetables do you like?

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## Get moving

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Try to be active every day.

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Try not to sit for too long.

Every hour, get up and move around for 10 minutes to get your blood flowing.

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You can try cycling.

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You can try fast walking.

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You can try swimming.

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You can try dancing.

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What activity do you enjoy doing?

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## Aim for your best weight



Being a healthy weight helps to protect your heart.

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Talk to your doctor if you want help with your weight.

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## Stop smoking

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When you stop smoking, your health improves.

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Get help: Call the National Smokers' Quitline on **1800 201 203** (free) or free text **QUIT** to **50100**.

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## Drink less alcohol

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Drinking alcohol is bad for your liver and heart.

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Keep some days alcohol-free.

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## Know your doctor

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Visit your doctor often for blood pressure and cholesterol checks.

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## Manage Stress

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Feeling stressed can be bad for your heart health.

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You can manage your stress by being active.

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Fresh air and green spaces help your mind and your body.

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Sleep well.

Keep a regular bedtime.

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Eat healthy food.



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Breathing exercises can help you feel calm.

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Spending time with friends and family can help you feel less stressed.

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What do you do to help you feel calm?

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## Learn More

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You can learn more about keeping your heart healthy at: **[irishheart.ie](http://irishheart.ie)**



This website has tips and advice to help you look after your heart.

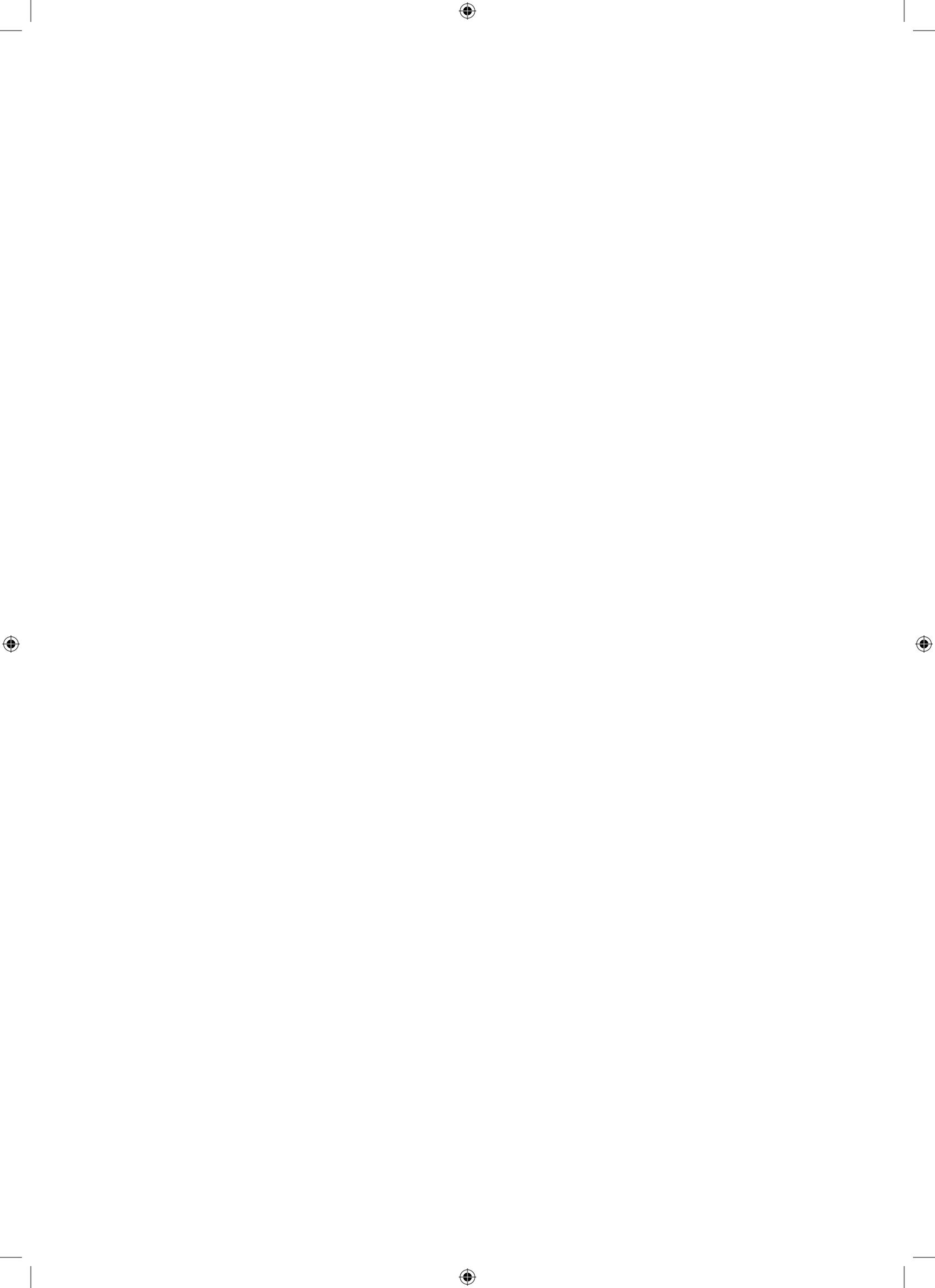
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