



Menopause and the Workplace

Menopause, defined as the final menstrual period, is a natural life transition experienced by half the world's population and occurs at an average age of 52 years. People have different menopause experiences, but many can have bothersome symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats (vasomotor symptoms), mood changes, joint aches, brain fog, insomnia, and vaginal dryness, which can negatively affect productivity and performance in the workplace.

Menopause symptoms can start well before menopause onset, in some cases as long as 6 to 10 years before the final menstrual period. Additionally, these symptoms last for an average of 7 years and even longer for some people. These bothersome symptoms have the potential to affect women's career satisfaction and even career trajectories and long-term financial stability. Here are some things you should know about the effect of bothersome menopause symptoms in the workplace and what options may be available to you for treatment.

Menopause symptoms and the workplace

- Menopause symptoms such as vasomotor, sleep, mood, and genitourinary symptoms (eg, vaginal dryness, painful sex, urinary frequency, urinary tract infections) have been reported to affect work productivity.
- The experience of menopause symptoms may be influenced by the work environment, with certain working conditions linked with worse menopause symptoms (eg, psychological stress at work, poor physical work conditions, inability to take breaks, insufficient restroom facilities).

What Your Employer Can Do to Help Employees With Menopause Symptoms

- Employers should evaluate existing workplace policies and healthcare plans to ensure that they provide adequate support and affordable coverage for managing menopause symptoms.
- Employers should ensure that all employees are aware of the workplace policies, health and wellness offerings, and healthcare coverage available to support them.
- Employers should provide access to restrooms with sanitary products and cold water and consider flexibility in terms of work breaks and scheduling, dress-code policy, and options for hybrid or remote work and temperature control.
- Employers should provide education and training to managers and supervisors on menopause to ensure creation of an inclusive workplace culture in which persons feel supported and comfortable talking about menopause and its effect on them at work.

What You Can Do to Improve Your Menopause Experience in the Workplace

- Seek accurate and reliable information on menopause to help navigate your menopause experience.
- Review existing workplace policies that can be leveraged to help support persons with menopause symptoms.
- Examine your healthcare plan to see whether it covers services to help with menopause symptoms, including prescription medication coverage, as well as health and wellness benefits.
- Explore options for menopause care through your primary healthcare professional or occupational health department at your place of employment or seek a menopause-certified specialist through The Menopause Society.
- Contact your human resources or occupational health department to identify the workplace policies and resources that are available to help with menopause symptoms in the workplace, understanding that not all will be menopause-specific.
- Consider starting or joining an employee resource group not only for peer support but also to engage with others in providing recommendations on how the work environment could be more menopause friendly.
- Consider being a menopause advocate and raising awareness about menopause in your place of work.
- Understand federal and state laws that provide rights and protections that may be applicable to insurance coverage and access to care for menopause symptoms.

Resources

Please visit The Menopause Society's website (menopause.org) where you can find additional information on important menopause-related topics including hot flashes, sexual health, heart health, and hormone therapy. You can also search for a menopause-certified specialist in your area.



This *MenoNote*, developed by The Menopause Society, provides current general information but not specific medical advice. It is not intended to substitute for the judgment of a person's healthcare professional. Additional information can be found at www.menopause.org

Copyright © 2024 The Menopause Society. All rights reserved. The Menopause Society grants permission to healthcare professionals to reproduce this *MenoNote* for distribution to women in their quest for good health.

Made possible by donations to The Menopause Society Education and Research Fund.

