

Easy Read

Keep healthy in perimenopause and menopause

Booklet 4: Talking to your doctor



October 2023

About this booklet



This is an Easy Read Booklet. You may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what all the hard words mean on **page 22**.



There are 4 booklets about keeping healthy in perimenopause and menopause:

- **Booklet 1: What is perimenopause and menopause**
- **Booklet 2: Symptoms**
- **Booklet 3: What you can do to feel better**
- **Booklet 4: Talking to your doctor**

What is in this booklet

Talking to your doctor	4
Treatments from your doctor	11
1. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).....	12
2. Treatments for vaginal dryness	15
3. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)	15
4. Pills to help improve your mood	15
5. Menopause clinics.....	16
Remember	17
Find out more	19
Hard words	22
Thank you.....	23

Talking to your doctor



You can talk to your usual doctor or nurse about perimenopause and menopause.



Sometimes it can be hard to talk to your doctor or nurse about **symptoms** of:

- perimenopause
- and menopause.



Symptoms are signs that something is going on in your body.



There can be lots of reasons for this. For example:

- you are younger than the usual age for **symptoms**
- or you might feel shy talking about them.

To help you to talk to your doctor or nurse:



- You can ask to talk to a woman doctor.



- You can ask for a doctor or nurse who has a special interest in women's health or menopause.



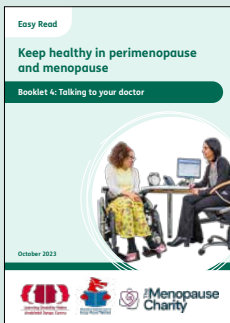
- You can ask for a longer appointment. This will give you more time to talk about your **symptoms**.



- You can take someone with you for support.



- You can take **Booklet 2: Symptoms** with you. This can help you talk about your **symptoms**. You could circle or tick the **symptoms** you have.



- You could also take this booklet with you, to help you talk about treatment.

Before you go to your appointment, it may help to:



- Look at the list of **symptoms** in **Booklet 2: Symptoms**, to see which ones you have.



- Keep a track of how you are feeling. Write this down and take your notes with you.



- Speak to a friend or carer about your **symptoms**. You might want your friend or carer to go with you to your appointment to help explain things.



- You might want to write down some questions to ask the doctor.

Your doctor might:



- Ask about your **periods** and any other **symptoms** you have. Like hot flushes or night sweats.



A **period** is when you bleed from your vagina, which is between your legs. This happens around once a month. The proper name for **periods** is menstruation.



- Talk about things you can do to feel better.



- Tell you about medicine to help and any risks to taking it.



- Make sure you have had your **annual health check**. This is a health check you can get every year through your GP surgery. You do not have to be ill to get one. It is good to go every year. It helps you stay healthy and well.



- Check your blood pressure.



- If you are under 45 years old, your doctor might take some blood from you. This is to check your **hormones**.



Your body makes **hormones**. **Hormones** tell different parts of your body what to do and when to do it.



Your doctor can usually tell you are in the perimenopause without doing any tests if:

- you have a lot of symptoms,
- you are around 50 years old.

Treatments from your doctor



It is always best to check your **symptoms** with your doctor.



You might be able to manage your perimenopause **symptoms** without medicine.



If your **symptoms** are very bad or stop you from doing things, your doctor might suggest the following treatments.

1. Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)



HRT is medicine that might help you with **symptoms**. It gives you back the **hormones** you have lost. The right type and amount of HRT can make your **symptoms** better.



If you want to take HRT you can ask the doctor for it.



You can start taking HRT during perimenopause.
You can still take HRT if you are past menopause.



You can take HRT in different ways. It could be:

- a gel or spray that goes on your skin
- a patch that you stick on your body
- or a pill that you swallow.



You might take HRT in more than 1 way. For example, you may have an oestrogen gel **and** a progesterone pill.



If you have a womb and you are taking oestrogen, you **must** also take progesterone.



This is to stop the lining of your womb building up. If the lining of your womb builds up, this can cause health problems.



You and your doctor can choose the treatments that works best for you.



After a few weeks of taking HRT, hot flushes and night sweats usually stop.



Other **symptoms** will improve slowly over time.



If you still feel bad after 3 months of HRT speak to your doctor. They might change how much or what kind of HRT you take.

2. Treatments for vaginal dryness



Creams, gels or a ring or tablet to put inside your vagina to help with dryness.

3. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)



This is talking to someone with special training. It can:

- Help you feel better if you are sad or worried.
- Help you to understand what you think and feel.
- Teach you how to deal with your feelings better.



4. Pills to help improve your mood

5. Menopause clinics



Sometimes, the doctor may want to put you on a waiting list to go to a menopause clinic. This is where there are menopause doctors.



They can help if your **symptoms** are bad, or if you need different treatments. You may have to wait for a while.

Remember



It is your choice what treatment you have. You can talk about the options with your doctor.



If you do not get what you want at the first visit, try again.



If you are not happy, you can ask to talk to another doctor at your clinic. It can help to take someone with you to help explain your feelings.



The menopause is a natural part of getting older for all women and people with **periods**.



Symptoms are different for everyone.



Talk to someone if you need help.

Find out more

You can read all 4 easy read booklets about keeping healthy in perimenopause and menopause:



- **Booklet 1: What is perimenopause and menopause**
- **Booklet 2: Symptoms**
- **Booklet 3: What you can do to feel better**
- **Booklet 4: Talking to your doctor**

You can also find out more on these websites:



www.themenopausecharity.org



www.ftww.org.uk/menopause



www.111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/m/article/menopause



www.womens-health-concern.org



www.menopausesupport.co.uk



www.rockmymenopause.com

Hard words

Hormones

Your body makes hormones. Hormones tell different parts of your body what to do and when to do it.

Period

A period is when you bleed from your vagina, which is between your legs. This happens around once a month. The proper name for periods is menstruation.

Symptoms

Symptoms are signs that something is going on in your body.

Thank you



These booklets have been written by [Easy Read Wales](#).



They are based on information by the [The Menopause Charity](#).



With support from the [Fair Treatment for the Women of Wales](#).



Thank you to [Cwm Taf People First](#) for checking these booklets.



[To tell us what you think about this easy read version, click here.](#)

[Photosymbols Licence number 403527247.](#)