

Section 8

Supporting someone through the menopause



The menopause can cause many physical and emotional changes for women. This can make it a difficult time.



It is good to find out how you can support someone who might be going through menopause or perimenopause. Some women will leave their jobs if not supported. Making changes at work can help women stay in their jobs.

Learn more about menopause



Getting yourself and others informed is an important step. It will give you an idea of what your partner, family member, friend or colleague might be going through.



A good first step would be to learn about all the symptoms of the menopause. Find out about the impact these symptoms may have. Find out about treatments and support that are available.

Listen to them



Communication is very important. Ask them about how they feel or what they are going through. It is important to remember that not everyone might want to talk about some symptoms or feelings.



It is also important to remember that everyone's menopause is different. Do not think you know what they are going through. Let them know you are there if they need you. This will make them feel supported.

Encourage them



They might not feel like doing things they normally would. Their self-esteem might be low. Saying encouraging things can help make them feel happy.



Invite them to meet other people or do activities. This will give them a chance to feel good about themselves even when experiencing symptoms.

Help with their symptoms



An active, healthy lifestyle can help some of the symptoms of menopause. You can encourage them to go for a walk, a swim or try a yoga class to get more active.



Alcohol and smoking can make the symptoms of menopause worse. Cutting down can help. Try cooking a healthy meal together rather than going to the pub.



You can also talk to them about the treatment options they are offered by their GP. They might even appreciate your support or company when they go to the GP if appropriate.

Sexual wellbeing and intimacy



Women can experience a loss of sexual desire or sex drive because of hormone changes during menopause. They may find they no longer want to have sex and that can be very upsetting.

Other symptoms that can affect desire for sex can include:



- vaginal dryness and discomfort that makes penetrative sex uncomfortable or painful



- night sweats that affect sleep and energy for sex



- emotional changes that can make someone feel too stressed or upset for sex.



There are treatments that help these symptoms. But it is just as important to ask your partner how they are feeling so you can give the support they need and want.



There are also a lot of ways to show love and care towards a partner. Talking about how to feel close to each other and spending time together is important.



It is still possible to get pregnant when perimenopausal. It is important that you keep taking contraception if you need it.

Menopause and the workplace



Many women have said that they often find managing the menopause in the workplace very difficult. Coping with symptoms in the workplace can be hard. Many women find it difficult to talk about menopause at work.



It is important that women feel supported to continue working.



There are lots of small changes that managers and organisations can make so that workplaces are healthy and welcoming places for women going through menopause.

Supporting staff



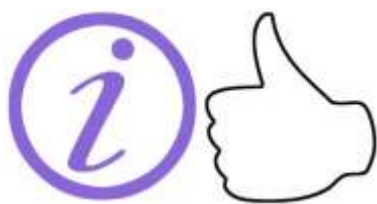
The menopause is normal for many women. By giving help and support to women who are managing menopause symptoms at work, employers can help make a positive workplace environment.



There are lots of things you can do to give menopause support at work. Practical support also helps to show that women are valued members of staff.



It is also important to remember that many women see the menopause as private. They should not be asked about it.



Menopausal symptoms can also be protected by employment law. It is important that managers and colleagues know about symptoms and impact of menopause.