

Signs & symptoms



Menopause fact:

According to research published by the FOM (Faculty of Occupational Medicine) around 75-80% of women of menopausal age are in work. As well as working, some women also have caring responsibilities for their children and parents at this age.

Seeking support

For support speak with your line manager. A referral to Occupational Health may also be helpful.

Visit your GP particularly if your symptoms are impacting on your quality of life. If suitable your GP may provide HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) or suggest other courses of treatment which can be reviewed over time.



Accessing Umatter

www.u-matter.org.uk was launched in April 2018. It is our staff website where you can access up to date information on health and wellbeing.

Visit the UMatter website from work or at home to access the latest information, advice and tools to help support your health and wellbeing. UMatter is also available on the Staff App (SHSCT Connect).

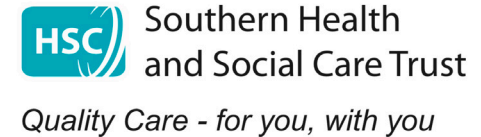
www.u-matter.org.uk

Seeking support contact

Occupational Health:
028 3756 4800

occupational.health@southerntrust.hscni.net

Inspire Wellbeing:
0808 800 0002



Menopause

An Awareness Guide for Trust staff



www.u-matter.org.uk

What is menopause?

Strictly speaking menopause is a woman's last menstrual period. It marks the end of her reproductive years as the cells in the ovary are producing less and less hormones and menstruation eventually stops.

In the UK the average age for women to reach menopause is 51 years. For most women menopause usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, although it can occur anytime up to mid-60s. The symptoms of the menopause can last between 4 and 8 years.

What is perimenopause?

The perimenopause is the period of time leading up to and just after the menopause itself. On average perimenopause can last one to four years.

Making positive changes to your lifestyle, such as stopping smoking, being more physically active and eating healthier can help reduce some menopause symptoms.

Feeling unsure?

If you aren't sure if you are perimenopausal, visit your GP and speak to them about your cycle, symptoms and concerns.

This conversation should be all it takes for your GP to determine if you are perimenopausal or at menopause. For other women, a blood test can confirm what your FSH (Follicle Stimulation Hormone) levels are.

Menopause & work

The menopause is a natural stage of every woman's life. Some women experience very mild symptoms/problems, whilst other women can experience a wide range of symptoms that impact heavily on every aspect of their health and lives.

At work

Until quite recently, the topic of the menopause and the difficulties women face during this period were not discussed within the workplace.

The SHSCT Health and Wellbeing steering group have developed a **Menopause at Work Policy** which outlines the Trust's commitment to ensuring supportive working environments for women experiencing adverse menopause symptoms at work.

It is important that staff and managers are aware of the Policy and guidance and use this to support women to manage their adverse menopause symptoms at work.

Not every woman will need additional support, but many women do struggle. The impact of some symptoms such as night sweats, insomnia, lack of concentration and forgetfulness can lead to problems with work performance, difficulties in making decisions and decreased confidence.

For this reason it is important that managers be aware of the menopause, that they recognise that some people have a more challenging time than others and where this is the case, how best to support these members of staff.

Menopause - an awareness guide

The Trust's Workplace Health and Wellbeing Steering Group has developed an interactive guide for staff on the issue of the menopause. The guide is available on www.u-matter.org.uk (look under staff support) with information on:

- What is menopause
- Symptoms of the menopause
- Perimenopause
- Premature / early menopause
- What can help
- Self care
- Screening
- If you are a carer
- Menopause at work
- Speaking to your manager, GP or Occ Health
- Research on the menopause
- Latest news
- Useful reading, viewing and listening
- Help from your local library
- Useful links
- U-matter website.

www.u-matter.org.uk

Common symptoms

Because of the many symptoms associated with the menopause, a woman's quality of life and her relationships can be affected both in and outside of work.

- Brittle nails
- Dizzy spells
- Dry eyes
- Dry / itchy skin
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Hot flushes.