

MENOPAUSE



**A toolkit for employers,
employees and spouses**

About perimenopause and menopause

Some basic information:

No two women will experience perimenopause in the same way.
These are the most common symptoms:



- Mood changes
- Changes in sexual desire
- Trouble concentrating/brain fog
- Headaches
- Night sweats
- Hot flashes
- Vaginal dryness
- Trouble with sleep
- Joint and muscle aches
- PMS-like symptoms
- Increased sensitivity, sadness, anxiety, irritability
- Frequent urination

Key points about perimenopause

Perimenopause is a natural process that occurs as a woman's ovaries stop producing eggs and the production of female hormones declines. For most, symptoms start in their mid to late 40s.

This is a natural process that causes physical and emotional symptoms.

It does not need treatment, but treatment can help lessen symptoms and prevent future health issues.

Treatments may include hormones, antidepressants, and lifestyle changes.



How is perimenopause treated?

Treatments may include:

- Hormone therapy using estrogen and / or progestins to level out hormone levels
- Antidepressants to stabilize moods
- A healthcare provider may suggest treatments even if symptoms are not present. There are other health benefits of treatment. If your Doctor does not bring this up to you, feel free to ask them about it.

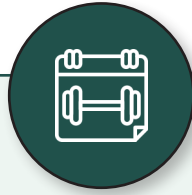
Your healthcare provider may suggest lifestyle changes:



A healthy diet including fruits, proteins, vegetables and whole grains.



Ensure adequate calcium each day through diet or supplements.



Exercise & move frequently during the day. Aim for 150 minutes of activity per week.



Examine and record triggers such as: alcohol, caffeine, spicy food, etc.

Cost of menopause to Canadian economy:



\$3.5B

lost annually due to unmanaged symptoms of menopause



5 million

working women over the age of 40

1/4 of Canada's workforce

At work:



1 in 10 women may leave the workforce due to symptoms that were not managed



540,000

lost days of work

\$3.3B

in lost income annually due to reduction in hours and/or pay or leaving workforce all together.



1 in 4 women hide their symptoms at work



1 in 3 of women would not feel comfortable speaking to their supervisor about their symptoms



How a benefit program may support perimenopause and menopause

Medication:

- Hormone Replacement Therapy HRT medications are covered if provided in an industry made pill, pump(gel) or patch format.
- Compound medications. *Note: Insurance coverage for compound drugs may not be as straight-forward. A compound may be declined if the same medication is available in a standard format from a pharmacist, even if the required dosage is not produced by a pharmaceutical manufacturer.*

Services:

- Confidential Counseling: psychiatrist / social worker / registered clinical counselor (RCC)
- Physiotherapy
 - Pelvic floor therapy
 - Exercise recommendations for prevention of osteoporosis
- Naturopathic Doctor
 - Testing, Treatment and Support
- Virtual programs to explore physiology of perimenopausal transitions (including support to help navigate physical & metabolic changes to help optimize bone, cardiovascular, cognitive and emotional health)
- Acupuncture: treatment for endocrine, sympathetic and parasympathetic systems
- Registered Massage Therapist
- Nutritionist

Not all coverage and options listed are included on all plans. All coverage and claims are subject to allowable expenses and maximums within the plan contract. Consult with your plan sponsor, HR team, benefit plan broker or insurance carrier for full details of coverage.

Employee & Family Assistance Program:

- Counseling including registered clinical counselors (RCC) within the EFAP network
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Nutritionist
- Health Navigation Services

Health Spending Account:

- Covers healthcare items not covered by insurers and yet still allowable under the Medical Tax Act
 - i.e. Professionally compounded medication
 - Weight loss drugs
 - Coverage beyond your annual maximums such as additional physio or RCC visits

Wellness / Lifestyle Spending Account:

- Covers a range of other expenses that are not allowable under the Medical Tax Act.
 - Subject to allowable expenses on your contract. Speak to your employer about what is covered.

Publicly available:

- Your Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner
- Medical doctor specializing in menopause
- Virtual access to Medical Doctors & Nurse Practitioners
- Pharmacists who consult on menopause

Resources:

Menopause Foundation of Canada <https://menopausefoundationcanada.ca/>



Menopause Support in the Workplace Scorecard

If you are not doing anything yet don't worry. The best time to start is now. Using this "scorecard" will help you build Menopause support systems to help your employees be the best they can be.

Rating Scale

- 1 - Not in place
- 2 - In development/planning stage
- 3 - Partially implemented
- 4 - Fully implemented but could improve
- 5 - Fully implemented and effective

Category	Criteria	Rating (1-5)	Comments/ Actions Needed
Awareness and Education	Training on menopause awareness for managers and employees/spouses		
	Informational materials available to employees		
Policies and Benefits	Specific policies addressing menopause-related issues		
	Flexible working hours or remote work options		
Health and Wellness	Access to health services, such as counseling or medical advice specific to menopause		
	Wellness programs inclusive of menopause support		
Workplace Environment	Physical accommodations like temperature control or rest areas		
	Supportive culture for discussing health issues like menopause		
Support Networks	Peer support groups or networks available within the company		
	Access to external support resources		

Category	Criteria	Rating (1-5)	Comments/ Actions Needed
Flexible Work	Part-time, job-sharing, or remote work options		
	Flexible start and finish times		
Physical Environment	Fans, air conditioning, or cooling systems		
	Access to cold water and rest areas		
	Comfortable clothing options		
Health Resources	On-site medical consultations or partnerships with menopause specialists		
	Menopause-related healthcare in employee health plans		
Mental Health Support	Counseling and mental health services		
	Stress management workshops and resilience training		
Supporting Non-Menopausal Allies	Education sessions about menopause for all employees		
	Men included in diversity and inclusion training programs		
	Encouraging empathy and understanding		
	Training male managers to recognize menopause symptoms		
	Men participating in wellness and support programs		
	Promoting a supportive culture led by male leaders		

Created in Partnership by:

