

The background is a solid light pink color with several darker pink, organic, wavy shapes that resemble liquid droplets or soft folds, creating a layered and textured effect.

WELLNESS TIPS FOR MENOPAUSE

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MAINTAINING WORK-LIFE PRODUCTIVITY

~44%

women in the
workforce older
than 45¹⁷

38%

adjusted presenteeism
for women experiencing
moderate to severe VMS¹⁸

\$150 billion

menopause-related
productivity losses
worldwide¹⁷

Many women are actively working during their menopause transition and for years beyond menopause. Symptoms, such as hot flashes and sleep disturbances, can be difficult to manage in the workplace setting, resulting in substantial absenteeism and productivity losses when working while experiencing disruptive menopause symptoms ([presenteeism](#)). Women experiencing the menopause transition and postmenopause in the workforce report challenges concentrating, tiredness, poor memory, feeling low or depressed, and reduced confidence.

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Check with your state and employer's policies on medical conditions, mental health conditions, and menopause support in the workplace.

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Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and a comfortable work environment can both help to reduce symptoms and mitigate their overall impact on your work-life productivity. Keeping a positive attitude that you are not the only woman experiencing symptoms and that they will likely not go on forever can help you endure.

How to Advocate for a Menopause-Friendly Workplace

While you make effort to manage your symptoms, there are some menopause-friendly accommodations that may also help improve your workplace environment and productivity.

Workplace accommodations can include:

- ▶ Flexible work hours or alternative work schedules
- ▶ Work from home

- ▶ Extra or frequent breaks throughout the day
- ▶ Time off for medical appointments
- ▶ Comfortable workspaces (e.g., temperature adjustable, dedicated rest areas)
- ▶ Access to cold water and restrooms, as needed
- ▶ Flexible uniforms or adapted dress codes

Your employer is responsible for creating and maintaining a conducive and healthy work environment for all employees, including those going through menopause. If your workplace does not already have certain menopause-friendly accommodations or policies, it might be time to speak with your supervisor or Human Resources (HR) department. Although it might be an uncomfortable subject, especially at first, do not be afraid to speak up and advocate for yourself.

Before meeting with your supervisor or HR, consider preparing a list of your symptoms, how they affect your ability to function at work, and treatments or actions you are taking to address them. You may also want to ask your health care provider for a letter describing your menopause symptoms. You can use the [Menopause Care Journal](#) provided in the Appendix of the SWHR Menopause Preparedness Toolkit to help prepare for this conversation.

Productive conversations with your employer and colleagues about your menopause experience can help them to better understand and support your needs, and decide what types of accommodations you or others might need going forward.



MINDFULNESS & WELLBEING DURING THE MENOPAUSE TRANSITION

For many women, adjusting to the menopause transition can be a stressful time as they learn to cope with physical symptoms, adjust to the idea of aging, and handle other midlife stressors (e.g., responsibilities at work, home, and socially).

A Mindfulness Approach to Menopause



Women are **1.5x** more likely to develop anxiety during perimenopause compared to before.¹⁹

Up to **60%** of women with a history of depression will experience depression during midlife.²⁰



Some women may experience anxiety or depression for the first time during perimenopause. Other women with pre-existing, well-managed anxiety or depression may find that they need to make adjustments to maintain a healthy menopause transition.

15-30% of women experience symptoms severe enough to be considered a depressive disorder during perimenopause.²¹

However...

The risk for depression appears to decline about **2 years after** a woman's final menstrual period.²²

And...

In the UK, older adults (ages 65-79) report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction than other adult age groups.²³

The most common risk factors for depression during menopause are:

- ▶ Previous history of depression, particularly hormonally sensitive depression
- ▶ Psychosocial and relationship problems (e.g., traumatic life events, abuse, loss of a loved one, financial stress)
- ▶ Substance and alcohol misuse

Depressive and anxiety symptoms can be difficult to separate from other menopausal symptoms, such as temporary mood changes, brain fog, and the effects of poor sleep.

It might be a hot flash.

A hot flash can be easily misinterpreted as a panic attack because the symptoms can be very similar. One way to tell the difference is if you experience shortness of breath – which typically only occurs with panic attacks.

Common symptoms of anxiety and depression may include:

- fatigue
 - dizziness
 - chills
 - nausea or reduced appetite
 - heart palpitations
 - chronic sweating
- feelings of sadness or hopelessness
 - trouble concentrating
 - irritability
 - panic attacks
 - sleep disturbances
 - loss of interest or pleasure in activities

Support During the Menopause Transition

If your symptoms begin to interfere with your daily activities, talk to your health care provider early and often, so that you can determine lifestyle and treatment options to help manage your symptoms.



Only **1** in **25** women discuss menopause symptoms with a mental health provider.³

Only **17%** of women speak to their significant other about their menopause symptoms.³



It can be difficult to discuss aging, menopause, and mental health challenges given the pressures of modern society and social media. However, speaking out about the challenges you face, particularly in midlife, and finding support networks through family, friends, and advocacy organizations can assist you throughout the menopause transition. Connecting with communities of support via online forums or in-person can help reinforce that you do not have to go about this alone.



LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR MANAGING MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

Menopause and associated symptoms can have widespread impact on your overall quality of life, including your personal, professional, sexual, social, and career life. However, there are several lifestyle approaches you can take to promote a healthy midlife, manage your symptoms, and improve your work-life productivity.



Healthy Diet

Studies have shown that the frequency and severity of menopause symptoms can be influenced by diet. Consuming foods that are low-fat, plant-based, and rich in calcium and soy may help to reduce vasomotor symptoms. You may also notice that certain foods (e.g., spicy and processed foods) and alcohol trigger your symptoms. A balanced diet can also reduce your risk for certain health conditions that become more common after menopause, such as weight gain, which is associated with diabetes, heart disease, and even some cancers. Ensure you're consuming a variety of essential vitamins and nutrients for long term health.

- You can use the [Menopause Care Journal](#) provided in the Appendix of the SWHR Menopause Preparedness Toolkit to keep a record of what foods help and/or trigger your symptoms.



Vitamins & Nutritional Supplements

As with any life stage, a healthy diet can ensure you do not have any nutritional deficiencies. Vitamins and other supplements may not be necessary if you are careful to obtain what you need naturally through your diet. It is important for menopausal women to get enough calcium and vitamin D. If you cannot meet your nutritional needs with dietary changes, speak with your health care provider about whether you need a vitamin or supplement.

- Femtech companies are fulfilling many unmet needs in women's health; however, watch out for supplements or products that claim to magically alleviate symptoms. Be sure to seek information from reputable, evidence-based sources and always consult your health care provider before trying any new treatments or medication.



Exercise & Weight Management

Weight gain during your midlife and the menopause transition is very common. Nonetheless, it is important to maintain a healthy weight and level of activity to manage menopause symptoms and lower your risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer. Not only can exercise help you stay physically fit, but it can also improve your overall mood and sleep. Whether a short walk or a full body workout, try to get yourself moving most days of the week. Resistance training or weights carry added benefit of improving strength, bone health, and helping to keep weight off.

- A [Monthly Goals Worksheet](#) is provided in the Appendix of the SWHR Menopause Preparedness Toolkit. Consider designing a goal around prioritizing exercise or creating other healthy habits.



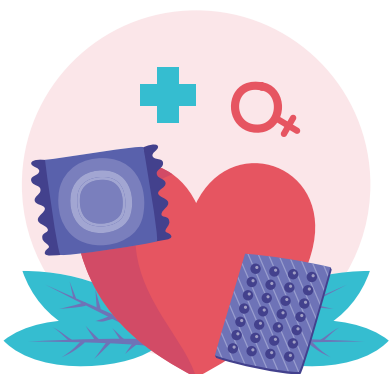
Stress Management

Managing menopause symptoms and the midlife transition can be stressful. Finding ways to manage your stress is important for alleviating your symptoms, reducing your risk for other medical issues, and adjusting to this new life stage. There are many stress-reducing and mindfulness activities that you can practice (e.g., yoga, meditation, acupuncture). Some suggested meditation apps are listed in the **Toolkit Quick Links and Resources** section. Take some time to figure out what works for you, and what fits with your needs and goals. If your anxiety is worsening despite applying stress management techniques, contact your health care provider.



Sleep

Prioritizing sleep is important, especially if you are experiencing sleep disturbances due to menopause. You might find it helpful to create a nightly routine. Sticking to a consistent bedtime, reducing screen time an hour before bedtime to help wind down, and avoiding caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine late in the day can also help improve your sleep.



Sexual Health

Some women feel uncomfortable discussing the details of their intimate life; however, sexual health is important to overall health and is appropriate to discuss with your health care provider. If you are experiencing genitourinary symptoms, such as vaginal dryness, loss of sexual desire, difficulties with arousal or orgasm, or painful sex, that impact your sexual health, you should discuss your symptoms with your provider. There are a variety of lifestyle options to help alleviate symptoms – some are as simple as using vaginal lubricants and moisturizers or engaging in pelvic floor exercises, or your provider may be able to refer you to an expert in sexual medicine. Having open conversations with your partner about your symptoms and challenges is also important to address your sexual health and intimacy needs.



~6,000 women reach menopause each day¹³

► See the **Menopause Conversation Guide of the SWHR Menopause Preparedness Toolkit** for more information on how to approach this topic with your partner.



Community of Support

Connecting with other women who are also journeying through menopause can help you feel supported during this transition. You can also gain some insight as to how others have dealt with similar experiences.

► For more information on menopause support organizations, see the **Toolkit Quick Links and Resources** section in the Appendix of the SWHR Menopause Preparedness Toolkit.

MENOPAUSE CONVERSATION GUIDE

You are not alone! Menopause is a life stage that every woman will eventually experience. While it might be an uncomfortable topic to discuss at first, reaching out to your partner, friends, and family for support can help with the menopause transition. Talking to your friends and loved ones about your experience will also help them to better understand and support your needs going forward. Below are some helpful tips for talking to those in your life:

Start small.

Choose one trusted friend or family member to test out articulating your menopause experience.

Share your experience.

Try to talk about your menopause symptoms and how they affect your day-to-day life. Make sure to also discuss goals and successes along your journey.

Communicate openly.

The more transparent you can be about your experience, the better the opportunity your loved ones will have to understand and adapt with you throughout your journey.

Ask for help.

Express what you need or how they can help – whether it is in the moment of a hot flash or general support.



Only 9% of women speak to their mothers about menopause³

Couples’ Conversation

Many women experience symptoms that impact their sex life during and after the menopause transition – from lowered libido to vaginal discomfort. You may find that what worked for you and your partner previously, is no longer effective.

Did you know? You can still become pregnant during perimenopause. Although menstrual cycles may be irregular, if you are sexually active and do not want to become pregnant, you will need to continue using some form of birth control until you are postmenopause.

It is important to try and discuss symptoms you are experiencing with your partner. Having an open and honest conversation, though potentially uncomfortable, will allow you both to better navigate your menopause transition and evolving sexual health.

Some topics to discuss with your partner include:

- ▶ Your desire for sex (e.g., changes since entering the menopause transition)
- ▶ Symptoms that can affect your sexual experience (e.g., vaginal dryness, irritation)

- ▶ Your partner’s sexual health and possible concerns
- ▶ Methods to mitigate to your genitourinary symptoms (e.g., longer foreplay, using extra lubrication)
- ▶ Ways to change up your sex routine, if interested (e.g., more spontaneity, romance)
- ▶ Exploring physical intimacy without intercourse (e.g., massage, cuddling)
- ▶ Other ways to express intimacy (e.g., emotional, intellectual, spiritual)

Your sexual health challenges may not be resolved right away. Be patient and communicate as you try new ideas and navigate sexual changes together. If problems persist, or if you need extra support, talk to a health care provider about your concerns. Consider taking your partner with you to your consultation, and hold them accountable if they aren’t following through or listening to you.

Sometimes it may help to seek assistance for your sexual health and intimacy needs from a licensed professional who specializes in sex therapy. You can search for a provider in your local area through the [American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists](#) or the [International Society for Women’s Sexual Health](#).