

# Menopause.

It's a natural part of life.  
Let's make it natural in conversation.



Not everyone will be familiar with the effects of the menopause or what kind of support is available. Here are some bitesize facts to help open conversations, along with details on how to seek and offer support.

## What is the menopause?

During the menopause, a woman's oestrogen levels fall and she stops having periods. This can often impact many areas of life, both at home and work.

Around

**1 in 3**

women are currently perimenopausal or menopausal.



Around

**8 in 10**

women will experience noticeable symptoms, and of these 45% will find their symptoms hard to deal with.

**51 yrs**

In the UK, most women go through the menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 – the average age is 51.

**40 yrs**

Younger women can be affected too: by early menopause (aged 40 to 45) or premature menopause (before the age of 40).

## Symptoms

Symptoms such as mood swings are well known, but there are **34 symptoms**<sup>\*</sup> associated with the menopause in total, including:

- hot flushes (a sudden feeling of heat in the face, neck and chest)
- aches and pains
- an urgent or regular need to urinate
- irregular or very heavy periods
- poor sleep and night sweats
- poor concentration, memory issues and an inability to think clearly – it's often called 'brain fog'

<sup>\*</sup>Menopause. Background information. Prevalence of symptoms. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries, 2017

Menopausal symptoms can last anywhere between **3 months and over 10 years**.

BHF, Menopause and your heart, 2022

**1/4** of women will experience debilitating symptoms.

CIPD, A Guide to Managing Menopause at Work, 2021

## Impact

Over **1/3**

said that they felt less outgoing in social situations and felt more isolated since experiencing menopausal symptoms.<sup>\*</sup>



Over **50%**

of women said their menopause symptoms had a negative impact on their lives.<sup>\*</sup>



**45%**

of women felt their menopause symptoms have had a negative impact on their work.<sup>\*</sup>



<sup>\*</sup>British Menopause Society. Employee Guide, September 2020

Women aged 50-64 are the fastest growing demographic in the workforce and those experiencing Menopausal symptoms can be forced to take long term absence for an average of 32 weeks throughout their career.

CIPD, A Guide to Managing Menopause at Work, 2021

## How can you help as an employer?

The best way for an employer to provide support is to understand how the menopause affects women's lives. If you're a manager, you should treat the menopause with the same support and understanding as you would treat any other ongoing health problems affecting team members. Don't offer medical advice but do offer support.

- Choose someone employees can go to in the first instance if they are struggling with symptoms.
- Have regular, informal one-to-one chats with your employees and encourage them to share any issues that could be affecting their workplace wellbeing.
- Give employees the option to speak to someone other than their manager, for example, a mentor or colleague. Some workplaces have support groups where people can share their experiences and helpful tips.
- The menopause can be a sensitive topic for some people – make sure any conversations are had in a private area.

## How can you help as a colleague?

- Educate yourself about what changes are common during this time of life, and offer lots of patience, understanding and support.
- Not all women want to talk about the menopause but if your colleague does mention it in conversation, don't be embarrassed.
- If your workplace offers menopause awareness sessions, go along to help educate yourself.



## How can you help as a family member or friend?

- Some people may not want to talk about their experience with the menopause, but if they do, listen, sympathise and be patient.
- Share your own experience, if you're comfortable doing so.
- Try to be understanding – it's common for the menopause to affect someone's mental health.



## How can I find help for myself?

### Ask your doctor about:

- self-help measures, such as diet, maintaining a healthy weight, stopping smoking and reducing alcohol to manage more severe symptoms
- hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or other prescribed medicines
- talking therapies eg cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) or medication to help your mental health



### Be mindful of the menopause. Don't make assumptions

In the UK the average age that people go through the menopause is 51 but people may also be going through premature or early menopause. The menopause doesn't only affect women but may also affect people who are transgender, non-binary or intersex.



### Encouraging employees to seek support

The NHS has a dedicated area online with advice and support for those experiencing the menopause. Find out more: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/help-and-support/>

The Menopause Charity is also a useful resource: <https://www.themenopausecharity.org/>