



What is menopause?

Menopause affects anyone who has periods and occurs when a person's periods stop due to lower hormone levels. It usually happens between the ages of 45 and 55 but can be earlier or later.

Menopause can happen for a number of reasons, including:

- Naturally
- Genetics
- Surgery (e.g. to remove the ovaries (oophorectomy) or to remove the uterus (hysterectomy) cancer treatments
- Sometimes the reason is unknown

What is perimenopause?

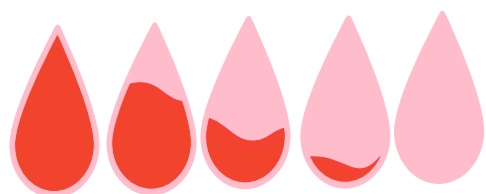
Perimenopause is when a person has symptoms of menopause, but periods have not stopped. Perimenopause usually start months or years before a person's periods stop. Perimenopause ends and a person reaches menopause when they have not had a period for 12 months.

What are the symptoms of menopause?

The menopause can cause a range of both physical and psychological symptoms and can have a big impact on a person's daily life, including relationships, social life, family life and work.

Menopause can feel different for everyone. A person may have a number of symptoms or none. Common symptoms include:

Changes to periods: The first sign of the perimenopause is usually, but not always, a change in the normal pattern of a person's periods, for example they become irregular. Eventually periods will stop altogether.

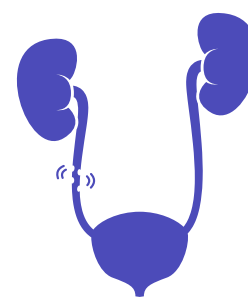
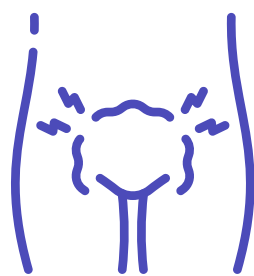


Mental health symptoms: Common mental health symptoms of menopause and perimenopause include: changes to a person's mood, like low mood, anxiety, mood swings and low self-esteem problems with memory or concentration (brain fog)



Physical symptoms Common physical symptoms of menopause and perimenopause include:

- hot flushes, when a person has sudden feelings of hot or cold in their face, neck and chest which can make them dizzy
- difficulty sleeping, which may be a result of night sweats and make a person feel tired and irritable during the day
- palpitations, when heartbeats suddenly become more noticeable
- headaches and migraines that are worse than usual
- muscle aches and joint pains
- changed body shape and weight gain
- skin changes including dry and itchy skin
- reduced sex drive
- vaginal dryness and pain, itching or discomfort during sex
- recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs)



How long do symptoms last?

Symptoms can last for months or years and can change with time. For example, hot flushes and night sweats may improve, and then low mood and anxiety may develop.

Some symptoms, such as joint pain and vaginal dryness, can carry on after periods stop.

What is the impact of menopause in the workplace?

Menopause symptoms can have a significant impact on a person at work. Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development found that two thirds (67%) of working women between the ages of 40 and 60 with experience of menopausal symptoms said they have had a mostly negative impact on them at work.

Of those who were negatively affected at work:

- 79% said they were less able to concentrate
- 68% said they experienced more stress
- nearly half (49%) said they felt less patient with clients and colleagues, and
- 46% felt less physically able to carry out work tasks.

As a result, over half of respondents were able to think of a time when they were unable to go into work due to their menopause symptoms. Further research by the Fawcett Society found that one in ten women surveyed who were employed during the menopause left work due to menopause symptoms.

What adjustments could be made in the workplace?

Workplace adjustments can play a key role in supporting workers experiencing the menopause. The following considerations/ adjustments can help:

- Providing rest rooms/ quiet areas
- Providing cooling systems or fans
- Relaxing uniform policies to allow workers to wear cooler or warmer clothing
- Promoting flexibility e.g. working from home or altering shift patterns such as varying start and finish times

How do I learn more?

We have a list of frequently asked questions and wider resources available for staff to learn more about the menopause as well as wider gender and EDI topics on the Equality Diversity & Inclusion page of SASP's Intranet.

How do I access help and support?

For further support on how to navigate menopause, including videos on other's experiences, tips to ease symptoms and who to contact within the NHS visit the NHS website.

MENOPAUSE

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What are the symptoms of menopause?

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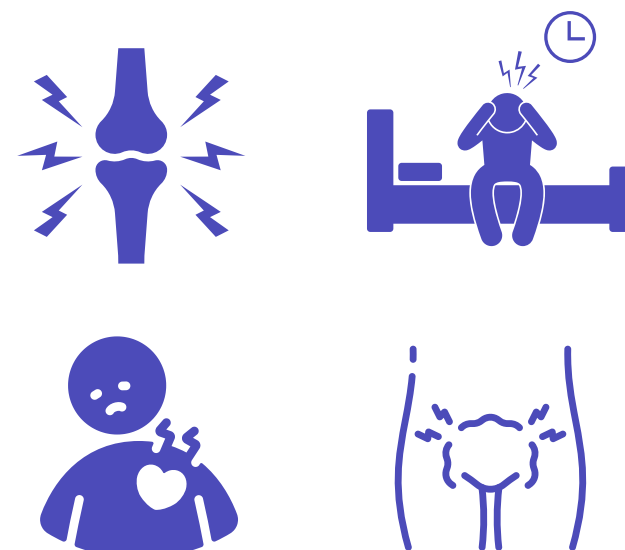


Mental health symptoms: Low mood, anxiety, mood swings and low self-esteem, problems with memory or concentration (brain fog)



Physical symptoms:

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- difficulty sleeping
- palpitations, when heartbeats suddenly become more noticeable
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A more detailed version can be accessed by scanning the QR code to the right: