



Making Menopause Work™

Employer Guide

Supporting employees through perimenopause and menopause helps retain talent and promote well-being for all.



The
**Menopause
Society™**

For more information, resources, and tools, visit menopause.org/workplace.

Menopause is a time when many are at the “top of their game” across jobs and sectors—holders of community or institutional wisdom, mature in decision-making, and adept at dynamic leadership.



About The Menopause Society and Making Menopause Work™

The Menopause Society, a trusted resource for more than 35 years, is here to help you reap the benefits of supporting workers during perimenopause and menopause. We developed **Making Menopause Work** based on **Menopause and the Workplace**, a scientific consensus report from a panel of experts, including clinicians, researchers, labor attorneys, and patient advocates.

By joining this effort, you become part of a movement that includes more than 2,000 healthcare professionals who have earned The Menopause Society’s Certified Practitioner (MSCP) credential, along with tens of thousands of people who rely on information in **The Menopause Guidebook**, the most complete menopause resource available.

For access to new resources, information about being recognized as a designated employer, and more, visit menopause.org/workplace and sign up for updates.

Gender-inclusive Terms

To respect and include all people experiencing menopause, The Menopause Society uses gender-inclusive terms. We recognize that some persons experiencing menopause may identify differently than with the gender and pronouns that have typically been used.

How to Use This Guide: Science-backed Tips

This guide prepares employers of all types and sizes to follow recommendations from **Menopause and the Workplace**. Use the list below to jump to the section you need.

Where do I start?

This guide gives you a comprehensive, and achievable, set of actions. If you need one place to start, create an open and welcoming environment. See the **Leading the Conversation section** and the **Creating an Open Environment tool**.

- 1. Leading the Conversation:** Create a supportive, educated, and open culture.
- 2. Supporting Managers and Supervisors:** Build capacity to support menopause symptoms.
- 3. Improving Workplace Environment and Dress Requirements:** Make physical spaces—ventilation, restrooms, cold water availability, breathable uniforms, and so on—easy on symptoms.
- 4. Establishing Workplace Policies and Benefits:** Cover access to menopause specialists and a range of treatments, protect against discrimination, support self-care.
- 5. Sharing Your Story:** State your commitment to employees and show other employers the possibilities through the impact you've made at your workplace.

“You’re likely already supporting menopause in many ways, and with a few common-sense adjustments to policies, healthcare benefits, and workplace environments, you can have significant impact.”

—Monica Christmas, MD, FACOG, MSCP, The Menopause Society Board of Trustees and advisory panel member for Menopause and the Workplace Consensus Recommendations

Additional resources are available at menopause.org/workplace, including

- An employee fact sheet
- A guide for supervisors and managers on creating an open environment
- Frequently asked questions about menopause in the workplace
- An assessment and planning tool to help you prioritize your actions and get started
- A link to receive updates on new resources, an employer-designation program, and more

Embracing a Natural Stage of Life

Welcome to Making Menopause Work! You are joining a vital movement to improve well-being, attract and retain valued workers, and benefit from multigenerational workplaces. You're helping recoup the \$1.8 billion lost every year to perimenopause- and menopause-related work absences.¹ You're also playing a critical role in continuing to move menopause from taboo to mainstream.

Supporting Workers, However Menopause Affects Them

Health and well-being evolve across every worker's life. Menopause, marked by the final menstrual period, is a natural life transition that usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. Perimenopause, the time leading up to menopause, can start as early as age 35.*

Some people have no symptoms or have mild symptoms that come and go. For others, symptoms are disruptive, persist over time, and interfere with quality of life, relationships, work productivity, and career advancement.

One thing many people have in common is a lack of information and support. Menopause can be viewed as an embarrassing issue to hide away or "suffer through." Many healthcare professionals don't learn about it in their medical training programs; some may feel they lack the knowledge and skills to adequately manage menopause symptoms.

Normalizing menopause at work can help people going through it—and people who want to support colleagues, friends, and loved ones who are going through it—know that it's natural, it's okay to talk about it, and it's safe to ask for help.



Menopause-responsive workplaces work

When menopause benefits are provided by an employer, **58 percent** of women reported a positive impact on their work.²

* Some people may enter menopause earlier due to a medical procedure such as oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries), chemotherapy, or radiation therapy, or due to other conditions such as autoimmune disorders or infections. They experience many of the same symptoms as someone who enters menopause naturally.

Benefits Across the Workforce, Today and in the Future

As our population continues to work longer, the number of employees who will benefit from workplace menopause support will only increase. People aged 50 years and older are the fastest growing demographic group in many countries, making essential contributions to society, families, communities, and the paid and unpaid workforces.

Supporting these current and future workers in the ways they want and need, has significant benefits for employers, employees, and society. Menopause-responsive workplaces align with multiple employer priorities.

- Continuous growth as workers age
- Recruitment and retention
- Marketing advantage
- Reproductive well-being, from menstruation through pregnancy, lactation, and beyond
- Gender equity and inclusion
- Multigenerational teams and workplaces
- Mental health

In the United States,

**over
1 million
people**

enter menopause each year,³ and

20%

are currently experiencing menopause.⁴

2 in 5

people experiencing menopause have considered looking for or found a new job because of their symptoms.⁵

Worldwide,

7%

is the projected increase in economic output if women were able to work to the level of their potential.⁶

1. Leading the Conversation

The first step in supporting employees during menopause is recognizing this phase as a natural transition and a fact of life.

Dan Simons, cofounder of Farmers Restaurant Group, says

- “[I] want to ensure that my female employees know we care to understand and support what is or will happen to their minds and bodies.”
- “[It] seems sensible to educate my male employees on what is happening or will happen to 100 percent of their female colleagues.”
- “And it seems sensible if I want to effectively talk about mental health that I talk about menopause and hormones, because they can be so deeply intertwined.”⁷

TIP 1: Talk about menopause openly and from a place of strength.

A supportive culture invites conversation and eases discomfort. This doesn’t mean you—or anyone in the organization—should bring up menopause all the time! It means offering information and space where employees who want to engage feel comfortable doing so.

State your commitment. Announce your participation in Making Menopause Work. Let employees know why you’re focusing on menopause and what you’re doing. It’s okay to say that this is new, you’re learning, and you welcome input and suggestions to help get it right.

Lead and bring in all leaders. Create understanding and buy-in across the organization and at all leadership levels. Whatever your role—owner or leader, human resources, manager, employee—you can be a positive voice of support.

If you need help making the case to leadership or human resources, see the **Sample Talking Points**. You can discuss these points, or include them in a memo or email. You can also print out pages 4-5 of this guide to use as a leave-behind.

Be clear about boundaries. People experiencing menopause—like any health issue—can feel vulnerable about having their symptoms and needs named at work. It’s an issue that’s long been private or even taboo, and it is tied to gender, age, and reproduction, topics linked to workplace discrimination.

For employees of color, employees experiencing disabilities, LGBTQAI+ employees, and others who have faced discrimination in healthcare and other systems, these concerns may be amplified. For example, even though Black people may experience more frequent, severe, and persistent hot flashes than do White people, they receive treatment less often from their health care professionals.⁸ Model and clearly state zero tolerance for harassment or discrimination.

TIP 2: Listen to your employees.

Based on the type of role or industry, employees will have different experiences and needs. Make it safe to share, then listen and respond.

Create space. Make an open invitation for employees experiencing menopause to join one-on-one or small group conversations to share input. These could be led by human resources, benefits consultants, employee assistance programs, or others. Ask: How does menopause affect you at work? What are we already doing that helps? What else would help you manage menopause symptoms and be well at work?

- Also create ways for employees to submit anonymous questions or needs to human resources or leaders.

Survey. Get a pulse on the entire workforce by doing an internal survey to understand employees' knowledge, experiences, and needs.

Reflect, share, act. As you learn, share general themes—keeping personal information confidential—with leadership and discuss how the organization might meet emerging needs.

TIP 3: Create access to information.

Provide clear information and links to resources from reputable sources such as The Menopause Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or healthcare professionals who have The Menopause Society Certified Practitioner (MSCP) credential.

Post in central places. Share our [Employee Handout](#) in break rooms, on your intranet site, or other places you post information. Share clinically vetted articles and other resources, such as [menopause.org/patient-education](https://www.menopause.org/patient-education), which includes general information as well as tips on finding an MSCP.

Work with your communication team. Engage your internal communication team, if you have one, to weave menopause information into wellness news, orientations, and other places.

Gather. Host an educational session for staff, with information on both menopause and supportive organizational policies and practices. To find a guest speaker, contact The Menopause Society at info@menopause.org, or your benefits administrator or local clinic.

- Topics could include aging well in the workplace, managing symptoms like hot flashes and brain fog, achieving healthy sleep, strengthening mental health, and other issues employees raise.
- Ask the group to commit to confidentiality and to let go of shame or other negative repercussions.

Celebrate. Create natural opportunities to bring up menopause by participating in awareness campaigns such as National Women's Health Week in May or World Menopause Day on October 18.



TIP 4: Build peer support.

Peer support can be a powerful tool to help navigate menopause, promote health, and strengthen social connections, all of which can boost quality of life and satisfaction at work.

Create a group. Support or create an employee resource group on menopause—or more broadly on reproductive and/or women’s health. Give employees the opportunity to select leadership, meeting cadence, topics, and other details.

- Remember there is no “one size fits all.” Perimenopause and menopause affect people differently across race, culture, socioeconomic status, ability, and other life factors.
- If you have existing resource groups on well-being—for example, for workers at various life stages, LGBTQIA+ employees, employees of color, Indigenous employees, employees living with disabilities—ask whether they would like to address menopause within their existing group.

“Because women’s experiences with menopause symptoms can vary widely, their needs at work can also vary. We need to create resources and tools for employers that will help to normalize the experience and the topic.”

—Yamnia I. Cortés, PhD, MPH, RN, FAHA, FAAN
The Menopause Society Board of Trustees and advisory panel member for Menopause and the Workplace Consensus Recommendations

- Consider sharing information that is culturally sensitive and relevant to your employees, such as [Black Girl’s Guide to Menopause](#) or [Menopause Myths](#) by *Latina Magazine*.

Offer options. Share information about online support groups or communities available through your Employee Assistance Program or other sources.

2. Supporting Managers and Supervisors

Talking about and supporting menopause will likely be new for most managers and supervisors, and they're vital partners in this effort. Employees will be more likely to ask for what they need when they know that their supervisors are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive work culture, understand menopause symptoms, and have the authority to explore solutions.



TIP 1: Get them ready.

Share information. Share the [Managers and Supervisors Guide to Creating an Open Environment](#), and [Employee Handout](#). These tools can help teams understand perimenopause and menopause and get into a strengths and solutions mindset.

Discuss and practice. Host a training session with human resources or leadership to discuss, ask questions, and practice conversations. Use the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) to spark discussion.

TIP 2: Check in.

Keep the conversation going. Check in regularly to hear what's coming up, learn how teams are feeling, and find out about any emerging needs.

Provide backup. Offer human resources support for anyone who fields questions that feel uncomfortable.

“Employers must build an inclusive and open company culture to help women feel comfortable enough to speak about their menopause symptoms.”⁹

—Claire Hastwell, content program manager
at Great Place To Work

3. Improving Workplace Environment and Dress Requirements

Workplace conditions can make menopause symptoms easier or harder to manage. By thinking about common bothersome symptoms, employers can gauge whether adjustments might help people experiencing those symptoms get through their work days.

Workplace conditions vary across jobs and industries. People at a computer may be able to use a fan or take a break more easily than those on an assembly line. People required to wear uniforms or safety equipment may have a harder time removing layers during hot flashes. Physically demanding jobs create unique challenges, as The United Steelworkers¹⁰ and U.S. Department of Defense¹¹ address in their practices.

Get input from your team, labor unions, and HR to understand the full picture in your organization.

The loss of estrogen that occurs during perimenopause and menopause can result in common bothersome symptoms, which include

- **General:** heart palpitations, insomnia, fatigue, aches, and pains
- **Vasomotor (blood vessels):** hot flashes and night sweats
- **Psychological:** mood swings, anxiety, irritability
- **Cognitive:** “brain fog,” difficulty with memory and concentration
- **Menstrual:** abnormal bleeding patterns in perimenopause, such as heavy or unpredictable bleeding and pelvic pain or cramping



Although any of these symptoms can affect any kind of work, the table below hints at how menopause symptoms might affect various situations and what actions might help. The [Self-assessment & Planning Tool](#) will help you prioritize actions for your workplace.

Workplace conditions	Symptoms that may be harder to manage in this workplace condition	Actions that could help
Indoor, hot, confined, or poorly ventilated workplaces, working near hot equipment or machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot flashes • Heart palpitations • Fatigue • Irritability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better ventilation (eg, fans and windows) • Temperature control • Access to ice and cold water • Room to change and/or shower
Uniforms: thick and nonporous fabrics for long periods of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot flashes • Heavy or unpredictable bleeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate dress code, when possible • Lighter, breathable, flexible fabrics • Uniforms with easy access for bathroom and sanitary needs (eg, no one-piece requirements) • More frequent breaks • Room to change and/or shower
Physically demanding work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Aches and pains • Heart palpitations • Hot flashes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent breaks, including regular meal breaks
Unpredictable or long hours; night-shift work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Insomnia • Irritability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent or flexible breaks • Light filters on electronic devices • Access to bright-light therapy
Long shifts, standing or working in one position for long periods of time, being “stuck” in one place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue • Hot flashes • Anxiety • Heavy or unpredictable bleeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent breaks • Access to adequate restrooms and breaks to use them • Access to sanitary products in restrooms or locker rooms
Intellectually demanding work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain fog • Fatigue • Hot flashes • Anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option to telework • Quiet space to work, with minimal distractions • Flexible work schedule

4. Establishing Workplace Policies and Benefits

Workplace policies outline your employment conditions and requirements, healthcare and other benefits, breaks and hours, and more. Here are some of the most important updates and additions to consider.

POLICY CONSIDERATION 1: Create anti-discrimination and reasonable accommodation policies, and train employees.

Adopt a zero-tolerance policy prohibiting unlawful discrimination and harassment based on an employee's protected characteristics, including sex and age.

- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission included a menopause-related example in the April 2024 update of its Enforcement Guidance on Harassment in the Workplace.¹²

Adopt a policy that outlines how employees with disabilities can request accommodations to perform the essential functions of their job.

Adopt a policy prohibiting retaliation against employees who report alleged discrimination or harassment or who request reasonable accommodations to perform their jobs.

Train managers and supervisors to understand that comments or actions taken because of menopause or its related symptoms could be a form of sex or age discrimination in violation of the company's anti-discrimination policy.

POLICY CONSIDERATION 2: Ensure opportunities for self-care.

Create or expand policies to provide or increase flexibility in schedules, including restroom breaks.

Offer options to work from home, if appropriate for the position.

Create or expand policies, including existing paid leave policies, to allow time off for healthcare appointments, including mental health, or for time away from work to recover. Make it clear that people experiencing perimenopause and menopause symptoms qualify for leave under these policies.

POLICY CONSIDERATION 3: Ensure that healthcare and mental health benefits support menopause.

Ensure confidentiality to the extent possible when employees seek support through human resources, employee assistance programs, or other programs and benefits offered by the company.

Provide adequate and affordable coverage for menopause-related care, including: access to menopause-certified providers; menopause-symptom treatment options, including prescription and nonprescription therapies for menopause symptom management; mental health services; education programs specific to menopause; and access to nutritionists, coaches, and other healthcare professionals with menopause expertise.

If you have an onsite health clinic, ensure that its staff members are trained to support menopause symptoms and needs.



“Existing workplace policies and health-and-wellness-benefit offerings can be leveraged to support women going through menopause and determine whether changes should be made or new policies or offerings adopted.”

—**Menopause and the Workplace:**
Consensus Recommendations from
The Menopause Society¹³



5. Sharing Your Story

By speaking out about what you're doing to retain a valuable workforce, you're strengthening recruiting and marketing by being at the forefront of this nationally in-demand issue. You're also modeling the way for others and leading needed societal change.

You might consider sharing via

- **Your social media:** Tag The Menopause Society so we can boost your posts.
- **Your website:** Link to menopause.org/workplace so others can access free tools.
- **Recruiting and orientation:** Include the [Supporting Our Employees Through a Natural Stage of Life](#) fact sheet in your packet and use the [Creating an Open Environment Guide for Managers and Supervisors](#) in your trainings.
- **Let us know what you're doing** and what else would help you, at info@menopause.org.

Track results and report on the effect the changes are having on both your employees and your bottom line. This will help you—and The Menopause Society—make the case for menopause-responsive workplaces. Think about measuring

- **Engagement:** open conversations, event attendance, manager behavior
- **Impact for employees:** reduction of menopause symptoms, increase in workplace and career satisfaction
- **Effect on workplace:** fewer missed days or early exits from the workforce
- **Awareness:** improvements in self-reported menopause knowledge and comfort discussing menopause

Join Us In Making Menopause Work™

Retain your team, strengthen your culture, lead the movement to embrace menopause as a natural part of life.

Caring for employees' needs at work affects how they are able to show up (or not) and what that means for your culture, team, and bottom line.

The data show what's at stake in terms of lost careers and revenue when employees miss work or leave jobs where they aren't supported through menopause. Innovative employers, guided by medical and human resources experts, are taking steps to retain these workers.

“There is a simple solution to these complex problems: start by caring about your staff.”¹⁴

—Amanda Rajkumar,
human resources professional and
writer for the Raconteur

Gratitude

Thank you to the many employers, human resources associations, and others who informed this guide and who are taking action as early adopters.

Making Menopause Work was supported by unrestricted grant funding from the following companies, none of which had input into the content

- Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals
- Pfizer Inc.
- Astellas Pharma Global Development, Inc.



References (all URLs accessed August 2024)

- 1 Faubion SS, Enders F, Hedges MS, et al. Impact of Menopause Symptoms on Women in the Workplace. *Mayo Clin Proc* 2023;98:833-845. doi: 10.1016/j.mayocp.2023.02.025. pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37115119/
- 2 Mayer K. Employers Are Turning to a New Perk: Menopause Benefits. *Society for Human Resource Management News*. November 8, 2023. www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/benefits-compensation/menopause-benefits-new-workplace-trend
- 3 Peacock K, Carlson K, Ketvertis KM. Menopause. *StatPearls Publishing*. January 2024. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK507826/
- 4 Mayer K. Employers Are Turning to a New Perk: Menopause Benefits. *Society for Human Resource Management News*. November 8, 2023. www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/benefits-compensation/menopause-benefits-new-workplace-trend
- 5 Society for Women's Health Research. *Employee Perspectives and Challenges Concerning the Transition of Menopause (EMPACT Menopause) Study*. January 2024. swhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FINAL-Menopause-Workplace-Fact-Sheet-02012024.pdf
- 6 The Menopause Society Menopause and the Workplace Advisory Panel. *Menopause and the workplace: consensus recommendations from The Menopause Society*. *Menopause* 2024;31:741-749. menopause.org/wp-content/uploads/workplace/2024-Menopause-and-the-Workplace-Consensus-Recommendations.pdf
- 7 Simons D. Menopause. MenAllPause. LeadersAllPause. *Dan Simmons Says blog*. December 5, 2023. www.dansimmonsays.com/post/menopause-menallpause-leadersallpause
- 8 Harlow S.D., Burnett-Bowie SA.M., Greendale G.A. et al. Disparities in Reproductive Aging and Midlife Health Between Black and White Women: The Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN). *Women's Midlife Health*. 2022;8:1-17. doi: 10.1186/s40695-022-00073-y. [womensmidlifehealthjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40695-022-00073-y](https://www.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40695-022-00073-y)
- 9 Hastwell C. It's Time to Address Menopause at Work. *Great Place To Work blog*. March 22, 2023. www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/support-menopausal-women-workplace
- 10 United Steelworkers. *USW Action Guide: Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety*. April 15, 2024 usw.org/act/activism/women-of-steel/resources/usw-action-guide-for-raising-the-bar-on-womens-health-and-safety
- 11 Defense Health Board. *Defense Health Board Report: Active Duty Women's Health Care Service*. November 5, 2020. www.health.mil/Reference-Center/Reports/2020/11/05/Active-Duty-Womens-Health-Care-Services
- 12 U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. *Enforcement Guidance on Harassment in the Workplace*. (See Example 24.) www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-harassment-workplace
- 13 The Menopause Society Menopause and the Workplace Advisory Panel. *Menopause and the workplace: consensus recommendations from The Menopause Society*. *Menopause* 2024;31:741-749. menopause.org/wp-content/uploads/workplace/2024-Menopause-and-the-Workplace-Consensus-Recommendations.pdf
- 14 Rajkumar A. The era of workism is over and HR needs to act. *Raconteur*. June 11, 2024. www.raconteur.net/talent-culture/the-era-of-workism-is-over-and-hr-needs-to-act





“Although there remains a significant need for additional research for workplace interventions to address menopause, there are several concrete actions that can be taken now.

“Get started to help inform the future. By sharing what you are doing, you are helping to build the evidence for programs like yours nationally, which can help normalize and expand menopause-supportive workplaces for all people.”

—Stephanie Faubion, MD, MBA, FACP, MSCP, IF, medical director of The Menopause Society

Continue the conversation by following us on social media and using #LeadingTheConversation

- Instagram: @menopause_society
- YouTube: @MenopauseSociety
- Facebook: The Menopause Society
- LinkedIn: The Menopause Society
- X: @MenopauseOrg

For more information, resources, and tools, visit menopause.org/workplace.



The
**Menopause
Society**™