



Frequently Asked Questions

As our workplace becomes more menopause-responsive, questions will arise. Here are some common ones. Please bring others to your manager or supervisor.

Q How can I ask about menopause without making it about age? Or we have a really young workforce; why should we be concerned with menopause?

- Talking about menopause is talking about health, mindfulness, and well-being. It's about understanding and supporting a set of symptoms many people will experience and about supporting workers across the life course.¹
- Most workplaces are open (or becoming more open) about menstruation, pregnancy, nursing, and other reproductive health issues—as well as health issues for all people. This is about accepting, embracing, and supporting life, health, and well-being for all people, and creating open spaces for people to ask for what they need at work.
- Make it a conversation about supporting a health issue that affects, or will affect, many people in your workforce and that's been unnecessarily hidden.

Q Why are we focusing on this one specific health issue?

- Half the population will experience menopause.
- Menopause is a natural part of the reproductive lifespan—menstruation, pregnancy, and through menopause. Our workplace needs to support the whole spectrum.
- As our population continues to work longer, the number of employees who will benefit from this type of support will only increase. By 2030, around 1 billion people worldwide are projected to be in menopause, with 47 million new people entering this phase each year.²
- Even if we don't have many people experiencing menopause in our workforce right now, we want them to stay. We will have more people experiencing menopause over time, and we want to be ready to keep them here.

The Menopause Society, a trusted resource for more than 35 years, is here to help employers and teams realize the benefits of supporting workers leading up to and through menopause. We created Making Menopause Work from a scientific consensus report³ developed by clinicians, researchers, labor attorneys, and patient advocates. For the full set of resources, please visit menopause.org/workplace.

Q What is involved, and what is the benefit of this investment?

- In many cases, the adjustments we'll consider will be updates or enhancements to workplace conditions and policies we already have. Some will also help us strengthen workplace requirements around pregnancy and other parts of the reproductive lifespan.
- Another way to look at this is the cost of *not* doing it.
 - » We stand to lose valuable team members because of challenges we can prevent. This means lost work productivity, loss of experienced workers, and the cost of replacing those who leave the workforce.
 - » For our colleagues who are affected by menopause symptoms at work, not only are they at risk for missing leadership opportunities, but they may also risk financial insecurity later in life if they aren't able to advance or are forced to leave the workforce prematurely.
- This is an investment in our workforce. And many of the changes we'll consider will benefit all workers.⁴ For example
 - » **Awareness:** Employees know more about a health issue that affects many people in different ways. People who need support with menopause—or any health issue—are more comfortable asking for it.
 - » **Culture:** Our team becomes more accepting and open to discussing menopause. Supervisors and managers are able to support employee needs.
 - » **Impact on workers:** We are ready to support employees' needs, keeping people in their careers and on our team. Our policies support well-being.
 - » **Impact on workplace:** We have fewer missed workdays, and we hold onto talent and intergenerational teams.

“The third stage of a woman’s life—her 50s and 60s—is actually her prime. It’s when the family has grown up, the expertise and knowledge has deepened, and most importantly, her own self-confidence is stronger. For many women, this is the very best time in their careers to hold a role in an organization or to run their own business. Want to make your best bet on talent? Hire more middle-aged women!”

— Marie Jerusalem
Co-founder of rocket50

Q What are some ways we can support people going through menopause in the workplace?

- Being open and supportive when people express their needs is the most important thing we can all do.
- We'll be looking at our policies, our physical environment, and places where we can create a more comfortable and supportive workplace.
- If you have suggestions, please contact your supervisor or human resources team.
- If you're a manager or supervisor, check out the [Managers and Supervisors Guide to Creating an Open Environment](#) for tips.

Q Are there legal considerations involved in creating menopause-responsive workplaces?

- Legal requirements may vary from state to state, and even industry to industry. Please discuss with your company’s legal counsel.
- Although menopause is not expressly included as a protected category under state and federal antidiscrimination laws, employers should understand that comments or actions taken because of menopause, or its related symptoms, could be a form of sex or age discrimination. Courts have recognized that “[b]ecause menopause occurs only in women, and predominantly in middle-aged women ... a comment suggesting that a woman may be menopausal singles her out on the basis of gender and age.”⁵
 - » This is why we strongly recommend letting all employees know that support during perimenopause and menopause is available for those who need it. Focus on normalizing the conversation overall—versus making assumptions and talking directly to individual employees, unless asked.
- Although menopause itself is not considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), in some circumstances, menopause symptoms could rise to the level of a disability and require an employer to reasonably accommodate those symptoms. The ADA defines disability to include a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Courts have recognized that the body’s endocrine system, which controls hormones, qualifies as a major life activity for purposes of the ADA and that employers may have a duty to accommodate menopause symptoms.⁶ The ADA also prohibits employers from discriminating against qualified persons on the basis of disability or retaliating against them for engaging in protected activity, such as requesting an accommodation.

References

- 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
- 2 Peacock K, Carlson K, Ketvertis KM. Menopause. In: StatPearls [Internet]. January 2024. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK507826/. June 2024
- 3 The Menopause Society Menopause and the Workplace Advisory Panel. Menopause and the workplace: consensus recommendations from The Menopause Society. *Menopause* 2024;31:741-749
- 4 The Menopause Society Menopause and the Workplace Advisory Panel. Menopause and the workplace: consensus recommendations from The Menopause Society. *Menopause* 2024;31:741-749
- 5 Cruz-Aponte v Caribbean Petroleum Corp, 123 F. Supp. 3d 276, 280 (D.P.R. 2015)
- 6 Mullen v. New Balance Athletics, Inc., Docket No. 1:17-cv-194-NT (D. Me. Feb. 27, 2019)