

Menopause Guide



Understanding [menopause](#) is important whether you are experiencing symptoms yourself or providing support for a team member or family member. The purpose of this guide is to create awareness and provide practical information and support.

Anyone can be affected by hormonal changes for many different reasons which includes and are not limited to pregnancy, fertility treatment, gender transitioning, conditions needing hormone treatment and menopause. Any of these can bring about symptoms which can affect anybody at work or at home.

Menopause is a transitional stage of life, generally those over 45 will or may experience menopause.

It is not an issue we should shy away from; we at S&P would like to increase our team members' awareness by providing practical information and education on the subject. With this in mind [S&P's global commitment on menopause](#) is part of our aim to build a more inclusive culture and our desire for team members to see S&P as the place to be for their career through all stages of life. Menopause is a natural phase of life and a universal experience. It is very important everyone feels comfortable and supported while at work.

Did you know?

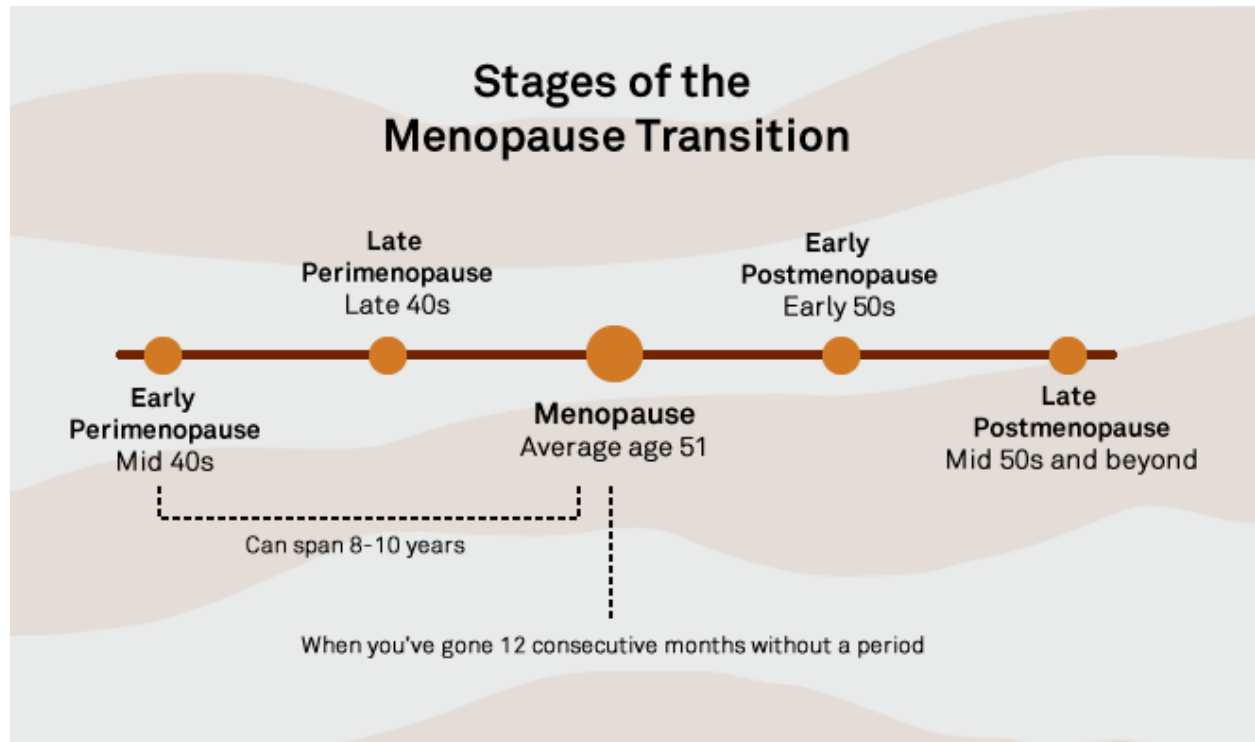
50% of the population will go through menopause and experience the effects for up to half of their lives.

1 in 4 people going through menopause will suffer with severe symptoms.

10% of employees affected by menopause will stop working due to unmanaged symptoms.

40% of team members going through menopause report it interferes with their job on a weekly basis.

Stages of menopause



There are three stages of menopause.

Going through the various stages of Menopause symptoms will vary by individual, therefore different levels of adjustments and support may be required.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause and can last anywhere from 5 – 10 years. Generally speaking, perimenopause begins in your 40s when you can start to experience physical and emotional changes. You can be in a perimenopause state for years before menopause actually takes place.

Menopause is defined as a biological state when hormones change and eventually menstruation stops. The average age of menopause is 51 and is marked by the absence of a menstrual period for 12 months. However, this stage can occur earlier naturally, due to surgery, illness or other reasons.

Trans and non-binary individuals may also experience the symptoms due to hormonal changes.

In some circumstances the menopause stage can start earlier where some people experience premature menopause before the age of 40 due to varying circumstances. Hormonal changes can happen when a person is receiving fertility treatment, taking contraceptives or any other hormonal treatments, treatment of endometriosis, transitioning, or going through an illness or surgery.

Postmenopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for 12 consecutive months and for the rest of that person's life.

Symptoms of menopause

Not all symptoms are the same, and everyone is different. Symptoms can range from physical to psychological.

The most common physical symptoms are:

- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia/fatigue
- Hot flushes/hot flashes/night sweats
- Skin and hair changes
- Migraines or headaches
- Aches and pains
- Irregular/heavy periods
- Urinary Increased frequency/urinary issues

The most common psychological symptoms are:

- Low mood, depression
- Moodiness
- Nervousness, worry or anxiety
- Reduced ability to concentrate or focus
- Brain fog
- Problems with memory recall

Potential health risks of menopause

The risk of health conditions such as heart disease, osteoporosis and a range of genitourinary issues increases with the onset of menopause.

Osteoporosis can be a serious health threat during postmenopausal because the drop in estrogen can cause a decrease in bone density and an increase fracture risk. The drop in estrogen can also increase the risk of heart disease.

The genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM) affects up to 80% of people during menopause and is caused by low estrogen levels in the tissues of the urinary and genital tract. Symptoms include vaginal dryness, painful sex, burning, urinary tract infections and general irritation of the genital area. In contrast to hot flashes and night sweats that usually improve over time, GSM generally gets worse without effective therapy.

Despite the high prevalence of GSM and lack of improvement without treatment, only a minority of those affected seek help or are offered treatment by their healthcare providers.

After menopause, a woman's risk of heart disease increases steadily due to a lack of estrogen.

Managing menopause

There are many ways you can manage your menopause either by approaching it naturally, using a medical approach, or a combination of the two.

Hormone therapy (HT) is often an effective treatment for disruptive menopausal symptoms. For some, hormone therapy is not an option. Other prescription medications can be effective treatments for hot flashes. Talk with your healthcare provider to find out which method is best for you.

Symptoms don't need to be bad or unbearable before help is available.

Talk to your healthcare provider for support and guidance on managing your menopause.

Lifestyle modifications to assist with symptoms

Taking care of yourself and refocusing on your overall health is more important than ever.

A healthy lifestyle helps counter some of the health issues that arise with perimenopause and menopause. Eating a nutritious diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and protein, among other nutrients, and getting regular physical activity may provide relief from menopause symptoms.

- Hormonal changes during menopause can cause bones to weaken, increasing the risk of osteoporosis. Calcium and vitamin D are linked to good bone health, so it's important to get enough of these nutrients in your diet.
 - Many foods are calcium-rich, including dairy products like yogurt, milk and cheese.
 - Green leafy vegetables, such as kale, collard greens and spinach have a lot of calcium too. Calcium is also plentiful in tofu, beans, sardines and other foods.
- Regular intake of high-quality protein may prevent the loss of lean muscle, aid in weight loss, and help regulate mood and sleep.
- Regular exercise can help alleviate menopause symptoms such as poor sleep, anxiety, low mood and fatigue. It can also protect against weight gain and various diseases and conditions.

How to prepare for a conversation with your health care provider

Tracking symptoms that could be related to hormonal change is an important first step. Your healthcare provider may need to rule out other issues.

How to prepare for a conversation with your People Leader

Menopause symptoms (e.g., hot flashes, anxiety, fatigue, depression, joint stiffness) can affect an individual's comfort and performance at work. Menopause can be a stressful, sensitive and personal matter. You may wish to meet with your People Leader to discuss adjustments that you can make to help alleviate your symptoms in your work environment.

Below are some examples of adjustments that can make a difference in your work environment:

- **Temperature:** We strive to achieve a comfortable working temperature for our people. Where possible, to improve an individual's comfort they can be moved closer to an open window or a desk fan can be provided.
- **Breaks:** Our people may book a small meeting room that is private, quiet and cool. Office facilities will vary by location (e.g., wellness room, first aid room).
- **Flexible working:** Recognizing that difficulty sleeping is a common symptom of menopause, we aim to facilitate flexible working wherever possible. Please review our [Flexible Framework](#).
- **Paid leave:** If unwell or unable to work due to menopausal symptoms our people can take paid leave. We encourage our people to speak to their doctor when they are experiencing symptoms – please review your local medical coverage details. Use paid leave to seek medical advice for managing symptoms of menopause and follow your medical practitioner's treatment plan. Our paid leave policies differ across the globe. Please always discuss time you need to take off with your People Leader. Details of your local leave options can be found on our [Global Benefits Site](#).

Tips to prepare for a conversation with your People Leader

- Review [Menopause: Talking to your People Leader](#).
- Keep a [list of your symptoms](#) and note how the symptoms are affecting you at work.
- Explain how your symptoms are affecting your productivity at work.
- Discuss what reasonable adjustments might help and suggest more than one option.
- Check what support is available to you. You can also engage HR.

If you are a People Leader, view the [People Leader Guide: Supportive Conversations About Menopause](#).

Helpful resources

- [TELUS Health](#)
- [MenopauseIQ](#) (offered by FertilityIQ)
- [Menopause Support Statement](#)
- [Menopause Symptom Tracker](#)

If you have any questions regarding flexible working or the paid leave options available to you locally, please visit the [People Portal](#).