



Menopause Policy

About this menopause policy template

Dove and Menopause Friendly Australia have partnered to deliver this resource to make it easier for employers to implement a menopause policy. Implementing a menopause policy shows you are committed to supporting women through this inevitable stage of life.

This template is designed as a guide, and we recommend you use this as a resource to develop your own customised policy.

Every organisation will be different, the nature of the organisation, its work and its leadership. You may already have existing things in place such as other policies, practices and training. Think about how you can link this policy to other existing support or documents.

Refer to the included appendix items for supplementary information you might consider including throughout parts of your policy or as stand-alone supporting documents.

Need more help creating a policy that's right for your organisation? Contact the experts at Menopause Friendly Australia www.menopausefriendly.au

Introduction

[Open with a statement about why you are introducing this guidance or policy and how this document fits into your organisational objectives. This is also a good place to introduce the message that menopause awareness is for everyone - not just for women - a message which you can reinforce throughout. Here is an example]

Here at *[insert organisation name]* we care about our colleagues' wellbeing and creating an environment where everyone can be at their best. That's why we believe we all need to understand menopause, so we can offer the right support to our people.

We recognise that menopause can affect us all, personally and professionally. Understanding the menopause is important for everyone, whether they're experiencing it themselves or providing support for a fellow colleague, partner, family member or friend.

Through this menopause policy, our aims are to help all people to:

- Understand more about menopause and its potential impact at work
- Feel comfortable talking about this topic in the workplace
- Know what support is available and how to access this support

Everyone's experience of menopause is different. People experience different symptoms, have different views or philosophies about how they manage them and different medical histories, too. This policy sets out how our organisation supports those impacted by menopause at work.

People of diverse gender expressions and identities experience menopause, and although we may use the terms 'women' 'female' and 'her' when quoting specific research, this policy is focused on how everyone can be supported.

Menopause Guidance

What is menopause?

Menopause is a biological transition that occurs when women's hormones change and eventually menstruation stops. Someone is said to have reached menopause when they have not had a period for 12 consecutive months (for those reaching menopause naturally).

The average menopause age is 45-55, however it can be earlier naturally due to surgery, illness or other reasons.

Peri-menopause is the time leading up to menopause when someone may experience changes and menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Post-menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when periods have ceased for 12 consecutive months and for the rest of life.

When we talk about menopause in this guidance, we are referring to any of these stages.

Premature menopause (Premature Ovarian Insufficiency – POI)

We often hear about averages when talking about the age menopause is experienced and this can be helpful to understand the most likely time for someone to be experiencing symptoms - normally between the ages 45-55.

However, this isn't the case for everyone, some will experience menopause later and some earlier. Early menopause - before the age of 45 - affects 10-15% of women. For some women it can come much earlier and when menopause occurs before 40 this is called Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI). About 3.5% of women globally experience POI between the ages of 12 and 40 years old.

Surgically/Medically induced menopause

Some enter menopause for reasons other than natural changes in their hormones. The two most common types are surgical and medical menopause are:

- **Surgical menopause** – this occurs when ovaries are removed.
- **Medical menopause** – this occurs when ovaries stop working due to chemotherapy, other medicines, or radiotherapy.

When menopause is induced, hormone levels decline rapidly, and menopause is experienced immediately, rather than gradually. Symptoms are often more sudden and severe.

What are the symptoms of menopause?

Everyone is different, some may not experience any symptoms at all. However, 3 in 4 may experience symptoms and as many as 1 in 4 of these may experience serious symptoms.

Symptoms can be physical or psychological. Below is a list of the most common menopause symptoms reported as having the biggest impact at work:

- Difficulty sleeping, insomnia or fatigue
- Hot flushes during the day or night
- Low mood, depression or changes in mood
- Nervousness, worry or anxiety
- Reduced ability to concentrate or focus
- Problems with memory recall
- Migraines or headaches
- Aches and pains
- Irregular and/or heavy periods
- Urinary issues, e.g. increased frequency



Thinking about long-term health, too

Understanding menopause is more than just being aware of symptoms, it's about long-term health, too. As hormone levels change, we need to take extra care of our wellbeing, in particular heart and bone health.

Managing menopause

Managing menopause is a personal choice and may depend on the severity of symptoms, medical history or personal philosophy about what feels the right approach. If symptoms are impacting you, don't wait until they are really bad before seeking help. Book an appointment with your healthcare practitioner, start tracking your symptoms and reading up on the treatment options.

The [Australasian Menopause Society](#) offers helpful resources and you can search for health practitioners who are AMS members in your area. These are practitioners who have an interest in menopause.

Lifestyle

A healthy lifestyle can have a positive impact on both menopausal symptoms and long-term health, so it's important to consider lifestyle changes during and after menopause. These can include healthy eating, regular exercise, reducing alcohol and caffeine, staying hydrated and managing stress.

Mindset

Challenging how we think and feel about menopause can help. Focusing on self-care and kindness using tools such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), mindfulness and meditation. Talking and knowing you are not alone can often help.

Talking about menopause

Some people can find it difficult to talk about menopause. It can be a deeply personal topic, and some women may find it embarrassing talking about their menopausal symptoms. Some people may think of it as a personal matter and nothing to do with work.

However, menopause is an inevitable stage of life, so it is important for you to understand menopause and be prepared to talk about it, whether that's with your

GP, your manager, partners, friends and family. Preparation is important for everyone. Visit www.dove.com/menopause for tips to help you have more positive menopause conversations with colleagues, managers and healthcare professionals.

Support for managing your menopause

We want to enable a working environment where everyone can be their best at work. If you feel that menopausal symptoms are negatively affecting you at work, then it's important to seek support. We treat all conversations seriously and in complete confidence.

Your GP	We always recommend you visit your GP or healthcare practitioner if you are experiencing menopausal symptoms or want to discuss long-term health. GP's can give advice on medical options, including MHT or other approaches to managing your menopause such as diet and lifestyle changes. See top tips for preparing for this conversation in Appendix 1.
Manager / People Leader	Talk to your manager if menopause symptoms are getting in the way of being your best at work. Discuss how they can support you at work. Use the conversation guide at www.dove.com/menopause
Workplace Health Safety and HR	If you need further help and support, talk to a Workplace Health Safety representative or HR.
Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	Check out help and support available to everyone through our EAP

Where additional support is available

Policies

[Link to relevant company policies (for example): Flexible Working Policy, Support and Counselling Policy, Leave Policy]

Entitlements

[Entitlements – insert detail about any additional entitlements available for your workforce eg. Leave]

Adjustments

[Reasonable adjustments – insert detail about adjustments people can request that have been agreed by the organisation – refer to [Appendix 3](#) for examples to insert here]

Additional Resources

Australasian Menopause Society – menopause information

The Australasian Menopause Society website has lots of information, visit:

<https://www.menopause.org.au/health-info/fact-sheets>

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

(RANZCOG) offer further information in a menopause factsheet available on their website here: <https://ranzcof.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Menopause-pamphlet.pdf>

Early menopause

Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) information and support on very early menopause. Visit <https://www.askearlymenopause.org/> or

<https://www.daisynetwork.org>

Menopause Friendly Australia

Visit www.menopausefriendly.au for more information about being a menopause friendly employer.

Women's stories

For more information on managing the menopause and an insight into women's stories, visit Menopause Friendly's UK partner: <https://menopausefriendly.co.uk>

Appendix 1

Talking to your manager about menopause

Dove Menopause Insights (DMI) research tells us that some people can find it hard to talk to their manager about how menopause is affecting them. However, your manager is there to help you be at your best at work. To help you both, preparation is important. This will result in a much better conversation and outcome for both you and your employer.

1. Prepare for your meeting

Keep a diary of your menopause symptoms and how they are affecting you. Think about what practical support might help, for example flexible working hours, working from home, taking more regular short breaks, requesting a portable fan. Be flexible and collaborate with your manager to come up with some different options that will be helpful for you. These may be for a short period of time while you work out how to manage your symptoms with your healthcare practitioner. Check out what support is available in your organisation.

2. Book a meeting

So that you will have time and privacy to talk, and you will be more likely to get your points across. Book a private space if you can, so you can talk openly with your manager.

3. Explain your situation clearly

Talk about how menopause is affecting you at work, what you are doing to manage your menopause symptoms and what your manager could do to help. Discuss what support you would like and timescales. Just knowing someone understands and is there to listen can help.

4. Agree with your manager what you can both do

They may need time to think about the best support. Remember, this may have been on your mind for a long time, but it may be the first time your manager has heard about it. Allow them time to digest the information and seek advice if necessary.

5. Do you want the conversation to be confidential?

Some of us are happy talking about menopause openly, others are not. Talk to

your manager about whether you want the conversation to be kept confidential or if you are happy to share with your immediate team for support. It's your choice.

6. Follow up

At the end of the meeting put a time in the diary to meet again, whether that is to agree a way forward, to monitor progress or update one another.

Menopause symptoms can change over time, so you might need to ask for different adjustments or support.

Above all, it's in both your best interests to find a good solution. All anyone wants is for you to be fit and well and do your job to the best of your ability.

Appendix 2

Talking to your GP about menopause

If menopausal symptoms are getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor. Here are some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Don't wait until symptoms feel unbearable. Often people feel they must 'put up' with menopausal symptoms, but if they are affecting you then there are things you can do and support available. Read the Australasian Menopause Society factsheets on their website www.menopause.org.au.

AMS guidelines are used by your healthcare practitioner to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer. The factsheets for patients are useful to read before you see your GP so you know what to expect.

Ask the receptionist which person is best to talk to about menopause. It might not be your usual GP, it could be someone who has had special training in the subject. You can find a list of menopause GPs on the Australasian Menopause Society website at <https://www.menopause.org.au/health-info/find-an-ams-doctor>. Ask for a longer appointment if you think you need it.

Prepare for your appointment. Keep a list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, hot flushes, how you're feeling, any changes you may have noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment.

If you have any preferences about how you manage symptoms tell them that too

e.g. if you would like to try menopause hormone therapy (MHT – formally known as HRT) or not. Your doctor will thank you for it and it's more likely that together you will find the right solution faster.

Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion if you don't feel you've received the help you need. Don't be put off, trust how you are feeling and how it's affecting you.

Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area. If there is and you think this would be helpful, ask for a referral. Take your partner or a friend with you. They will know how the symptoms are affecting you and be able to support you at the appointment. This is also a great way for your support person to learn how best to continue supporting you.

Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms and what kind of help you need.

Appendix 3

[This appendix is designed to help you add reasonable adjustments into your policy or guidance – it should be deleted from your policy document once you have used it to insert the relevant provisions in the "Where additional support is available" section.]

We recommend you utilise the menopause friendly workplace checklist, that can be downloaded from Dove's website, to highlight what support you already have made available and other adjustments you could implement.

Many adjustments will be simple and how long they will be needed may vary. Here are some examples you could insert into your policy]

Difficulty sleeping, tiredness or fatigue

This is a common complaint during menopause, often starting during peri-menopause.

- Review start and finish times – could these be adjusted, or is working from home an option

- Consider flexibility around breaks – dividing long breaks into more frequent smaller breaks
- Consider when meetings are scheduled and how you can adjust your schedule to accommodate more demanding tasks at a time of day when you feel most rested

Anxiety and/or loss of confidence

Anxiety and loss of confidence can cause many different symptoms. It might affect how a person could feel physically or mentally and how they behave. Self-esteem can be lowered due to changes that are occurring.

- Have regular one-to-one discussions
- Talking therapies e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can help
- Refer to our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), or the Workplace Health & Safety team

Hot flushes

Hot flushes can start during peri-menopause and continue after menopause.

- USB fans are available from our Health and Safety team
- If your desk is not positioned in an optimal place for temperature management, speak to your manager about an alternative
- Fresh, refrigerated drinking water is available
- You can request additional uniforms if you need to change more regularly due to symptoms

Difficulty focussing or concentrating

Some can experience problems with concentration during menopause.

- Consider adjusting working hours to times of the day when concentration is better or adjust your working pattern
- Schedule difficult tasks during times of the day when you feel more focussed
- Utilise notebooks to keep track of action items, to do lists and people's names
- Find a quiet space for work to reduce distractions
- Schedule focus time in your calendar during the day

Problems with memory recall

This is one of the lesser-known symptoms of hormonal change during menopause. It's often referred to as 'brain fog' and includes difficulty processing or retaining information.

- Utilise notebooks or other memory aids, following conversations up with an email to trigger a reminder

- Reduce interruptions or find a quiet space to work
- Be mindful about how and where you are having important conversations – avoid agreeing deliverables in the corridor

Fluctuating or heavy periods

For many, one of the first signs of the menopause transition is a change in their periods.

- We ensure you always have access to toilet and washing facilities as well as period products in our bathrooms
- If you are experiencing heavy periods, seek medical advice and request flexibility
- Ask for additional uniforms if you need them