

Menopause[®]
Experts

Menopause
at work



Covered during this session

What Is Menopause?

Menopause Symptoms

Legislation

Case Studies

Benefits Of Policies

Staff Retention



What is Menopause?

Menopause is the point of transition from a woman's reproductive to a non-reproductive life stage.

Many women go through this change in their 40s or even earlier, this is known as premature or early menopause, while some experience it later.

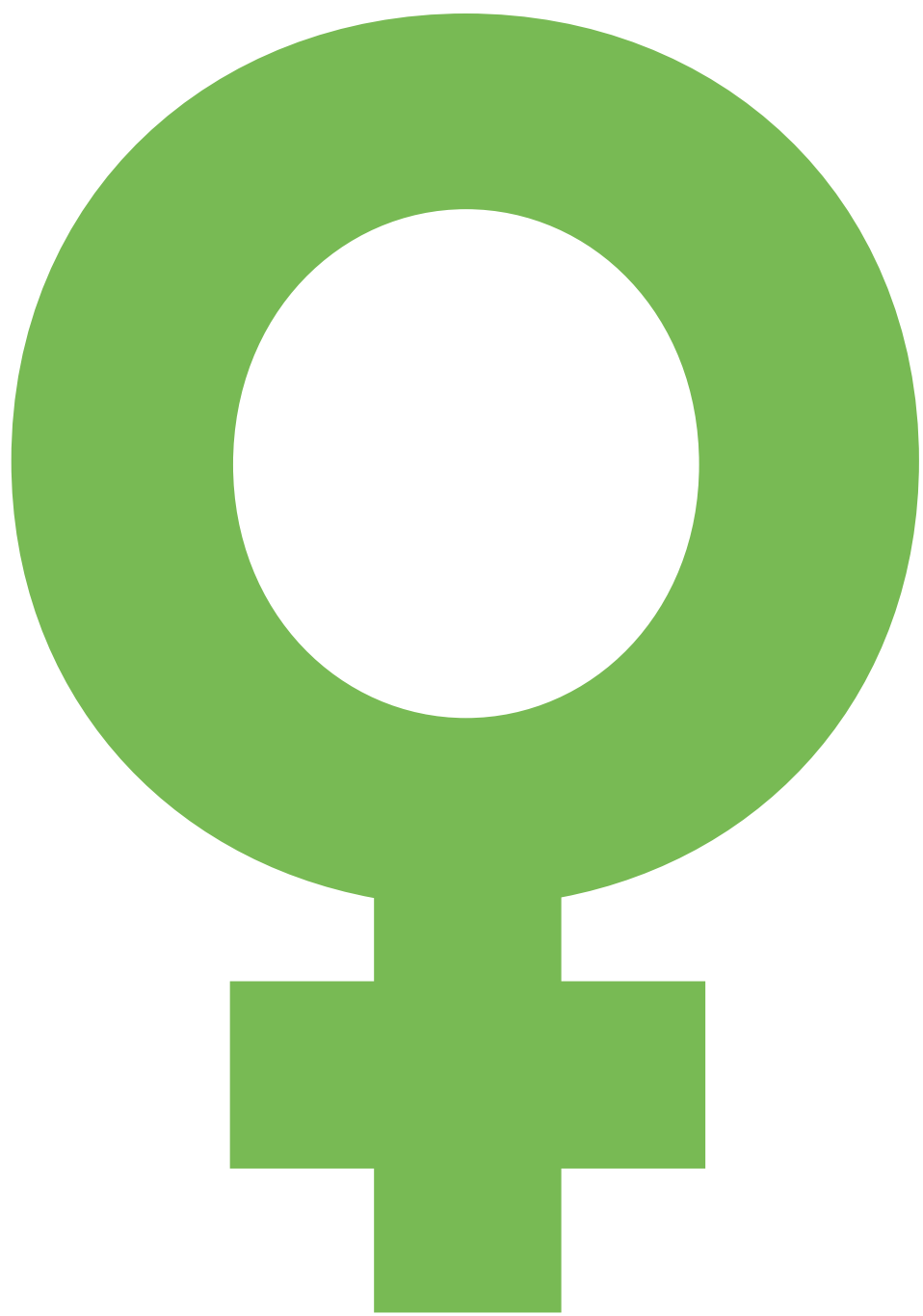
Girls are born with all of their eggs, around 2-million of them. They start to deplete from puberty onwards through their menstruation cycles. Once eggs are gone, the hormonal feedback loop of their cycle is disrupted, until it eventually fails.

Perimenopause, Menopause, and Post-menopause

It can take a long time for this cycle to stop altogether, often up to 10 years. We use the term 'peri-menopause' or 'perimenopause' to describe the lead-up to the event when periods finally stop.

'Menopause' occurs after 12-months and one-day without a bleed. After that, it is known as 'Post-menopause' for the rest of a woman's life.

Facts about Menopause



72.3% of menopausal women are at work
(Source: ONS Statistics, January 2020).

Typically, 1 in 3 women in the workplace will be peri or post menopausal.

Menopause symptoms can affect women aged 40–58. Sometimes due to medical issues, it can also impact women much younger.

Menopause is often misdiagnosed as a mental health condition.

80% of women will experience symptoms – some will be severe and debilitating.

Troublesome symptoms

Difficulty sleeping & profuse sweating

Feeling tired & lacking energy

Mood swings & depression

Anxiety & panic attacks

Hot flushes or feeling extremely cold

Forgetfulness & trouble concentrating

Taking longer to recover from illness

Irregular periods which can become heavier





Managing the impact of Menopause at work

Employees

It can be a very difficult and often stressful time.

It is a sensitive and very personal matter.

Employers & Managers

It is a health and well-being concern. It needs particularly careful handling.

Menopause impacts on an employee's ability.

Legislation (AU)

Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 (Victoria)

Work Health & Safety Act 2011 (NSW)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Queensland)

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (South Australia)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Northern Territory)

Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (Western Australia)

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tasmania)

The primary duty of care, as is reasonably practicable, is to provide a safe working environment.

This includes monitoring workers health, conditions at the workplace and managing risk.

‘Health’ is defined as both physical and psychological health.



Successful Tribunal Claims

(UK Case Studies, In Brief)

According to our own research the number of tribunals that reference menopause has nearly doubled in a year.

An analysis of court records, conducted by Menopause Experts Group, UK, found that there were 23 employment tribunals citing menopause in 2021, an increase of 44% from the 16 cases seen in the previous year.

‘This is an upward trend that shows no down-turn. Employers need to take action now or run the risk of not only losing good talent but having action taken against them that could damage their reputation. Other countries will follow.’

Dee Murray, Founder, Menopause Experts Group

Without employer support

If an employee does not get the help and support they need, it is increasingly likely that the effects of menopause may mean they:

Call in sick

Lose confidence in doing their job

Suffer from stress, anxiety & depression

Leave their employment



Why employees may not reveal their Menopause symptoms



Their concerns may be one or more of the following:

Their symptoms may be a private or personal matter

Their symptoms might be embarrassing for them and/or the person they would be confiding in

They may not know their line manager well enough

Their line manager may be a man, younger, or unsympathetic

They may feel that their symptoms may not be taken seriously

If they do talk, their symptoms may become widely known at work

They may be thought of as less capable

Workplace Health & Safety risks

An employer must minimise, reduce or (where possible) remove workplace health and safety risks for employees.

Ensure menopausal symptoms are not made worse by the workplace or its work practices.

Make changes to help an employee manage their symptoms when doing their job.

An employer must generally assess health and safety risks for employees.



Recommended changes to workplace Health & Safety

Monitor the temperature and ventilation in the workplace.

Consider the materials used in an organisation's uniform (whether the uniform might make an employee going through perimenopause or menopause feel too hot or worsen skin irritation).

Somewhere suitable for the employee to rest.

Toilet and wash room facilities should be easily available.

Ensure access to cold drinking water.

Develop a menopause policy and train managers.

Develop a policy

Develop a policy and train all managers, supervisors and other team members.

Raise the following in your policy:

How would you have a conversation with an employee raising a perimenopause or menopause concern?

How does perimenopause and menopause affect employees?

What support or changes for the employee might be appropriate?

The law relating to menopause.



An employee knowing their organisation has a menopause policy will give them the confidence to approach their manager.



Benefits of a robust Menopause Policy

Reduce the number of sick days

Avoid potential legal pitfalls

Be an inclusive organisation

Improve staff retention



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Open Discussion

Thank you for participating