Menopause Symptoms Checklist

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Based on research into the most common and recognisable symptoms, doctors have identified 34 signs of menopause. Everyone is different and can experience a different range of these symptoms.

If you are going through menopause, think about whether any of your symptoms affect you at work. You may want to make some notes about the impact they’re having on your job. This personal assessment will help you to discuss and seek appropriate support from your manager.

A visit to the GP may also help you to manage your symptoms and protect your longer term health and tracking your symptoms may help you to prepare for that appointment.

**Symptoms**

**Most Common:**

**Hot flushes**

Affecting around 75% of menopausal women, hot flushes are often described as a rising wave of heat. They happen as a result of the fluctuation and decline of oestrogen which disturbs the body’s thermostat, and occur for an average of 5 years.

**Night sweats**

Like hot flushes, night sweats are a temperature dysfunction that occurs due to changes in hormones. You wake up drenched in sweat, often having to change your sheets and nightwear.

**Irregular periods**

Covers any alteration to your typical menstrual cycle. Shortened intervals between periods often happen in early menopause. Periods can become erratic; sometimes they are very heavy, at other times light.

**Decreased libido**

When hormone levels drastically drop during menopause, the result may be a lower sex drive. The effect of psychological problems arising from menopause can also impact libido**.**

**Vaginal dryness**

Is more common in peri-menopause and post-menopause than at other times of a woman’s life. As oestrogen levels, drop, you may notice itchiness as well as discomfort during sex.

**Mood swings**

Mood swings are defined as rapidly changing moods. They can occur due to the decline in oestrogen and other hormones which directly affects the neurotransmitters in the brain. This can cause problems not just the person going through the menopause, but also for family and loved ones. For some, these moods can be debilitating.

**Pains:**

**Breast soreness**

Tender breast can become an issue at this transitional time when your periods slow and finally stop. Breasts can also appear less full due to the change in oestrogen levels.

**Headaches**

Can be caused by hormonal fluctuations during menopause and can be more common for those who suffered with them during their periods.

**Joint pain.** Oestrogen positively affects joints by keeping inflammation under control, so as oestogen declines joints lose flexibility and inflammation can increase which can cause moderate to severe pain and swelling in mainly the fingers and wrists.

**Burning Mouth Syndrome**

Oestrogen plays an important role in the formation of saliva, therefore, once oestrogen levels decrease this can cause burning mouth syndrome. This condition is where burning pain occurs in widespread areas across your whole mouth including your tongue, lips, roof of mouth and cheeks.

**Electric shocks**

Erratic behaviour of the female hormones in perimenopause and menopause can lead to an electric shock type sensation, occurring most often immediately before a hot flush.

**Digestive problems**

Hormonal changes in perimenopause have an effect on the digestive system, and problems include bloating, indigestion, acid reflux, abdominal cramps, constipation, diarrhoea, weight gain, flatulence and nausea.

**Gum problems**

Gum problems and experiencing a metallic taste in the mouth affects up to approximately a third of menopausal women

**Muscle tension**

Cell deterioration causes muscles to feel tight or strained and can be a source of chronic pain. Stress and anxiety can make this worse.

**Itchy skin**

Lower oestrogen levels in the body can lower collagen levels, which can lead to thinner, dryer and more fragile skin. This can be a source of irritation and itching.

**Tingling**

Also known as paresthesia, hormone fluctuations affect the central nervous system, which can cause tingling in any part of the body, most commonly in the feet, legs, arms and hands.

**Changes:**

**Anxiety**

Feeling anxious during menopause is common and can be more acute than at other times. Although a mental health issue, it can also be a symptom of the physical changes encountered during perimenopause. This maybe a particular issue if a woman has experienced anxiety before.

**Fatigue**

Oestrogen, progesterone, thyroid and adrenal hormones are all involved in energy levels and when these are disrupted, women can feel drained. Sometimes referred to as “crashing fatigue” is defined as a sudden overwhelming feeling of reduced energy levels, weakness and exhaustion.

**Hair loss**

A receding hair line, especially around the temples or an increasingly wider hair parting can be associated with the menopause.

**Sleep disorders**

Night sweats, mood changes and having to visit the loo more often all disrupt the sleep. In turn insomnia exacerbates other menopause symptoms such as heart palpitations and hot flushes.

**Difficulty concentrating**

Oestrogen regulates your brain, pushing it to burn glucose to make energy. As oestrogen declines the brain doesn’t work as hard, so energy levels in the brain decline and can cause a general lack of focus and concentration.

**Memory lapses**

Fatigue, and fluctuating hormones can make you more forgetful than usual, and even trying to find the right word can be difficult at times during menopause. ‘Brain fog’ is a common feeling for many experiencing menopause.

**Unexplained dizzy spells**

Oestrogen affects the nerves in your body so if lower levels are supplied to the brain this can cause dizziness.

**Weight gain**

People often experience an increase in body fat during menopause. This is linked with reduced oestrogen levels, poor sleep, and sluggish metabolism as well as losing muscle mass.

**Stress incontinence**

Can happen around the time of menopause and although natural ageing rather than hormones may be the main factor here, oestrogen is responsible for keeping the bladder lining, the urethra and the pelvic region healthy so a reduction can cause the pelvic muscles to become weaker.

**Bloating**

A common symptom related to an increase in water retention and/or intestinal gas.

**Allergies**

Can develop during the menopause because hormones are closely linked to the body’s immune system. Falling oestrogen levels causes the body produces more histamine which can lead to allergies to certain substances.

**Brittle nails**

Brittle nails in menopause are increased by hormonal changes weakening the keratin layer, resulting in nails that tear easily.

**Body odour**

Hormonal changes can also change the way you smell. You may also find you sweat more as a decline in oestrogen sends a false message to the hypothalamus telling your body that it is overheated, resulting in an increase in sweat production

**Irregular heartbeat**

[Irregular heartbeat](https://promensil.co.uk/menopause-and-irregular-heartbeat/) or heart palpitations can be caused by lower menopausal oestrogen levels overstimulating the nervous and circulatory systems. Often, but not always, this may be linked to hot flushes. If these palpitations are accompanied by shortness of breath or feeling faint, then do seek medical advice.

**Depression**

Depression is four times more likely to affect women of a menopausal age than a woman below the age of 45. [Irritability](https://promensil.co.uk/menopause-and-moods/) and feelings of sadness are the most common emotional symptoms of menopause.

**Irritability**

Often related to the emotional and physical effects of the transition towards menopause and the years following. Other symptoms such as insomnia, loss of libido and lack of concentration can contribute to irritability.

**Panic disorder**

Fluctuations in hormone levels unfortunately means that menopausal women are more susceptible to panic attacks than almost anyone else. There are lots of lifestyle changes and natural remedies that can assist with managing anxiety and panic attacks.

**Osteoporosis**

Oestrogen levels dramatically decrease after the menopause, and as much as half of a woman’s total bone loss occurs within the first 10 years following her last monthly period. The risk of osteoporosis, which causes bones to crumble and become fragile, increases after the menopause but is preventable with the right treatment.

*Don’t dismay! Although the list of possible menopausal symptoms is long, you may not experience all or any of them. And in most cases, they are manageable with the right advice, lifestyle changes and treatment.*

*If you find your symptoms are impacting on you at work speak to your manager about how you can be supported. Taking down some notes about your personal assessment might help. You can also find a discussion plan template here which aims to provide a way of structuring and recording your discussion.*

***My symptoms and how they are affecting me at work:***

| **Symptom** | **Task & how affected** | **Thoughts on how this could be supported** |
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