

Menopause..... Awareness



Holy Cross
Menopause Policy

Before you read this training
please read the Hospital
Menopause Policy



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Menopause Policy

What is the menopause?

‘As the menopause approaches, the supply of eggs in a woman’s ovaries dwindles, the two sex hormones, oestrogen and progesterone fluctuate and then begin to decline. This then causes the cessation of menstruation’

Pre- menopause refers to the years when your menstrual cycle is regular

Peri-menopause refers to the stage lasting several years on either side of your last menstrual period. This means, in part it is a retrospective diagnosis

Menopause has a very precise meaning The menopause is a point in time that can be identified retrospectively when you have not had a menstrual bleed for 12 months.

Post-menopause refers to the end of your last menstrual period until the end of your life

34 Menopause Symptoms

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- 1.Mood Swings
 - 2.Brain Fog
 - 3.Lack of Motivation
 - 4.Difficulty in Focusing
 - 5.Headaches
 - 6.Night Sweats
 - 7.Hot Flashes
 - 8.Breast Tenderness
 - 9.Digestive Problems
 - 10.Quick Weight Gain
 11. Loss of Libido
 - 12.Vaginal Dryness
 - 13.Periods Stop
 - 14.Osteoporosis
 - 15.Joint Stiffness
 - 16.Muscle Aches
 - 17.Decreased Confidence

- 18.Hair Thins
- 19.Dry Skin
- 20.Acne
- 21.Dry Eyes
- 22.Wrinkles
- 23.Dry Mouth
- 24.Bloating
- 25.Fatigue
- 26.Insomnia
- 27.Anxiety
- 28.Urinary Pain
- 29.Clammy Feeling
- 30.Burning Mouth
- 31.Facial Hair
- 32.Dizziness
- 33.Lack of Focus
- 34.Depression

- Cycle Changes
- Hot Flashes (75%)
- Tiredness / poor sleep (68%)
- Loss of Libido (65%)
- Anxiety (62%)
- Loss of memory / concentration / brain fog (53%)
- Dry Vagina / discomfort on intercourse (48%)

Hot Flushes

Deserve a special mention as they are so common amongst women going through both the peri / menopause and post menopause.

They are a common feature of abrupt menopause due to surgery / treatment with certain medications such as chemotherapy.

- Rapid onset lasting from 1 to 5 minutes
- Range from a few over the course of a week up to 10 or more in the daytime / night
- They range in severity from a fleeting sense of warmth to a feeling of being **consumed by a raging fire** from the inside out
- A major hot flush can induce facial and upper body flushing, sweating and sometimes confusion
- Followed by a sudden chill
- Think of the impact of having one whilst caring for a patient, in a meeting, doing a presentation....
- Night-time hot flushes often result in disturbed sleep and needing to change bedding and nightwear and shower
- Imagine having disturbed sleep every night!
- Some women report they make them visible and vulnerable to derisory comments and embarrassment
- They can be debilitating and can last for years!

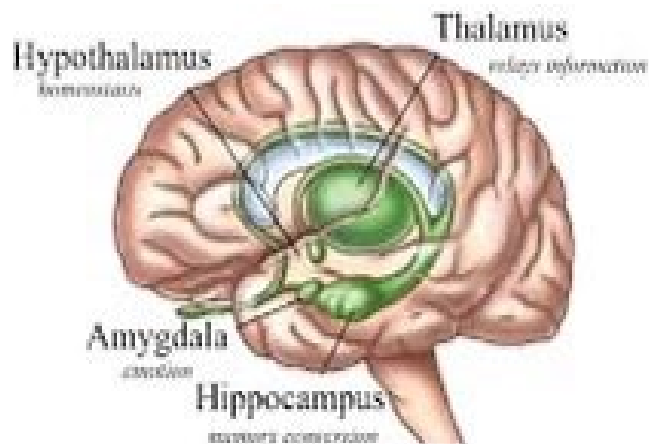


"H..has your hot flush gone yet,
c..can we close the window
now?"

Memory issues / Mood / anxiety / Irritability

- Well established association with the menopause
- Decline in memory at onset menopause - but rebounds later
- Due to effects of low oestrogen on nerves in brain particularly in: amygdala / hippocampus / frontal brain
- These are the areas associated with Mood and Memory!

The Limbic System



Hijacking the Amygdala

- Very old primitive part of human brain
- Fear / aggression / anxiety – fight or flight
- Brain evolved better control over it
- We learn to control it
- Low oestrogen = poorer emotional control

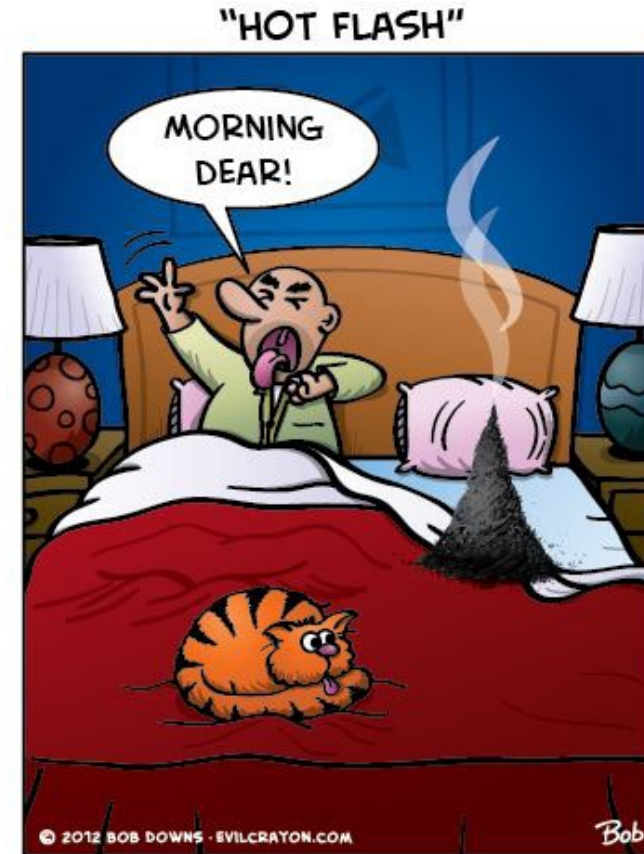
Poor sleep and tiredness

Addressing the underlying issues of the menopause often helps sleep!

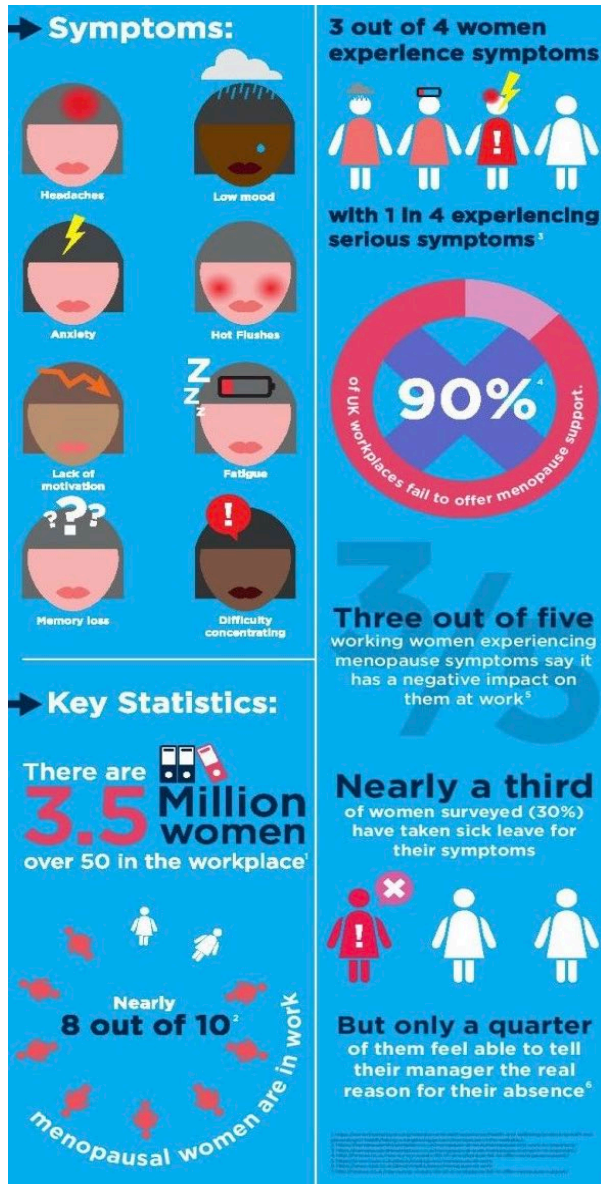
- Improving the hot flushes helps improve sleep and some forms of HRT promote restorative sleep
- Stress and anxiety management
- Good sleep hygiene
- check out the sleepio app
- Regular exercise

Other important reasons for good sleep:

- Memory
- Cardiovascular Health



Menopause causing workplace Inequality



“She’s Being Menopausal”

“She’s having a moment”

“Hormonal”

- Managers need training
 - Talking to managers
 - Talking to your GP about all options
 - Fans / windows open
 - Uniform adjustments
 - Counselling and support
 - All of us talking more about menopause issues
- 2016 Well Woman Study: found that when women do understand the symptoms and ways to manage them, their lives (and work) can get back to normal quickly

Why is it important?

Menopause affects 51% of the population.

Menopause can impact women differently depending on their race, religion and other health inequalities

Menopause is a normal part of the ageing process and is a natural transition affecting all women

Affects most women between the ages of 45 and 55 years. Average age of onset is 51 years.

Affects other colleagues including trans and intersex, but you may not hear from this group.

75% of women will experience mild to moderate symptoms. 25% more severe

Many women enter the menopause at the peak of their productive lives, with an increasing number going through the menopause whilst working

Approximately 89% of nurses are female, of whom 48.9% are aged over 45 years

Approximately 1% of women will experience early menopause before the age of 40

Support and understanding from managers is crucial and can make a huge difference to how a woman deals with her menopause at work.

Rapidly growing media interest!

Food for thought!

It's not THE
menopause.
It's YOUR
menopause

I was genuinely worried I had early
onset Alzheimer's because I'd forget
really important stuff

One of my real problems
with the menopause was
that I had to think about
female stuff

It was like I
had lost my
nerve

Incontinence ...can be
giggly when you get on a
trampoline ...but its not
normal

There is an essential
ageism and misogyny
around the idea that
menopause is
uniformly tragic ...

Menopause is a diversity
issue. The face of
menopause is very white
and middle class

Menopause is as much the
beginning of something as it is the
end

Call to Action!What will YOU do?

Commit

- Commit to understanding more about the menopause

Reflect on

- Reflect on whether you have any colleagues / team members going through peri / menopause and need support

Consider

- Consider the workplace and whether any changes could be made to help colleagues going through the menopause, both environmental and uniforms

Consider

- Consider flexible working for colleagues who need support

Raise

- Raise awareness about menopause within your workplace. Tell ONE colleague what you have learned today! Aim to have a culture where menopause can be talked about openly

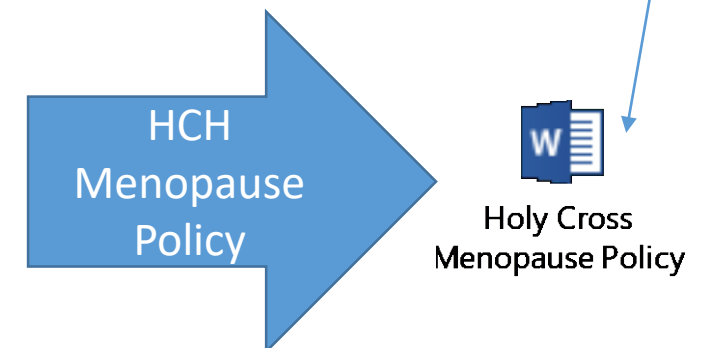
Staff

- Direct staff to other specialist support or their GP if they need help

Support and understanding

- Support and understanding from you as managers is crucial and can make a major difference to how a woman deals with her menopause symptoms whilst at work

Check out our policy



External Links for help and advice

- **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.** These explain how your GP will determine what types of treatments and interventions they can offer you.
- The **National Health Service** provides a comprehensive overview of menopause, the symptoms and available treatments.
- **Menopause information.** The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) provide further information in a dedicated area of their website.
- **Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI).** Information and support on very early menopause. You can find out more at the Daisy Network. <https://www.daisynetwork.org/>
- **Surgical Menopause.** Hysterectomy and removal of the ovaries can be an invaluable treatment for some gynaecological problems, however the subsequent surgical menopause is not always considered and there can be little follow up after recovery from surgery. It is worth having the discussion about your post-surgery options with your GP or surgeon as soon as possible, so that you are prepared.
- **Henpicked.** This site provides information on managing menopause and an insight into individual stories. <https://henpicked.net/>

What Now

- If you are struggling with symptoms of the Menopause speak to your Manager or to Human Resources
- There is lots more information about how we can support you in the policy



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