

Menopausal Symptoms

The International Menopause Society is grateful for permission to adapt for global use the information sheet that was originally produced by the **Canadian Menopause Society**. The medical and scientific information provided might not be relevant to a particular woman's circumstances and should always be discussed with her own health-care provider.

www.sigmamenopause.com

Menopausal Symptoms

www.menopauseinfo.org

menopause
Info

International **IMS**
Menopause Society
Promoting education and research on midlife women's health



Every woman's journey through menopause is unique. While some women experience a relatively symptom free transition, for others there may be difficulties and troublesome symptoms. There are a variety of treatment options available which may help women to continue to have a rich, rewarding and active life during this period of transition.

Common symptoms and discomforts

Across cultures, certain symptoms and discomforts are very common during menopause:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Joint and muscle aches and pains
- Insomnia or other sleep disturbances
- Memory changes
- Mood swings
- Vaginal dryness
- Bladder control issues
- Changes in sexuality

It is important to talk to your health care provider if you are experiencing these symptoms and they are **impacting on your quality of life.**





Lifestyle choices and changes

Mid-life presents the perfect opportunity to **consider lifestyle change**. Implementing these changes will promote healthier ageing and may help to alleviate some of the troublesome symptoms of menopause:

- Regular exercise (both aerobic and weights)
- Smoking cessation
- Healthy dietary choices
- Moderation of alcohol consumption
- Relaxation and stress management techniques

Hormone medication

Contrary to some of the information in the media, hormone therapy, when used correctly, does not increase a woman's health risks. For some women hormone therapy is considered the best choice for management of their menopausal symptoms. The goal is to use the lowest dose of hormone medication for the shortest time possible to help relieve moderate to severe menopausal symptoms.

Vaginal and Bladder Symptoms

Low levels of estrogen due to menopause can often cause changes in the vagina and bladder. For some women these are the only troublesome changes they experience during menopause.

Many women find it difficult to talk about these changes and may be embarrassed to bring it up with their health care provider.

SYMPTOM SCORE SHEET



Please take a moment to fill out this simple score sheet.

A problem is scored as:

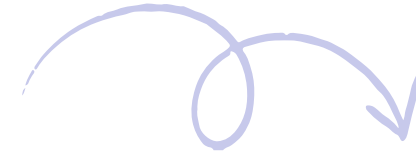
0= None

1= Mild

2= Moderate

3= Severe

- 1. Heart beating quickly and strong
- 2. Feeling tense or nervous
- 3. Difficulty sleeping
- 4. Excitable
- 5. Panic attacks
- 6. Difficulty concentrating
- 7. Lacking in energy
- 8. Loss of interest in most things
- 9. Feeling unhappy or depressed
- 10. Crying spells
- 11. Irritability
- 12. Feeling dizzy or faint
- 13. Pressure or tightness in head or body
- 14. Body feeling numb or tingly
- 15. Headaches
- 16. Muscle or joint pains
- 17. Loss of feeling in hands or feet
- 18. Difficulty catching breath
- 19. Hot flushes
- 21. Loss of interest in sex



Non-hormonal medication

Some women may require non-hormonal medication to manage mood swings, depression, sleep disturbances, joint aches and pains or hot flashes. Speak to your health care provider for more information.

SYMPTOM CHECKLIST

Please fill in this checklist to help aid discussion with your care provider.

Are you experiencing:

- Vaginal dryness before or during intercourse?
- Vaginal discomfort not involving sexual activity?
- Pain during sex?
- Vaginal itching or burning?
- Itching or irritation of the labia?
- Frequent or recurrent urinary tract infections?
- Yeast-like symptoms?
- More frequent trips to the bathroom to urinate?
- More night-time trips to the bathroom?

Please discuss the answers to your checklists with a doctor.