

SUPPORTING MENOPAUSE CARE AT WORK

IMPACTS OF MENOPAUSE AT WORK

More than **75% of women** maintain employment during their menopause transition years – late 40s and 50s – and for years post-menopause.⁵ Symptoms that cause sleep disturbances, brain fog and difficulty concentrating, weight gain, and fluctuations in mood can be difficult to manage at work and can lead to higher rates of women working while impaired or feeling unwell.

According to the **EMPACT Menopause Study**, menopause has far-reaching impacts on a woman's career-related decisions:


1 out of 3
women
considered
or reduced
their
workload⁶

1 out of 4
women
considered
or did not
pursue a
leadership
opportunity⁶

2 out of 5
women
considered
or found a
new job⁶

WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS DURING MENOPAUSE

Menopause symptoms do not have to be a barrier to your work. Employers are responsible for creating and maintaining an accommodating and healthy work environment for all employees, including those going through menopause. It is also financially favorable for employers to consider menopause-friendly workplace policies that can improve employee productivity and reduce health care expenditures.

 **\$1.8 billion** is lost in work productivity every year in the U.S. due to menopause symptoms.⁷



While there are no federal mandates specifically related to menopause and employment, there are laws that can support advocating for reasonable accommodations and job security while navigating health challenges during menopause.

- ▶ **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** and **Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA)** can support individuals with significant impairment of digestive, bowel, neurological, brain, respiratory, endocrine, and reproductive functions. These and other health challenges can become disruptive for women throughout their menopause journey.
- ▶ **TITLE VII of the Civil Rights Act** and **Age Discrimination Employment Act (ADEA)** protect against sex and age discrimination (respectively) in the workplace. ADEA applies to individuals 40 years and older in companies with at least 20 employees.
- ▶ **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act** mandates safe work environments, potentially addressing exposure to hazards and certain toxins like endocrine-disrupting chemicals that can impair menstrual health and hormone levels during menopause.



In the U.S., 60% of women receive their health insurance from an employer-sponsored plan.⁸

REQUESTING WORKPLACE SUPPORT

While menopause may be a difficult topic to discuss in the workplace, women have the right to request support if they are experiencing disruptive menopause symptoms. Individuals are not obligated to disclose a specific diagnosis to their employer; however, they should work with their health care provider to clearly communicate their health challenges and need for accommodations with their employer. A combination of formal workplace policies and menopause-friendly accommodations can really help improve the work environment and productivity for everyone.

Before meeting with your human resources (HR) department or direct supervisor, consider preparing the following:

- ▶ List of symptoms and how they specifically affect your ability to function at work
- ▶ List of actions or treatments you have taken to address your symptoms
- ▶ Suggestions for accommodations

Workplace accommodations can look different depending on the industry, as well as the demands and tasks associated with your job. Consider which adjustments might best meet the unique needs of your health and job. For examples of accommodations to address different menopause symptoms, see the [SWHR Menopause Workplace Resource Guide for Women](#). Many of the accommodations are simple and cost-effective for a company to provide.

UNDERSTANDING COMPANY HEALTH BENEFITS

Employers are key stakeholders in menopause care coverage for women. In addition to health insurance, companies may offer other benefits that can help women manage their menopause challenges at work. Beyond legally required health benefits, which generally do not cover menopause, every company has different employee resources and benefits. Some benefits are not labeled as menopause-specific but might apply to menopause, such as uniform adaptations, hybrid or remote work options, or flexible work schedules.

Company health benefits can look different, depending on the industry, size, and structure of the organization. Consider what benefits might be most beneficial for managing your menopause symptoms to meet the needs of your job and long-term health.

Example benefits that can be applied to support your menopause experience, include:

- ▶ **Health care spending accounts:** flexible spending account; health savings account; health reimbursement arrangement
- ▶ **Wellness Programs:** nutrition counseling; health or fitness education programs; onsite health clinics and screenings
- ▶ **Mental Health Resources:** employee assistance program; mental health counseling; employee resource groups

Take time to review company benefits and contact your HR or benefits department with any questions. Women are encouraged to advocate for insurance coverage expansion or additional benefits to make their workplace more accommodating. This benefits not only the individual, but also their coworkers.