

Mid-Nottinghamshire
Integrated Care Partnership

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Sherwood Forest Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Menopause- Why do I feel fatigued?



Why do I feel fatigued?

During the perimenopause and menopause there are significant fluctuations in women's hormone levels. Oestrogen levels fluctuate and fall significantly and both progesterone and testosterone levels reduce. A reduction in these hormones can have a significant impact on the body. Some of the important roles in the body that these hormones regulate are listed below:

Oestrogen: Helps to keep organs healthy, such as the brain, heart and liver. Maintains our brain power and also helps to regulate the body's fluid levels, so cells remain hydrated. Involved in the regulation of the body's core temperature, during the menopause minor changes in the body's temperature can trigger an excess reaction and promote heat dissipation by vasodilation and sweating also known as the **Hot flush**.

Progesterone: Boosts feelings of natural calmness, improves mood and increases pain threshold levels. Allows restful, relaxing and rejuvenating sleep. Helps to stabilise our blood sugars. During the menopause as levels fall it may be more difficult to sleep.

Testosterone: Helps motivation and optimism, associated with feelings of brightness and confidence. Supports our cognitive function. Helps to turn our body fat to muscle. As levels fall during the menopause you may feel lower in mood and find it difficult to concentrate or remember things.

Vasomotor symptoms: Hot flushes and Night sweats can have an effect on sleep patterns and occasionally lead to insomnia and fatigue.

Cognitive symptoms: Anxiety and low mood can make it difficult to relax or sleep contributing to tiredness and fatigue.

What can I do to manage my symptoms of tiredness?

Exercise- This can protect and strengthen the heart, bones and muscles. It will help to maintain and improve energy levels, body weight and mood, improving your general wellbeing. Regular exercise can help our sleep routine but avoid exercising in the evening as this can make it difficult to fall asleep.

Vary exercises to include cardiovascular, strength training and stretching. Avoid high impact exercises like running and jumping as this puts excessive stress through joints.

Hydrate- The body is less able to hold onto fluid due to reduced oestrogen levels, causing cell dehydration. Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to counteract this.

Lose weight if BMI high- Reduced testosterone levels impact on the body's ability to turn fat into muscle and decreased oestrogen levels increase the amount of fat distributed around your tummy. A normal BMI range is 18.5-24.9.

Relaxation- Reduced progesterone can lead to reduced pain threshold levels and reduced levels of mood and calmness . It is important to make time in the day for relaxation. Each person is different so try a varied number of techniques to find one that suits you. Some good examples of relaxation are, visualisation, relaxed breathing techniques, relaxing to calming music and mindful meditation.

Medications- Record and then discuss your symptoms with your GP. They can advise what treatments are available and what might be right for you.

Workplace adjustments- Consider if your symptoms are affecting you at work or how your role may be contributing to your symptoms. For help and support read the Menopause at work guidance which can be found on the SFH staff intranet or discuss with your manager or occupational health.

Life Style Top Tips

Diet- Eating a varied healthy balanced diet will help to support your bones, joints and muscles and reduce excessive weight gain. Avoid eating sugary foods which cause fluctuating energy levels. Eating whole grains, beans, lentils and pulses will help to keep blood sugars stable and provide energy.

Prevent sedentary positions and repetitive tasks- Take regular rest breaks and alternate tasks.

Sleep- Maintain a regular bedtime routine, avoid the use of phones and electrical items in the last hour before sleeping. Make time to relax before bed, for example having a bath or reading. Wear lighter breathable clothing to bed, decrease the general room temperature to 18 degrees and consider using a fan. Avoid caffeinated or alcoholic drinks within 6 hours of your bedtime.

Exercise moderately for 150 minutes or vigorously for 75 minutes per week- Joint mobility, energy levels, strength and flexibility will improve and weight gain will be reduced. Exercises that have been shown to have benefit include brisk walking, yoga, Pilates, swimming and aerobics. Start off slowly and gradually build up over a number of weeks to prevent injury .

Stop smoking- Nicotine reduces the amount of oxygen that can be carried to the organs and increase levels of stress and anxiety. Ask for help and support and use nicotine replacement products to cut down.

Avoid alcohol- Cut down on alcohol levels as low mood can be exacerbated and sleep is disturbed by regular use. General dehydration can lead to decreased energy levels.

Who should I contact?

Your GP- Contact your GP surgery if you are struggling with menopausal symptoms or would like advice about medication treatment options.

Line manager- If you feel your menopause symptoms are affecting you at work or you would like to discuss any aspects of menopause at work, please contact your line manager and have a look at the SFH menopause guidance document, which can be found on the staff intranet site.

Occupational health department- If you would like advice around possible workplace adjustments then contact your line manager and ask for a manager referral into the occupational health department.

Where can I find more help?

Occupational health service

Extension: 3780/3781

Sfh-tr.occupational.health@nhs.net

[SFH E-learning: Menopause and joint pain/fatigue](#)

Menopause at work policy guidance document

<https://sfhnet.nnotts.nhs.uk/admin/webpages/default.aspx?RecID=3203>

<http://sfhnet.nnotts.nhs.uk/content/showcase.aspx?contentid=54919>

Nice guidelines

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/menopause>

VIVUP employee assistance programme

For help and support with any pressures at work or home.

Available 24/7, 365 days a year.

03303 800658

vivup.co.uk

NHS Choices

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/free-fitness-ideas/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/menopause/pages/meopausehome.aspx>

External links

www.womens-health-concern.org

www.menopausematters.co.uk

www.managemymenopause.co.uk

www.rockmymenopause.com

www.rcog.org.uk

www.thebms.org.uk