

# Menopause and the Workplace – Information for Employees

If the symptoms of menopause are problematic and causing stress and concern it is important to recognise that it is ok to reach out for help. See the [HSE Menopause webpage](#) for information.

## Accessing support from your personal health provider

There are a number of GPs and consultants in Ireland who specialise in menopause. To prepare for the visit:

- Keep a record of symptoms in as much detail as possible.
- Make a note of how long symptoms have been experienced.
- Keep a note of the date of the last menstrual period.
- Be informed about the different treatment options – See <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/menopause/menopause-treatment/>.
- HRT is a form of therapy which replaces the declining hormones. Write down any questions about benefits versus risks.
- Ask what other treatment options are available.

Specialist websites contains additional information on preparing for your appointment including resources such as the Green Climatic Scale (GCS), which is a simple tool to help assess your menopause symptoms across various health areas such as physical, psychological, sexual and vasomotor.

## Lifestyle Changes

Many individuals are not prepared for the many changes that their bodies and minds go through in this natural transition. Having knowledge gives power and informs good choices. It can be a time to reflect and implement changes in lifestyle which may improve overall wellbeing and assist in managing problematic symptoms.

Some lifestyle changes to consider include:

- Regular exercise which benefits both physical and psychological wellbeing
- Build in some resistance exercises in addition to cardiovascular exercise. This supports muscle mass which is lost in menopause
- Relaxation and mindful breathing which can reduce the stress response and increase toleration of hot flushes
- Eating a healthy diet which supports bone health and cardiovascular health
- Awareness of intake of spicy food/alcohol as both can exacerbate hot flushes
- Stop smoking as it can impact on menopause and it's symptoms
- Keep the bedroom cool and use light layers rather than heavy bed clothes
- Talk to others, talk to a specialist, talk to your GP, talk to the [Employee Assistance Programme](#).
- Accessing credible source research and learn about the accurate facts and staying informed will enhance overall management of challenging symptoms.

## Managing symptoms at work

If menopausal symptoms are impacting your workplace wellbeing, consider talking to your manager. While this is a personal choice, it could be an important step in securing the support you need at work. It can be difficult to disclose sensitive and personal information. You might consider talking to an Employee Assistance Programme Counsellor in preparation. They can provide you with a safe space to discuss your concerns and identify how this might be best approached.

- You can start with listing the symptoms which impact you most. Then review these to see which are impacting you most at work.
- Try to identify what adjustments might support you at this time and consider how any of the existing flexible working arrangements which are available to you might work to your advantage to support you at this time.
- Consider your desk or office space. Would a fan help or being near a window?
- If you are experiencing brain fog or short term memory difficulties, consider making a note of items you may need to recall and what reminders you could set to support your memory.
- Reflect on when you are at your best and plan your most demanding tasks around this time if feasible.

It is also vital you take regular breaks throughout the day e.g. getting outside to get some fresh air or employ breathing or mindfulness techniques. Your Employee Assistance Programme Counsellor can support you in building your personal self-care plan.

If feasible, consider bringing a “caught-out kit” to store in your desk or locker at work. This kit could include sanitary products, wet wipes, a towel and spare clothes.

Do consider talking to supportive work colleagues. Some may be at a similar life stage and could provide invaluable peer support.

## Information Links

HSE Menopause Information - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/menopause/>

Menopause treatment information - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/menopause/menopause-treatment/>

Employee Assistance Programme - <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-and-services/employee-assistance-programme-staff-counselling/>