

Menopause Policy



Contents

Introduction



How We Define It

What is Menopause?

What are the stages of Menopause?

What are the symptoms?



How We Can Help

What support can CMS offer?



What external support is available?

Possible Treatment Options

Appendix 1 - Talking to your Line Manager about Menopause

Appendix 2 - Talking to your GP

Introduction

CMS is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone. We recognise that menopause will affect most of our employees in some way. Whether they themselves experience menopause, or their partner, mother, daughter, friend, colleague or team member does.





How We Define It

What is Menopause?



Anyone can be affected by hormonal changes during their lives for a number of reasons, including puberty, pregnancy, fertility treatment, gender transitioning, conditions needing hormone treatment, and menopause. These can bring about symptoms which could affect someone at work.

Menopause is a stage when hormones fluctuate and change, and eventually periods stop. The average age in the UK is 51, it's usually between the ages of 45-55. It can also happen much earlier, either naturally or as a result of surgery e.g. hysterectomy or illness.

Menopause Facts

51 years

The average age to reach the menopause in the UK

4-8 years

Symptoms of the menopause usually last between 4-8 years

1 in 100

will reach menopause before they are 40

8 in 10

people going through the menopause are in work



How We Define It

What are the stages of Menopause?

The menopause transition

Perimenopause

The time leading up to menopause when they may experience changes and menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Duration: Average 5-7 years

Menopause

The phase when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months or more (for those reaching menopause naturally).

Duration: 1 day event

Post-menopause

The time after menopause has occurred. A person who is post-menopausal (more than a year since periods) may still experience menopausal symptoms for many years.

Duration: Rest of life



How We Define It

What are the symptoms?

Three out of four people going through the menopause will experience some kind of symptoms, although everyone is different and symptoms can be fluctuating and be felt to varying degrees. Each person's experience may be very different to colleagues or friends.

These are some signs and symptoms that those who have gone through the menopause have said affect them most at work. It is highly unlikely that all will be experienced or all at the same time.

Physical Symptoms

- Hot flushes during the day or night (brief and sudden surges of heat usually felt in the face, neck and chest).
- Difficulty sleeping/insomnia/fatigue
- Hair/skin changes
- Muscle/joint stiffness
- Headaches/migraines
- Change in periods
- Urinary issues – e.g. increased frequency

Psychological Symptoms

- Low mood/depression/changes in mood
- Brain fog/problems with memory recall
- Reduced ability to concentrate/focus
- Anxiety/worry/nervousness
- Loss of confidence

Research suggests that symptoms may differ amongst certain ethnic groups. Ethnic differences in some symptoms include aches in the back of neck and skull, soreness, palpitations, severe backache and frequently feeling nervous or tense.

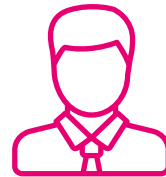


How We Can Help

What support can CMS offer?



We aim to facilitate an open and understanding working environment. If an employee feels that their menopausal symptoms are affecting them at work, then it is important that they seek support.



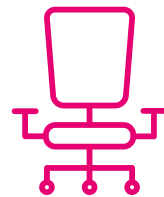
Line Manager

We encourage all employees to have an open and honest conversation with their manager or HR regarding what would help them at work to manage their symptoms and managers will consider making reasonable workplace adjustments.

Here are some general ideas on possible supportive changes to consider:

- A temporary change of work pattern.
- Reduce travel and consider dialling into meetings.
- More frequent breaks when needed.
- Allowing time off if an employee cannot carry on working that day.
- Providing a fan in the office environment.
- Providing a private area where the employee can rest for a while to help manage their symptoms.

See [Appendix 1](#) for some advice on talking to a line manager.



Occupational Health

CMS is partnered with Health Partners for our occupational health service. Occupational health is primarily concerned with the effect of work on an employee's health and of an employee's health on their work. They can provide support and identify reasonable adjustments in the workplace. HR can refer anyone for a consultation.



How We Can Help

What support can CMS offer?



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

CMS offers an external Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) so if someone is struggling with managing their symptoms they can speak confidentially with a counsellor who can offer advice and support. The freephone number is 0800 980 6559 and is available 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

The EAP also has a website portal generalilifeworks.com (access code: generaliuik). There are a number of resources relating to the menopause available such as articles and toolkits.



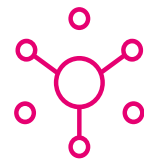
Efficacy - Psychological Support

Available across all offices, this confidential service provides emotional and psychological support through onsite (in London) and virtual clinicians. They deliver effective support and treatment, including cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Issues and problems with which CBT can help include menopause symptoms such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, performance anxiety, low self-esteem and excessive worry. To book an appointment call 020 7929 7911 or email cms-cmno@efficacy.org.uk.



Menopause Champions

Our Menopause Champions are colleagues around the Firm who have been trained on the Menopause and can be contacted to speak to someone on this topic. The list of champions is [here](#).



BAME Network

CMS appreciates that certain ethnic groups are sensitive to the issue of menopause and may find it difficult to talk about their symptoms, concerns or the overall impact of menopause on the day to day life. Specialist support can be provided if needed.



What Support is Available Externally?

What Support is Available Externally?



We always recommend an employee visits their GP if they are experiencing menopausal symptoms. Doctors can give advice on medical options, including HRT or other approaches to manage the menopause including diet and lifestyle changes. See top tips for preparing for this conversation in Appendix 2.

Helpful Resources

Henpicked

Menopause Hub and Menopause in the Workplace
henpicked.net/menopause-hub

British Menopause Society

www.thebms.org.uk

NHS guidance on menopause

www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause

Daisy Network

Dedicated to providing information and support with premature menopause
www.daisynetwork.org

Menopause Matters

www.menopausematters.co.uk

Healthtalk.org

Provides information about premature menopause including people talking about their own experiences.
<https://healthtalk.org/menopause/early-premature-menopause>

My Menopause Doctor

<https://menopausedoctor.co.uk>

Women's Health Concern website

www.womens-health-concern.org

NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)

[Menopause | Information for the public |](#)
[Menopause: diagnosis and management |](#)
[Guidance | NICE](#)



What Support is Available Externally?

Possible Treatment Options



This section offers some guidance on options to manage menopause. This is relevant for both those who are experiencing menopause and those supporting them. Just as each person's menopause symptoms may differ, so will their treatment plan, based on their individual preferences and medical history. What works for one might not work for another.

Discussing all options with a healthcare professional is crucial to decide the best options, taking into account personal preference, medical history, risks and benefits. Equally it's important to think about long-term health too. As hormone levels change, we need to take extra care of our long-term health and wellbeing, in particular our heart and bone health.

There are many options available, including:

Lifestyle Options

Making positive lifestyle choices can really impact symptom management. Think about the following;

- **Diet and Nutrition:** making sure we get a wide range of vitamins and minerals is so important for our overall health. Balancing protein, carbohydrate and 'good' fats is also key.
- **Exercise:** important for our overall physical and mental health, can help manage symptoms and improve long-term health including heart and bone health.

- **Sleep:** can feel elusive during menopause and is a cornerstone to good health and managing hormonal balance. There are medical and non-medical solutions that can help, or supportive apps to help get a better night's sleep.
- **Hydration:** drinking water and keeping our bodies hydrated is important for both our cognition and gut health.
- **Stopping smoking:** this is good for our overall health and is an important consideration with the longer-term cardiovascular risks post menopause. Smoking can also make symptoms worse.
- **Limiting caffeine and alcohol:** these act as stimulants and can increase symptoms like hot flushes and affect our sleep patterns.
- **Managing our stress:** helps us both physically and psychologically. Meditation or Mindfulness can help us relax, and calming our minds can assist with anxiety-related symptoms.



What Support is Available Externally? Possible Treatment Options



Medical Options

The main medical treatment is Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). There are many different types and preparations, and different combinations work for different people, so it's important to work with a healthcare professional to discuss risks and benefits and find the right option.

The key is reading up on the facts from reputable sources and being well informed to make a personal choice.

Complementary approaches

As an additional or alternative treatment option, different herbal remedies may support someone going through menopause. It's recommended to consult a nutritional therapist or qualified herbalist for a full discussion regarding these options.

Supplements

Vitamins and supplements can also prove useful. Calcium, magnesium and vitamin D are all important during and post-menopause too. Always make sure to consult a GP or pharmacist first.

Non-medical treatments

A range of non-medical treatments could also be helpful in Managing symptoms. These include:

- **Yoga** – helps with relaxation, physical mobility and builds strength and balance
- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)**
- **Acupuncture**
- **Aromatherapy**
- **Reflexology**
- **And talking!**

Further information

If you have any questions in relation to this policy, please speak with your HR contact.

Appendix 1

Talking to your Line Manager about Menopause



Research tells us that some people can find it hard to talk to their manager about how menopause is affecting them. However, your manager is there to help you be your best at work. The help you both, preparation is important. This will result in a much better conversation and outcome for both you and your employer. If you would prefer to speak to a Manager from the same ethnic background as you, please speak to HR. If you don't feel comfortable talking to your line manager then speak to your HR contact in the first instance.

Prepare for the meeting

- Check what support is available on the intranet or speak with your HR contact.
- Keep a diary of your menopause symptoms and how they are affecting you in relation to work, personally and outside of work.
- Think about what could make things easier at work and what could your manager do to support you.
- If you need work to be flexible, consider how long you would need these adjustments to be in place for.
- Think about what the solutions are that would help you.
- Book a meeting so you have the time and private space to talk.
- Plan what you are going to say.

At the meeting

- If you are nervous about the conversation, don't be afraid to tell your manager this.
- Explain your situation clearly. Tell them what is happening as it will help your manager understand how it is affecting you.
- Provide examples of your symptoms and how this is impacting you at work.
- Agree with your manager what you can both do and how you will review any adjustments. Your manager may need to go away and review your suggestions – be understanding and agree a time to catch up again.

Appendix 2

Talking to your GP



If menopausal symptoms are getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your GP. Here are some helpful tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Ahead of your appointment

- Don't wait until symptoms feel unbearable.
- Keep notes of your menstrual cycle, symptoms, frequency, duration, how they are affecting you, how you are feeling, any changes you've noticed, how you are attempting to manage the symptoms. Take these notes to your appointment.
- If you have any preference about how to manage symptoms write them down.
- Review the NICE guidelines. They are used by your GP to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer.

Making your appointment

- Ask the receptionist which person is best to talk about the menopause (in case someone has had special training in the subject).
- If you don't think your standard appointment length will be long enough, ask for a longer/double appointment.

What to expect from your appointment

- The GP should talk to you about your lifestyle and how to manage both your symptoms and long term health.
- They may offer advice on hormone replacement therapy and other non-medical options.
- They will discuss the safety and effectiveness of any treatment.
- Ask them if there is a menopause clinic in your area – if there is then ask for a referral.

After your appointment

- Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion if you don't feel you have received the help you need.

Date policy last updated:	17 August 2021
Document Version:	V1
Policy Owner:	Phil Raymond, HR Director
Policy approved by:	Sophie Kent, HR Business Partner
Policy updated by:	Sophie Kent, HR Business Partner
Policy applicable to:	UK Offices



CMS Law-Now™

Your free online legal information service.

A subscription service for legal articles on a variety of topics delivered by email.
cms-lawnow.com

The information held in this publication is for general purposes and guidance only and does not purport to constitute legal or professional advice. It was prepared in co-operation with local attorneys.

CMS Legal Services EEIG (CMS EEIG) is a European Economic Interest Grouping that coordinates an organisation of independent law firms. CMS EEIG provides no client services. Such services are solely provided by CMS EEIG's member firms in their respective jurisdictions. CMS EEIG and each of its member firms are separate and legally distinct entities, and no such entity has any authority to bind any other. CMS EEIG and each member firm are liable only for their own acts or omissions and not those of each other. The brand name "CMS" and the term "firm" are used to refer to some or all of the member firms or their offices; details can be found under "legal information" in the footer of cms.law.

CMS locations:

Aberdeen, Abu Dhabi, Algiers, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Barcelona, Beijing, Beirut, Belgrade, Berlin, Bogotá, Bratislava, Bristol, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Casablanca, Cologne, Dubai, Duesseldorf, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Funchal, Geneva, Glasgow, Hamburg, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Kyiv, Leipzig, Lima, Lisbon, Ljubljana, London, Luanda, Luxembourg, Lyon, Madrid, Manchester, Mexico City, Milan, Mombasa, Monaco, Moscow, Munich, Muscat, Nairobi, Paris, Podgorica, Poznan, Prague, Reading, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Santiago de Chile, Sarajevo, Shanghai, Sheffield, Singapore, Skopje, Sofia, Strasbourg, Stuttgart, Tirana, Utrecht, Vienna, Warsaw, Zagreb and Zurich.

cms.law

