

World Menopause Day 2023 : Cardiovascular Disease



18 October 2023

October is Menopause awareness month, with World Menopause Day being held on 18th October. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the menopause and the support options available for improving health and wellbeing. The theme for World Menopause Day 2023 is Cardiovascular Disease.

Symptoms of menopause

Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on your daily life, including relationships, social life, family life and work. It can feel different for everyone. You may have a number of symptoms or none.

Symptoms usually start months or years before your periods stop. This is called the perimenopause

- **Changes to your periods:** the first sign of the perimenopause is usually, but not always, a change in the normal pattern of your periods. Eventually you will stop having periods altogether.
- **Mental health symptoms:** commonly include changed to your mood, like low mood, anxiety, mood swings, low self-esteem or problems with memory or concentration (brain fog)
- **Physical symptoms:** commonly include, hot flushes, difficulty sleeping, night sweats, palpitations, headaches, muscle aches and joint pains, change in body shape, weight gain, skin changes including dry and itchy skin, reduced sex drive, vaginal dryness and pain, itching or discomfort during sex, recurrent urinary tract infections.

Symptoms can last for month or years and can change with time. Some symptoms such as joint pain and vaginal dryness can carry on after your period stops.

Getting advice early can get reduce the impact perimenopause and menopause have on your health, relationships and work.

Reproductive factors and cardiovascular disease

Researchers have recently discovered that a person's reproductive experiences (including menstruation, pregnancy, any breast cancer treatments and menopause) can affect the chances of developing cardiovascular disease later in life. Awareness of this can help determine an individual's risk.

- **The impact of menstruation:** If a person begins her menstrual periods when they are very young or has a history of absent or irregular menstrual cycles (if they have had polycystic ovary syndrome, for example) then this may lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease later in life.
- **The impact of pregnancy complications:** Complications during pregnancy or soon after delivery, including high blood pressure, can increase the chances of developing heart disease.
- **The impact of treatment for breast cancer:** A person who has undergone breast cancer treatment may have sustained damage to their heart due to certain chemotherapy, radiation, and estrogen-lowering medications. This can increase the risk of developing heart failure and blockages of the coronary arteries.
- **The impact of menopause:** If menopause happens at a particularly early age (i.e. below the age of 45) or at an age that is considered premature (i.e. below the age of 40), this can speed up the possible development of cardiovascular disease. However, menopause at the average age of 51 may lead to a heightened risk of developing the disease. Unless there is a good reason not to, the use of menopausal hormone therapy, particularly for women with premature and early menopause, is recommended to reduce the risks of heart disease.

Further details of these and how to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease can be found on [International Menopause Society](#)

Menopause resources

A number of different organisations are providing advice, information, support and guidance for those suffering from perimenopausal/menopausal symptoms:

- [The British Menopause Society](#): news style programme to dispel menopause misinformation
- ACAS Podcast: [Inclusive workplaces – supporting women through menopause](#)
- CIPD Webinar: [Let's talk menopause](#)
- [Pausitivity](#): #KnowYourMenopause campaign to take away the fear and confusion when menopause symptoms start to affect the body and mind
- Queer Menopause: [what is the non-binary experience of menopause?](#)
- [Daisy Network](#): providing information and support to women diagnosed with premature ovarian insufficiency, also known as premature menopause
- [Menopause Matters](#): independent website providing up to date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options
- [Cool Embrace](#): High quality cooling blankets and pillowcases to actively regulate your body temperature in order to give you a good night's sleep. To enjoy 10% of first order quote WESTLOTHIAN23

Supports

If you are suffering from the effects of perimenopause or menopause, there are a number of supports available to assist you in the workplace:

- [Menopause Policy](#): designed to raise awareness and offer support on the impact of menopausal symptoms in the workplace
- [Employee Assistance Programme](#): provided by Help EAP, provides a freephone helpline, manned by trained professionals, available 24/7. To access call 08000 028 5148
- [Four Pillars of Wellbeing](#): Council webpages designed to signpost staff to a number of supports available to staff both locally and nationally
- Optima Health: leaflet designed by our occupational health provider to give further information and support on the menopause