

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).

Source 'Menopause: The menopause is a workplace issue: guidance and model policy' Unison. Published October 2019. <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/10/25831.pdf>

Symptoms

Symptoms such as mood swings are well known, but there are **around 34 symptoms[^] associated with the menopause, 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'.

75%

of women experience hot flushes and night sweats during menopause, making them the most common symptoms experienced by menopausal women.

1 in 10

women have menopausal symptoms for up to 12 years.

[^]Menopause. Background information. Prevalence of symptoms. NICE Clinical Knowledge Summaries. cks.nice.org.uk, last revised March 2017 <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/menopause/background-information/prevalence-of-symptoms/>

Impact

Over **1/3**

said that they felt less outgoing in social situations and felt more isolated since experiencing menopausal symptoms.*



Over **50%** of women said their menopause symptoms had a negative impact on their lives.*

45%

of women felt their menopause symptoms have had a negative impact on their work.*



*British Menopause Society. Employee Guide, September 2020, page 4. www.thebms.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/BMS-Infographic-A-womans-relationship-with-the-menopause-SEPT2020-B.pdf

With 4.4 million women aged 50-64 in work (ONS 2019), this employee group represents the fastest growing demographic in the workforce.

There are very few workplaces, therefore, where menopause is not an issue affecting women employees.

Let's talk menopause. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. www.cipd.co.uk, published March 2019 https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/menopause-leaflet_tcm18-55569.pdf

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.

- Flexible working can really help people experiencing menopausal symptoms. If you can offer it, make sure your employees are aware of this.
- Choose someone or somewhere suitable 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.



Be mindful of the menopause. Don't make assumptions

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



It goes without saying

That no-one will appreciate anyone brushing the menopause off as a 'woman's problem', trivialising it as just 'going through the change' or referring to women as 'hormonal' or 'overly emotional'.

For more information, support and advice on the menopause, visit bupa.co.uk/womens-health

1 Menopause and the workplace guidance: what to consider. British Menopause Society. thebms.org.uk, published February 2019 <https://thebms.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/07-BMS-TfC-Menopause-and-the-workplace-APR2020.pdf>

2 Menopause and its management. Patient. patient.info, last reviewed January 2018 <https://patient.info/doctor/menopause-and-its-management>

3 The menopause. The menopause is a workplace issue: guidance and model policy. Unison. www.unison.org.uk, published October 2019 <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/10/25831.pdf>

4 Guidance on menopause and the workplace. Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians. www.som.org.uk, accessed September 2020 <https://www.som.org.uk/sites/som.org.uk/files/Guidance-on-menopause-and-the-workplace.pdf>