MENOPAUSE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Understanding symptoms, support options and when to seek help

Menopause and perimenopause are natural life stages. They happen when hormone levels change and periods become irregular before eventually stopping. Most people experience menopause between ages 45 and 55, but it can happen earlier.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Hot flushes and night sweats
- Changes to periods, including heavier, lighter or irregular bleeding
- Sleep difficulties and fatigue
- Mood changes, anxiety, low mood or irritability
- Brain fog, memory or concentration difficulties
- Joint aches, headaches or palpitations
- Vaginal dryness, discomfort during sex or urinary symptoms

WHAT CAN HELP?

Everyday support	Healthcare options
Keep a symptom diary, prioritise sleep, stay active, eat a balanced diet, reduce alcohol and caffeine if they worsen symptoms, and talk to someone you trust.	Speak to a GP, nurse or pharmacist about treatments such as HRT, vaginal oestrogen, CBT or non-hormonal medicines depending on symptoms and medical history.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE

- Symptoms are affecting daily life, work, relationships or wellbeing.
- You are under 45 and think you may be experiencing menopause symptoms.
- You have bleeding after menopause, or bleeding that feels unusual for you.
- You want to discuss HRT benefits, risks or alternatives.

Remember: Support is available. You do not have to "just put up with it". Make an appointment with your GP practice and take a note of your symptoms, questions and priorities.

***Reliable information*: NHS menopause and perimenopause | NHS treatment options | NICE menopause guidance**