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Easy  
Read

# Menstrual health and menopause policy



**Menstrual health** is about periods, health conditions that affect periods, and how they can affect your body.

**Menopause** is when your periods stop happening.

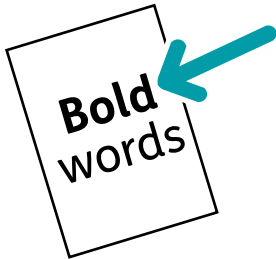
# Easy Read



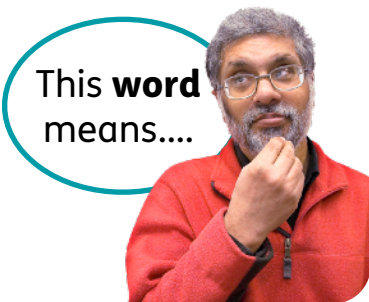
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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# About this booklet



This document is the **menstrual health** and **menopause** policy for:



**Menstrual health** is about periods, health conditions that affect periods, and how they affect your body.



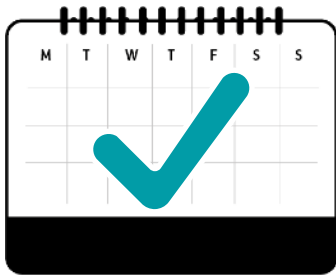
**Menopause** is when your periods stop happening.



This policy explains how our organisation will support staff who go through menstrual health issues and menopause.



This policy started on this date:



This policy was checked on this date:



This policy will be checked again on this date:

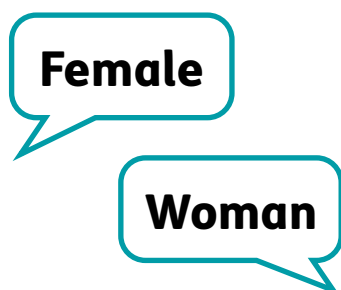
# About this policy



We want to make sure that all of our staff feel welcome and safe at work.



That includes staff who go through menstrual health issues or menopause.



We often use words like “female” and “woman” in this policy.



This is because most of the people who go through menstrual health issues and menopause are women.



This policy includes everyone who faces these issues.

People from these groups may also go through menstrual health issues or menopause:



- **Transgender men** - these are men who have changed from the gender they were born with.



- **Non-binary people** - these are people who do not feel themselves to be either male or female.



- **Intersex people** - these are people who have both male and female parts of the body.

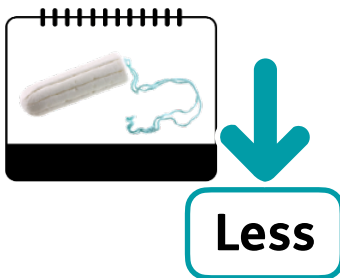
# Menopause



Menopause has 3 stages.

Going through these 3 stages is called the **menopause journey**.

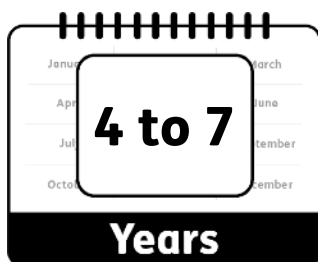
The 3 stages of the menopause journey are:



- 1) **Perimenopause** - this when your periods start happening less often.



Perimenopause usually happens when a woman is in her late 30s or early 40s.



This stage usually lasts for 4 to 7 years.



- 2) **Menopause** - this is when you have stopped having your period for at least 12 months.



Menopause usually happens when a woman is between 45 and 55 years old.



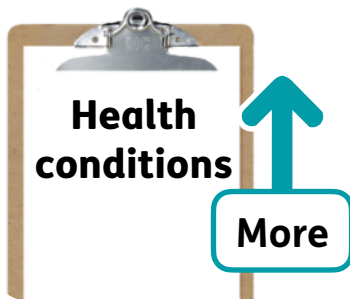
- 3) **Post-menopause** - this is after you have gone through menopause, but you still have some **symptoms** of menopause.



**Symptoms** are changes or feelings in your body when you get poorly or go through a big change like menopause.



Post-menopause usually lasts for 4 years after your last period.



When someone goes through post-menopause, they might be more likely to get certain health conditions.



If someone goes through menopause suddenly, their symptoms may be more serious.



Some people will go through the 3 stages of menopause earlier.



**Early menopause** is when you are 40 to 45 years old.



**Premature menopause** is when you are younger than 40 years old.



Some people go through menopause suddenly because of medical treatment for things like cancer.

This is called **medical menopause** or **surgical menopause**.

# Symptoms of menopause



Remember, **symptoms** are changes or feelings in your body when you get poorly or go through a big change like menopause.

There are lots of different symptoms of menopause, including:



- **Hot flushes** or sweating.

**Hot flushes** are when your body feels very hot for a short time.

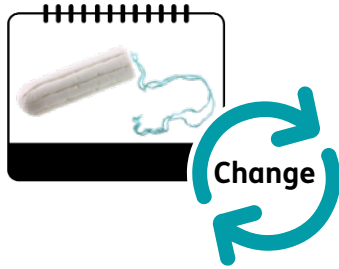


- Headaches.



- **Anxiety** - this is when you feel very worried or nervous about something.

Some other symptoms of menopause include:



- Your periods changing. They might get lighter or heavier, and less regular.



- Your **joints** hurting or feeling stiff.  
**Joints** are the places where your bones connect, like your knees or elbows.



- Problems with weeing.



- Problems with sleeping.

Some other symptoms of menopause include:



- Finding it hard to focus or remember things.



- Putting on weight.



- Feeling angry easily and your mood changing a lot.



- Feeling less confident.



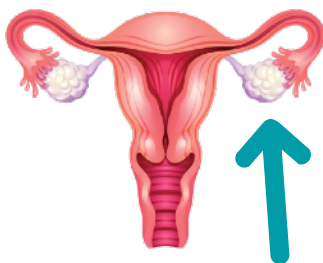
This is not a full list of menopause symptoms.

Some people will have different symptoms, and some people may have no symptoms at all.

Some people can also get these symptoms when they get treatment for other medical conditions like:



- **Endometriosis** - this is a medical condition that affects your womb. It can make it very painful to have a period.



- **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)** - this is a medical condition that affects how your **ovaries** work. **Ovaries** are the parts of your body where your eggs are kept.

Some people can also get menopause symptoms when they get treatment for:



- **Infertility** - this is when you are not able to have children, or it is very difficult to have children.



- **Diabetes** - This is when your body cannot deal with sugar properly.

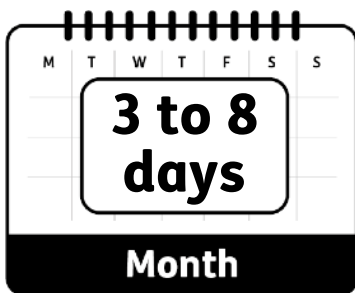


- Changing their gender.

# Periods



A period is when blood comes out of your vagina.



This usually happens once every month, for 3 to 8 days.



But every person who gets a period is different.



Most women and girls have periods from the time they start **puberty** until they go through the menopause.

**Puberty** is when a child's body begins to change as they become an adult.

# Pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS)



**Pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS)** is when you have symptoms for 1 week or more before your period.

PMS symptoms can include:



- Pain in your stomach, private areas or lower back.



- Your breasts feeling very sore.



- Your mood changing a lot and getting angry easily.

Some more symptoms of PMS are:



- Getting headaches and feeling very tired.



- Wanting to eat certain foods a lot.



Most people who get periods will have some of these symptoms.



Some people might have more symptoms because of other menstrual health conditions.

# Supporting staff

Staff members who are going through menstrual health issues or menopause must:



- Look after their own menstrual health.



- Talk to their doctor (GP) if they find it hard to do their job properly because of their symptoms.



- Talk to their manager if they are worried about their menstrual health issues or menopause.



- Be honest when they talk about these issues with managers and other professionals.

All staff members must:



- Support staff who are going through menstrual health issues or menopause.



- Understand that some staff may need extra support from work because of these issues.

# Managers

Managers must support staff going through menstrual health issues or menopause by:



- Making sure that staff have chances to talk about their health.



- Respecting and listening to staff if they are worried that their menstrual health issues will affect their job.



- Keeping information about staff members' menstrual health issues safe and private.



- Not believing wrong things about periods and menopause.

Managers must also support staff by:



- Talking to the staff member about what support they might need.



- Being ready to make **reasonable adjustments** to help with their symptoms.

**Reasonable adjustments** are changes that your work can make to help you do your job and look after your health at work.



- Writing down the support that the staff member will get in their **Wellbeing Action Plan (WAP)**.

You can read more about the **Wellbeing Action Plan** on page 35.



- Telling staff about the websites they can visit on page 45 to page 52.

Managers must also support staff by:



- Understanding that menopause symptoms can make it harder for some people to do their jobs well.



- Asking other professionals for advice if they need help supporting the staff member.



- Asking the staff member if they want other staff to know about their issues.



- Stopping staff from being treated badly because of their menstrual health or menopause.

# Talking about periods and menopause at work



Some staff may find it hard to talk to their manager about their menstrual health or menopause symptoms.

You can get ready to talk to your manager by:



- Looking at the list of menopause symptoms on this website: [www.balance-menopause.com/menopause-library/menopause-symptom-sheet](http://www.balance-menopause.com/menopause-library/menopause-symptom-sheet)



- Keeping a **symptoms diary** - this is when you write down your symptoms and how they affect you.

You can also get ready for talking to your manager about these issues by:



- Thinking of reasonable adjustments that your manager could give you.



- Practising what you will say to your manager.



You could practice by yourself or with someone else.

When you talk to your manager, you should tell them:



- How your symptoms are affecting your work.



- What reasonable adjustments could help you.

Managers can get ready for a meeting about a staff member's menstrual health or menopause symptoms by:



- Reading this policy.



- Looking into what tasks the staff member must do and how much work they have.

When they have these meetings, managers should:



- Listen to the staff member without judging them.



- Talk about ways to support the staff member, like making reasonable adjustments.



- Understand that they may need more meetings to deal with all the problems.

# Wellbeing at Work Meeting

A **Wellbeing at Work Meeting** is a meeting where you talk about:



- How your health issues are affecting your job.



- What support you might need to do your job well.



You may also need a Wellbeing at Work Meeting if your work is making your health worse.

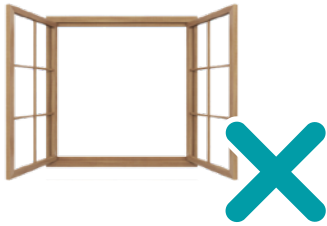


Some people may also need help from an **occupational health worker**.

An **occupational health worker** is a professional who can give advice on how to help you stay healthy and do your job well.

# Making changes at work

Your menstrual health or menopause symptoms may get worse at work if:



- There is not enough fresh air, or the air is too **humid**.

**Humid** means that there is lots of water in the air.



- The room where you work is too hot or dry.



- You feel stressed because you have too much work.

Your menstrual health or menopause symptoms may also get worse at work if:



- You do not get enough breaks.



- The room where you work is too noisy.

Managers can make lots of changes to support staff with these issues, like:



- Making sure the staff member can use a bathroom that has period products, like pads and tampons.



- Letting the staff member have breaks in a quiet room away from other people.

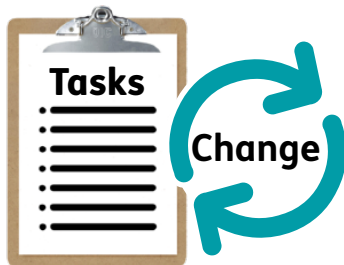
Managers can also make changes like:



- Making sure it is easy for the staff member to get water to drink.



- Telling the staff member about choices they can make, like when and where they work.



- Changing the amount of tasks that the staff member has to do.



- Making sure that the staff member has a way to change the temperature where they work.

For example, by giving them a fan or letting them work by a window.

Managers can also make changes like:



- Looking at where the staff member usually works and how noisy it is.



- Getting staff to look after their health when they have breaks.



- Letting staff change their uniforms if they need.



- Telling the staff member about Wellbeing Action Plans (WAP).

Managers can also make changes like:



- Checking to see if there are any issues at work that are causing stress.



- Asking the staff member to talk to their doctor about their symptoms.

- Asking the staff member if they want support from:



- **Human Resources (HR)** - This is the team in your organisation that helps look after staff.



- **Occupational Health** - this is a service that can support you with your health at work.



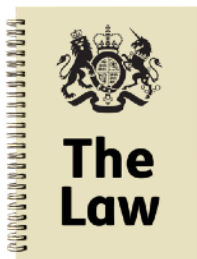
Sometimes, reasonable adjustments will also affect other staff.



If this happens, the staff member can decide whether they want to tell other staff or not.



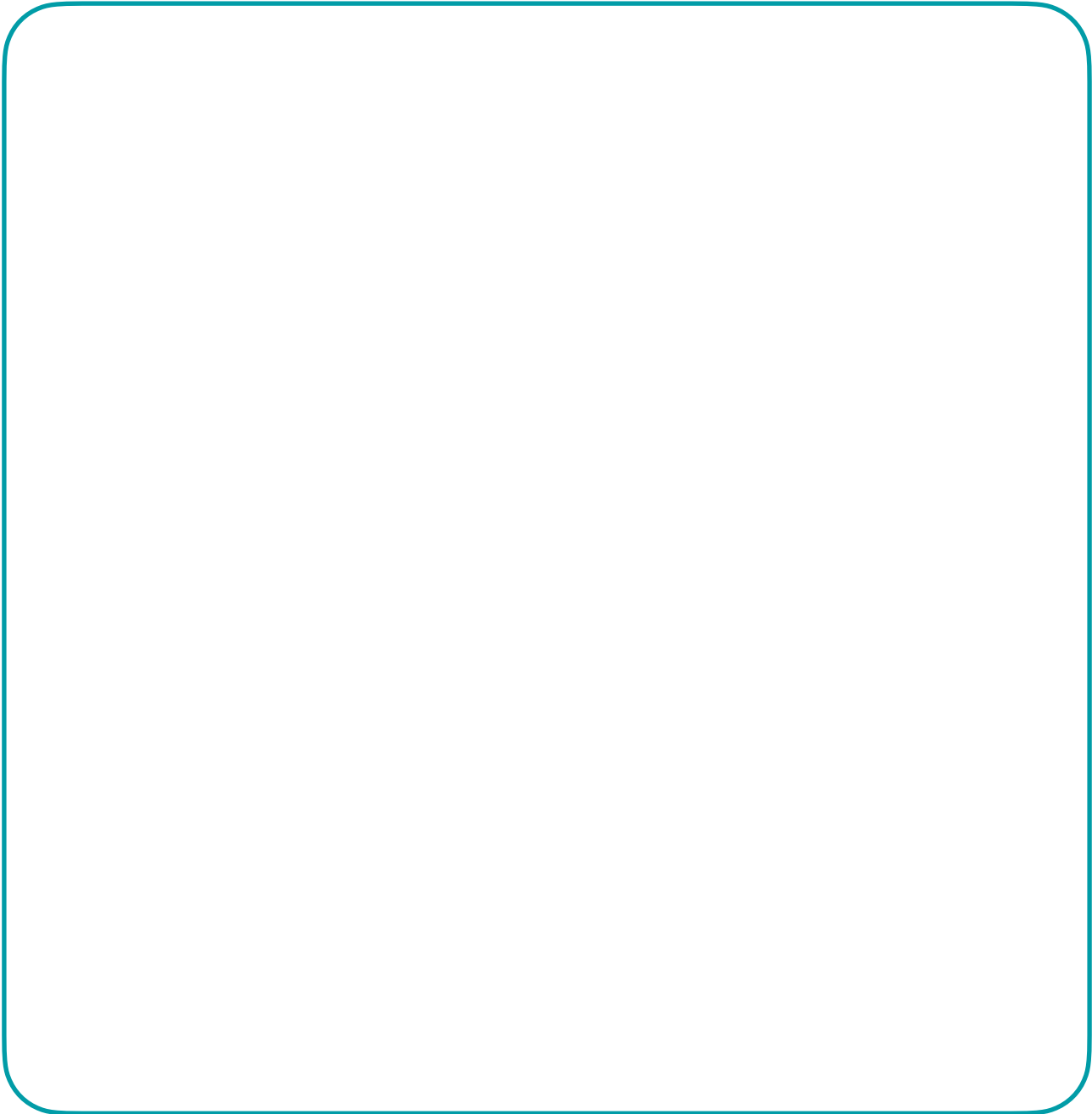
Some people may have a disability because of their menstrual health issues or menopause.



So if your organisation does not offer support or reasonable adjustments, this may be against the law.



You can also read these documents to find out more about support for staff at your organisation:



# Wellbeing Action Plan (WAP)

A Wellbeing Action Plan (WAP) is a document about a staff member that explains:



- What helps the staff member to feel healthy and happy at work.



- What might make it harder for the staff member to feel healthy and happy at work.



- What different people can do to help the staff member manage their symptoms.



Staff members can make this plan on their own or with their manager.



**Question 1:** What helps you to have good mental health at work?

This could be things like having a lunch break or talking with other staff.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a teal border, intended for a user to write their answer to Question 1.



**Question 2:** What could your manager do to help you stay healthy at work?

This could be things like having regular meetings about your work.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a teal border, intended for a user to write their answer to Question 2.



**Question 3:** Are there any issues at work that can make your mental health worse?

Empty rounded rectangular box for response to Question 3.



**Question 4:** How do you cope with stress at work?

This could be activities like exercise or talking to colleagues.

Empty rounded rectangular box for response to Question 4.



**Question 5:** How can you look after yourself if you start feeling stressed or ill at work?

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a teal border, intended for the user to write their answer to Question 5.



**Question 6:** When you start getting stressed or ill, do you show any signs that managers can look out for?

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**Question 7:** What support could managers give you to help you deal with your symptoms or stop you from feeling worse?

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**Question 8:** What should managers do if they notice signs that you are getting stressed or ill?

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**Question 9:** Do you use the organisation's Wellbeing Hour to help you look after your health?

Yes.

No - please say why:



The staff member should write their full name here:



The staff member should sign their name here:



The staff member should write today's date here:



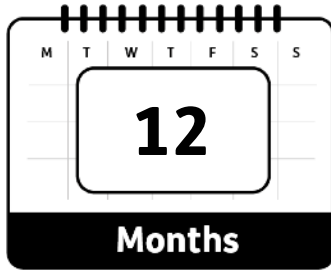
The manager should write their full name here:



The manager should sign their name here:



The manager should write today's date here:



We will look at this Wellbeing Action Plan (WAP) again in 12 months on this date:



We agree to look at this plan earlier if you ask us to.

# More information



You can read about how doctors make decisions about your care on the NICE website here:

[www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/about-this-information](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/about-this-information)



You can read about how to look after your mind on the NHS website here:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness)



You can find out more about female health by reading a book called “**The Knowledge**” by Dr Nighat Arif here:

[linktr.ee/drnighatarif](http://linktr.ee/drnighatarif)

# About menopause

You can find more menopause information and support by visiting:



- The NHS website:  
[www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause)



- Menopause Support:  
[menopausesupport.co.uk/?page\\_id=17128](http://menopausesupport.co.uk/?page_id=17128)



- Menopause Matters:  
[www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk)



- The Menopause Charity:  
[www.themenopausecharity.org](http://www.themenopausecharity.org)

You can also find more menopause information and support by visiting:



- The Menopause Café website:  
[www.menopausecafe.net](http://www.menopausecafe.net)



- The Queer Menopause website:  
[www.queermenopause.com](http://www.queermenopause.com)



**The Queer Menopause** website gives information and support to **LGBT+** people who are going through menopause.

**LGBT+** stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.



- The British Menopause Society:  
[thebms.org.uk](http://thebms.org.uk)



You can download the **Balance Menopause** app here:

[balance-menopause.com](https://balance-menopause.com)

**Balance Menopause** is an app that helps people going through menopause.



You can look at a list of menopause symptoms here:

[www.balance-menopause.com/menopause-library/menopause-symptom-sheet](https://www.balance-menopause.com/menopause-library/menopause-symptom-sheet)



You can get more information about how diabetes can affect the menopause here:

[www.diabetes.co.uk/menopause-and-diabetes.html](https://www.diabetes.co.uk/menopause-and-diabetes.html)

# About periods

You can learn more about periods by visiting these websites:



- The NHS website:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods)



- Women's Health:

[www.womenshealth.gov/menstrual-cycle](http://www.womenshealth.gov/menstrual-cycle)



- Women's Health Concern:

[www.womens-health-concern.org](http://www.womens-health-concern.org)



You can learn more about how diabetes can affect your period here:

[www.diabetes.co.uk/periods-and-diabetes.html](http://www.diabetes.co.uk/periods-and-diabetes.html)

# About other health conditions



You can get information about **Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)** here:

[www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/premenstrual-dysphoric-disorder-pmdd/what-is-pmdd](http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/premenstrual-dysphoric-disorder-pmdd/what-is-pmdd)



**PMDD** is a health condition where you get very bad PMS symptoms.



You can get information and support about endometriosis here:

[www.endometriosis-uk.org](http://www.endometriosis-uk.org)



You can get more information about Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) here:

[www.verity-pcos.org.uk](http://www.verity-pcos.org.uk)



If you have faced problems with having children, you can get support here:

[fertilitynetworkuk.org](http://fertilitynetworkuk.org)



You can visit the **Daisy Network** website here:

[www.daisynetwork.org](http://www.daisynetwork.org)



The Daisy Network gives information and support to women who are going through menstrual health issues early.



You can visit the Hysterectomy Association website here:

[hysterectomy-association.org.uk](http://hysterectomy-association.org.uk)



The Hysterectomy Association has information and support for people who have a **hysterectomy**.

A **hysterectomy** is when you have an operation to take out your womb.



You can visit the **Macmillan** website here:

[www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/menopause](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/menopause)



**Macmillan** has advice and information for people who have menopause symptoms from cancer treatment.

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