



## **Tips to Help Employees Affected by** **Menopause**

Premenopause, perimenopause, menopause, postmenopause, and andropause – terms you'll have heard being mentioned increasingly in the workplace in recent years, and for good reason.

Increasing awareness and understanding of the different stages of the menopause and male menopause is crucial in ensuring that you create a safe and comfortable environment for your team, and that you're providing an adequate level of support and adjustments for your colleagues.

We've pulled together this guide to provide you with a brief overview of the different stages of menopause and the symptoms that individuals can experience, as well as a handy tip sheet containing guidance on what you can do if you – or someone you know – is experiencing symptoms and how they can get support at work.

### **The 4 Stages of the Menopause**

#### **The Early Menopause**

The early menopause is classed as when the menopause occurs before the age of 45, but this is not to be confused with Premature Menopause which is when menopause occurs below the age of 40 but can occur as young as teenage years. The Early Menopause is when the ovaries stop functioning much earlier than they should and cannot always be directly linked to a cause but can be related to primary or secondary conditions. Signs of Early Menopause include night sweats, low energy levels, issues with sleep and poor concentration.

#### **Perimenopause**

Perimenopause occurs usually between the ages of 40 and 50 but can begin much earlier. This describes the stage before the menopause when a person will start to experience symptoms which may include hot flashes, mood swings, low energy, changes to periods and possible difficulty in sleeping.

## Menopause

The Menopause most commonly occurs between the ages of 45 – 55 but as with all previous stages can occur earlier – the average age for this stage in the UK is 51. The menopause is described as when oestrogen levels begin to drop which affects the production and storage of eggs and ultimately affects the ability to conceive. Signs of the menopause include all of those listed already, as well as joint stiffness/aches and pains, heart palpitations, and problems with concentration or memory levels.

## Postmenopause

The final stage of the menopause is referred to as Postmenopause and is classed when a person has not had a period for a 12-month period and lasts for the rest of the individuals' life. Most of the symptoms that have been experienced generally start to decrease during this time, but this is not always the case as 10% of women have been reported as still experiencing these<sup>1</sup>.

## The Male Menopause – 'Andropause'

The 'male menopause' typically occurs between the late 40's and early 50's, and brings symptoms such as mood swings, a lack of enthusiasm or energy, difficulty sleeping, and issues with concentration and memory. However, unlike the stages of menopause, this is not directly linked with a decline in the production of testosterone (unless in the case of diagnosed hypogonadism). It is often found that lifestyle factors, physical or psychological problems are the root cause.

**Now that we've covered the stages and types of menopauses, see our handy Top Tips guide on the next page to see what you can do to support any members of your team experiencing symptoms or if they know someone who is...**

## Menopause support in the workplace – Top Tips

### Tips if you're experiencing symptoms of the menopause

Find someone that you're comfortable talking to – choose someone you trust, and outline whether you want help or just

### Tips if you know someone who is experiencing symptoms of the menopause

Be supportive whilst someone is experiencing any symptoms of the menopause, asking if there is anything you can do and understanding what they may need – a listener or some help, for example. Show a level of

<p>Speak to your employer if you feel that your symptoms are affecting your wellbeing or performance at work.</p>	<p><b>Provide access to third-party support where you can, such as EAP programmes, health insurance, health management apps/services.</b></p>
<p>Consider any adjustments that you feel would be beneficial or would help you feel more comfortable at work that you can suggest – prompting what you feel may help will give guidance to your employer.</p>	<p>Make sure that any support you offer is appropriate – don't assume that someone is experiencing symptoms unless they have told you. On the flip side to the above – don't be scared to open the format for a conversation. Simply asking someone "is everything okay?" or whether they need support can create a comfortable environment that people may feel more inclined to share in.</p>
<p>Be open (if comfortable) with your employer so that they are aware of your circumstances. Ask for regular wellbeing check-ins.</p>	<p>Consider any relevant adjustments – allowing more rest/toilet breaks, allowing remote/hybrid working if possible so that the employee can work in an environment that they can control the temperature of/be more comfortable, creating a space in the office that can be used for quiet time/breaks.</p>
<p>Consider if you can start a support network at your organisation – if it's a big enough team, you could organise social catchups for those going through the same thing to share any learnings and to act as a support network to one another.</p>	<p>Keep furthering your knowledge in order to support others – we all play a part in keeping our knowledge up to date, and with studies and research being published every day, make sure you're familiar with any new or different ways you can support someone experiencing the menopause.</p>
<p>Join support groups and networks that can provide additional support and guidance.</p>	<p>Ensure that welfare facilities are suitable – consider cold drinking water, sanitary products available in toilets for employees to use/access, toilets maintained to a suitable level.</p>
<p>Familiarise yourself with treatment options and explore the ones that you can receive and that are most comfortable for you – try not to rule anything out if it hasn't worked</p>	<p>As the person experiencing the symptoms may be doing, familiarise yourself with treatment options so that you can try to tailor your support – or even have a better understanding</p>



**Any questions, call us on 01536 215240 or email [client@gatewayhr.com](mailto:client@gatewayhr.com)**