

Menopause symptoms

Vasomotor symptoms (hot flushes and night sweats) and vaginal dryness are the most common symptoms of the menopause. While the menopause may cause no significant problems for some, for others symptoms present considerable difficulties in their working and personal lives.

Hot flushes and night sweats

- Affect up to 85% of women
- Are inappropriate transient episodes of heat loss
- Are usually experienced for less than 5 years, but some women will continue to flush beyond the age of 60 years
- May begin before periods stop
- Vary between races and ethnic groups, being more severe or of longer duration in Afro-Caribbean than in Caucasian or Japanese or Chinese women
- Are more common in women who smoke or who are obese

Women's experience of menopause varies widely and is affected not only by symptoms but also by age and type of menopause, childhood experience, and work and social pressures.

Vaginal dryness

- Affects about 50% of postmenopausal women
- Is part of the **genitourinary syndrome of the menopause** (GSM)
- May be lifelong
- Can be associated with urinary problems, such as recurrent urinary tract infections
- Can have a major impact on interpersonal relationships and quality of life

Other menopausal symptoms

These include:

- **Chronically disturbed sleep**, which, in turn, can lead to insomnia, fatigue, irritability and difficulties with short-term memory and concentration.
- **Muscle and joint discomfort.**
- **Headaches** and **migraines**, which may worsen during the perimenopause.

Further information

EMAS CareOnline 2020 <https://emas-online.org/emas-careonline>

The essential menopause curriculum for healthcare professionals: A European Menopause and Andropause Society (EMAS) position statement (2022) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.maturitas.2021.12.001>

Global consensus recommendations on menopause in the workplace: a European Menopause and Andropause Society (EMAS) position statement (2021) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.maturitas.2021.06.006>