

5 minute guide: Talking to your 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 at your best at work. To help you both, preparation is important. This will result in a much better conversation and outcome for both you and your employer.

Prepare for your meeting. Check out what support is available in your organisation. Search your organisation's intranet or if there's nothing there, talk to HR.

Keep a diary of your menopause symptoms and how they're affecting you. Think about what practical, reasonable adjustments might help, being flexible and ideally coming up with some different options. These may be for a short period of time while you work with your medical professional to alleviate your symptoms.

Book a meeting. This means you'll have time and ideally a private office/time to talk and will be more likely to get your points across.

Explain your situation clearly. Talk about how menopause is affecting you at work, what you're doing to manage your menopause symptoms and what your line manager could do to help. Discuss what support you would like e.g. reasonable adjustments and timescales. Or sometimes just knowing someone understands and is there to listen can help.

Agree with your manager what you can both do. They may need time to think about the best support. Remember, this may have been on your mind for a long time, but it may be the first time your manager has heard about it. Allow them time to digest the information and seek advice if necessary.

Do you want the conversation to be confidential? Some of us are happy talking about menopause openly, others are not. Talk to your line manager about whether you want the conversation to be kept confidential or if you're happy to discuss it with colleagues. It's your choice.

Follow up. At the end of the meeting put a time in the diary to meet again, whether that's to agree a way forward, to monitor progress or update. Menopause symptoms can change over time so adjustments may need to change.

Above all, it's in both your best interests to find a good solution. All anyone wants is for you to be fit and well and do your job to the best of your ability. Menopause can be isolating if you don't talk to someone but remember, menopause can have an impact on everyone, so you most certainly are not alone.

