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Event

Member Webinar

Menopause Awareness



Sue Landsberg

DCM Trainer



About Me

Passionate about supporting individuals become more effective, fulfilled, happier and healthier in their personal and professional life.

Webinar Session

Outline

- Stages of Menopause
- Changes and symptoms
- Healthy lifestyle choices
- Managing symptoms
- Supports



Menopause

Myths & Facts

Menopause Myths

Menopause is a taboo subject

Menopause Only Affects Women Over 50

Menopause happens suddenly

Menopause means loss of libido

All women experience hot flashes

Menopause causes significant weight gain

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) is dangerous

Menopause causes depression

Menopause is a sign of old age

Once Menopause Hits, It's All Over Ladies!



Menopause Facts

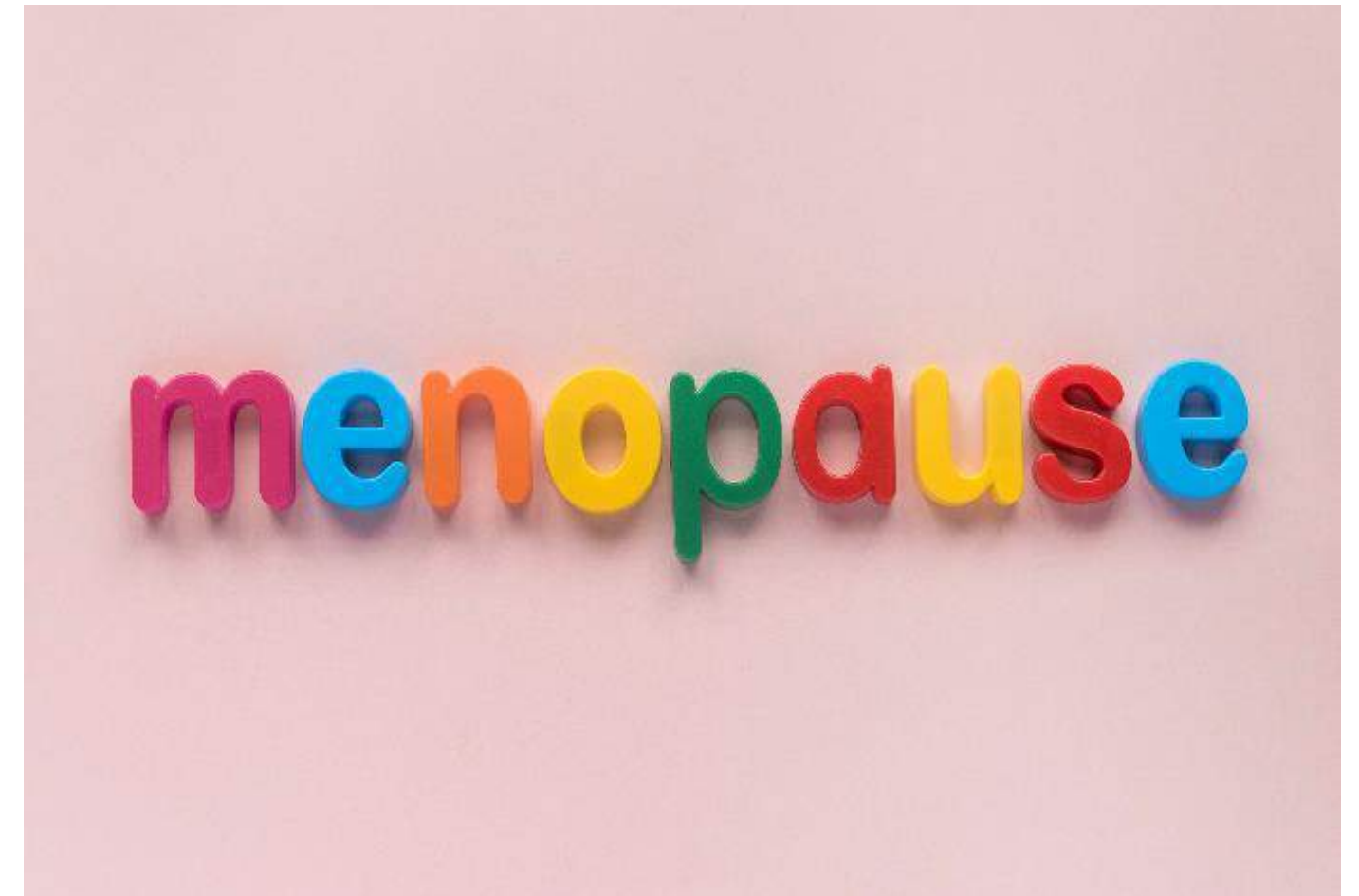
Menopause is part of the natural ageing process.

It refers to the time when menstruation has ceased for 12 consecutive months.

It is triggered by lower levels of oestrogen, which decrease naturally between the ages of 45 and 55.

Whilst it is a natural process.

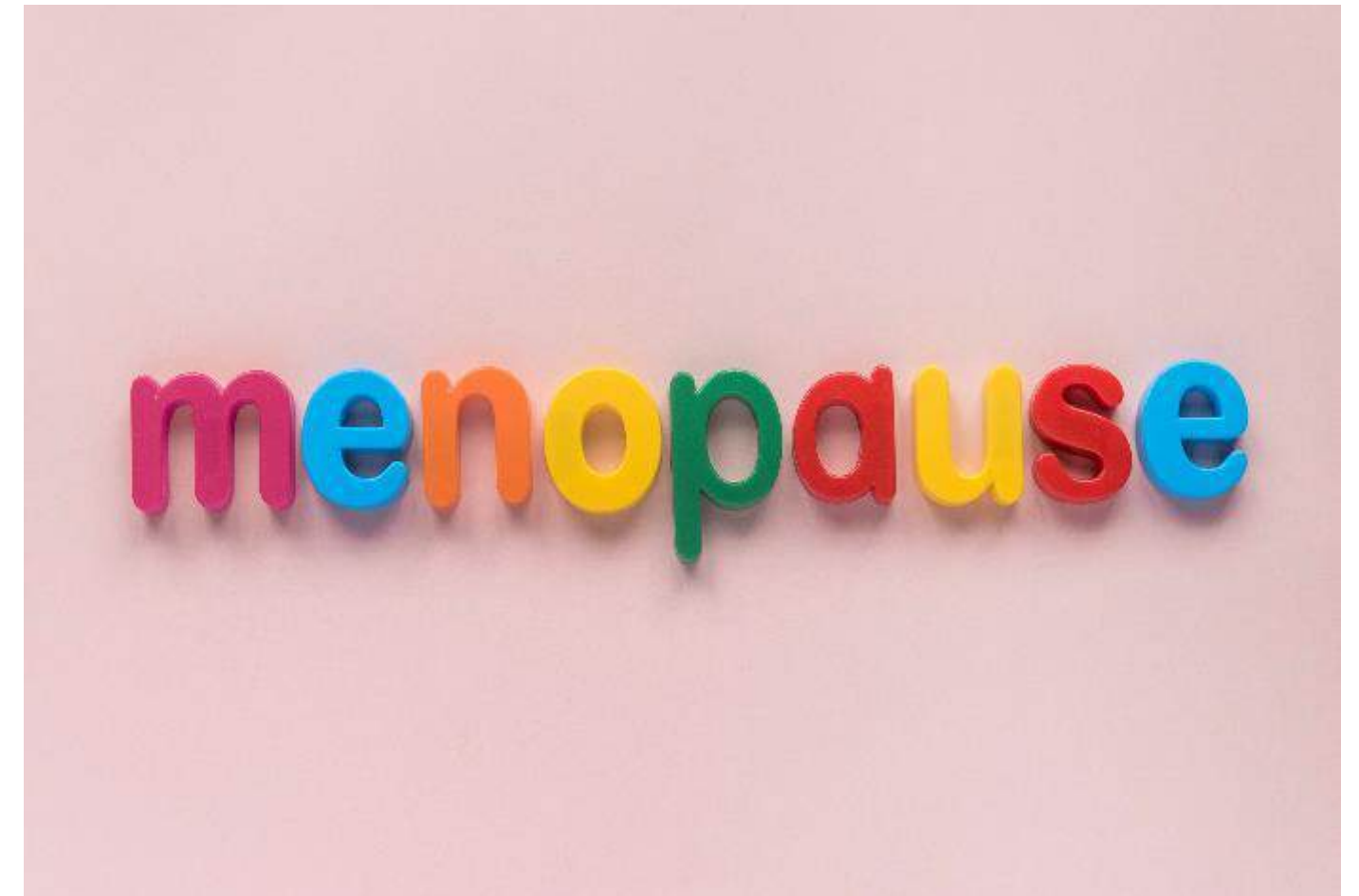
The menopause can cause a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms that can last for several years.



Menopause Facts

The majority of menopausal women experience symptoms, but everyone is different. Some people go through menopause with little impact on their daily life

The symptoms can fluctuate and be felt to varying degrees. Experiencing any of the typical symptoms can pose a challenge for women as they go about their daily lives.



Stages Of Menopause

Perimenopause

Premature menopause

Menopause

Surgical menopause

Post-menopause

Perimenopause

The transitional period leading up to menopause when the ovaries gradually begin to produce less oestrogen.

Characterised by hormonal fluctuations that can cause various symptoms.

Typically starts in the 40's but can begin in the mid-30s and. Duration varies from months to years.

Ovarian function becoming erratic, oestrogen and progesterone levels fluctuate, leading to irregular ovulation and menstrual cycles.

Symptoms include Irregular menstrual cycles, hot flashes, night sweats, sleep disturbances, mood swings, vaginal dryness, and changes in libido.



Premature Menopause

Premature menopause occurs before the age of 40. This can happen naturally or be induced by medical treatments like surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation.

Symptoms are similar to menopause but may have more severe long-term effects due to prolonged low oestrogen levels, such as a higher risk for osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease.

Women experiencing premature menopause need regular monitoring and may require hormone therapy to manage symptoms and reduce health risks.



Menopause

Menopause is defined as 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period, signalling the end of a woman's reproductive years.

The ovaries stop releasing eggs, and the production of oestrogen and progesterone drops significantly.

The average age of menopause is around 51, but it can occur between 45 and 55. Symptoms experienced during perimenopause, such as hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, sleep disturbances, and mood changes continue.



Post Menopause

Post menopause is the stage after menopause. This stage lasts for the rest of a woman's life.

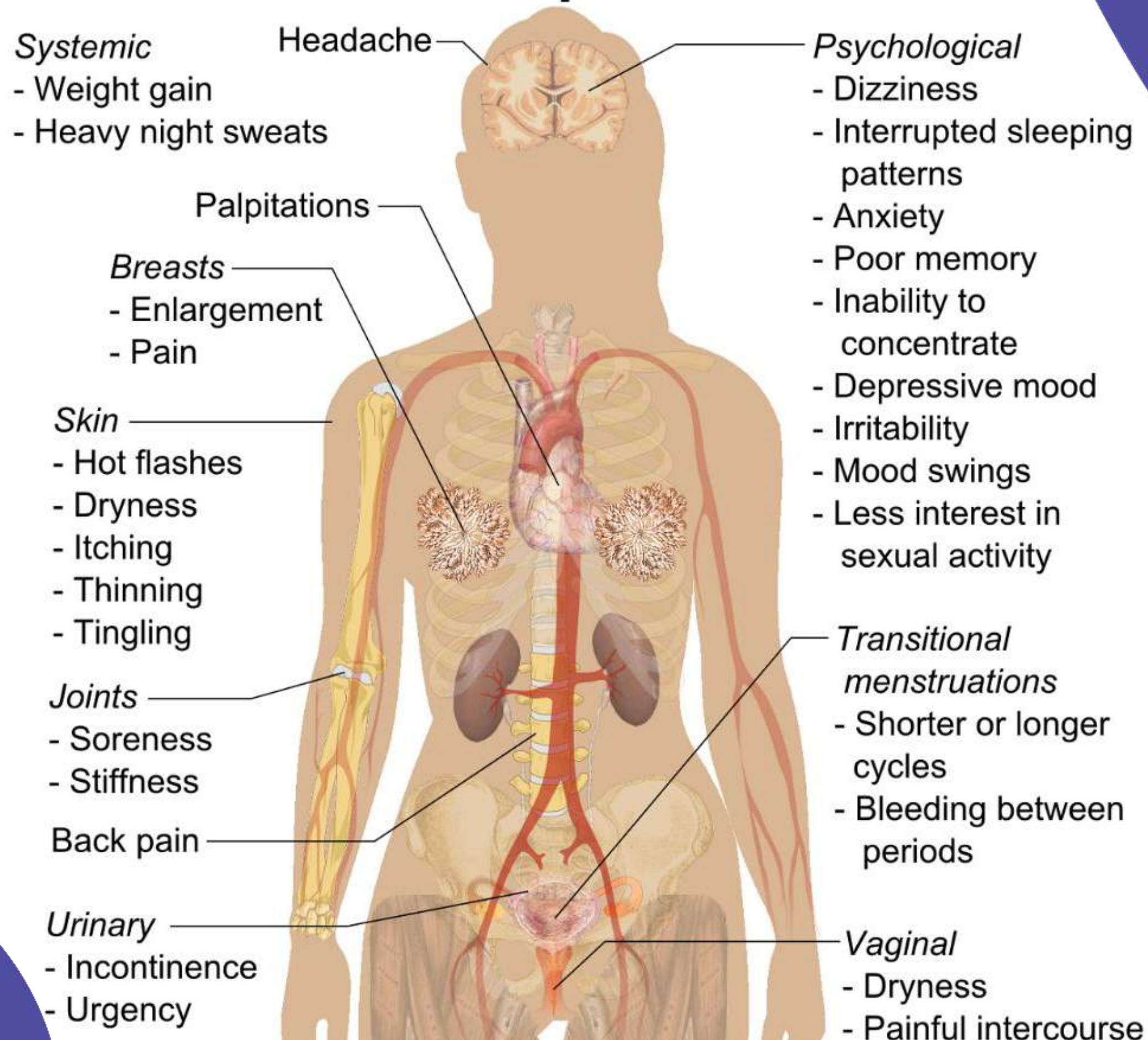
While some menopause symptoms (like hot flashes and night sweats) may continue, they generally decrease over time.

Long-term health risks due to lower oestrogen levels include osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, urinary incontinence.



Symptoms Of Menopause

Symptoms of Menopause



Physical Symptoms

Hot flashes, night sweats (brief and sudden surges of heat usually felt in the face, neck and chest) , sleep disturbances, weight gain, joint pain,, breast lumps fatigue and headaches, skin changes (dryness, acne, general itchiness, cold extremities irregular/lighter/heavier periods.

Swollen feet/ankles. Muscle and joint stiffness, aches and pains.

Urogenital Symptoms

Vaginal dryness, urinary incontinence and infection – UTIs including cystitis, and decreased libido.

Emotional and Psychological Symptoms

Mood swings, anxiety, panic, depression, "brain fog," decreased concentration, memory issues. Loss of confidence

Symptoms can be mild – moderate – extreme



A significant number of women experience moderate to severe symptoms, yet few seek medical help due to stigma or lack of awareness

The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)



the menopause hub®



The Menopause Hub and Ibec present the first "Menopause in the Workplace" survey results.



This is the first data in Ireland to provide insight into how women feel as they transition through menopause in the workplace, and demonstrates how employers are and should be supporting their staff.

Loretta Dignam, Founder & CEO of The Menopause Hub

Maeva McElwee, Director of Employer Relations at Ibec says

It is really positive to see that **79%** of respondents to this survey stated that menopause is relevant to their organisation.

About Ibec

Ibec is Ireland's largest lobby and business representative group. With over 250 employees, Ibec engages with key stakeholders in Ireland and internationally.

About The Menopause Hub

The Menopause Hub is Ireland's first and only dedicated multidisciplinary menopause clinic, offering a range of services to optimise the health and wellbeing of menopausal women.

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EMPLOYEE SURVEY

1152 women, ROI, Sept / October 21
 by The Menopause Hub

Performance and ability to do the job:

- 52% said performance was affected a little
- 30% said performance was affected a lot

Missing work due to symptoms:

- 39% said they missed work because of their symptoms
- 22% said that they missed 3 or more days
- 86% were not comfortable telling their line manager the real reason

Giving up work:

- 40% said that they considered giving up their work
- 12% gave up work

What employees are asking for from their employers

- 92% Would like awareness training and education for staff
- 96% said they would like menopause awareness training for managers & HR
- 93% said they would like to see a menopause in the workplace policy introduced at work.



EMPLOYER SURVEY

272 HR managers,
 Sep-Oct 2
 by Ibec

79% of respondents to this survey stated that menopause is relevant to their organisation.

25% of respondents said that it was "very likely" that they would introduce menopause specific supports in the next 1-2 years.

Of the supports provided to menopausal women in the workplace, the availability of supports through the company EAP service was the most common (70%), with flexibilities such as ability to schedule annual leave around appointments (47%), and option to avail of flexible working if needed (39%) also being popular. (46%) stated that their employees can avail of paid sick leave where needed.

Of these companies, the most popular supports planned for the future were

- Education and training for management/HR (74%)
- Communications/events to increase employee awareness (70%)
- A specific company policy on menopause (62%)
- Menopause champions/ambassadors or similar (48%)
- Supports available through the EAP service (46%)



KEY FINDINGS:

What's Going On ... Hormonal Changes

Oestrogen

Oestrogen levels significantly decline, particularly oestradiol, which is the most active form of oestrogen produced by the ovaries.

Effects

This deficiency can lead to symptoms such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, mood swings, and an increased risk of osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease.

Progesterone

Progesterone production decreases significantly during menopause, especially as ovulation ceases.

Effects

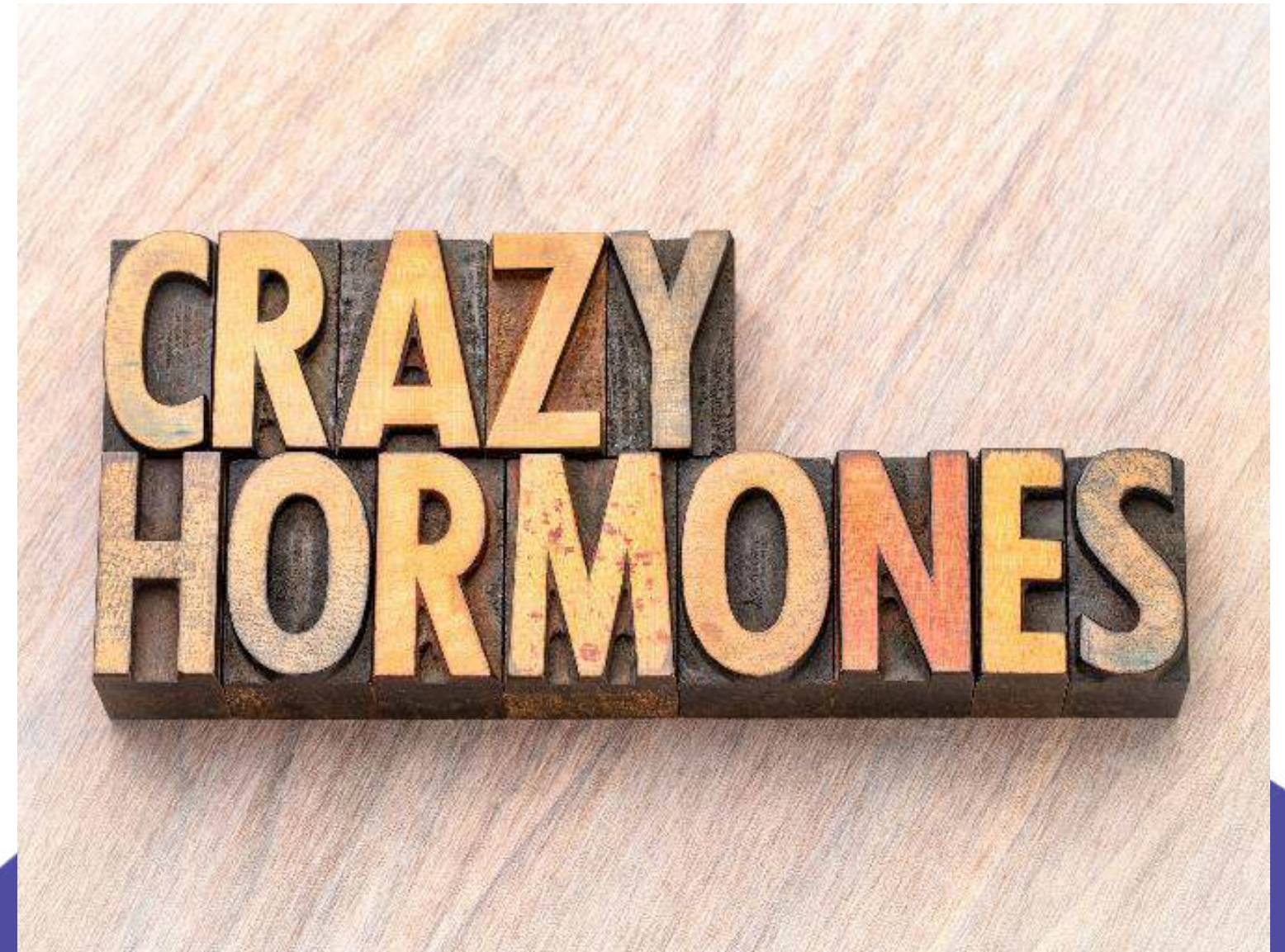
Low progesterone levels can contribute to irregular menstrual cycles during perimenopause, as well as mood changes, anxiety, and sleep disturbances.

Testosterone

Testosterone levels, while less affected than oestrogen and progesterone, do decrease with age and menopause.

Effects

Lower testosterone levels can affect libido, muscle mass, and overall energy levels.



Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH) Increase

Primary Change

As oestrogen levels drop, the pituitary gland increases the secretion of **Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH)** in an attempt to stimulate the ovaries to produce more oestrogen.

Effects

Elevated FSH levels are one of the key markers of menopause and are used in diagnostic tests. High FSH can also cause symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats.



Luteinizing Hormone (LH) Increase

Primary Change

Similar to FSH, **Luteinizing Hormone (LH)** levels rise in response to low oestrogen levels.

LH, together with FSH, regulates the menstrual cycle and ovulation.

Effects

While high LH levels are less commonly used for diagnosing menopause, they reflect the body's response to reduced ovarian function. Elevated LH can contribute to hot flashes and other vasomotor symptoms.



Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) Decline

DHEA is a hormone produced by the adrenal glands and serves as a precursor to oestrogen and testosterone. Its levels decline with age, including during menopause.

Effects

Lower DHEA levels may be linked to decreased libido, lower bone density, and changes in mood and cognitive function.



Changes in Other Hormones

Cortisol

The stress hormone cortisol may increase during menopause due to changes in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, which can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and sleep disturbances

Thyroid Hormones

Some women experience changes in thyroid function around menopause, which can exacerbate symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, and mood changes. Hypothyroidism is more common in postmenopausal women.

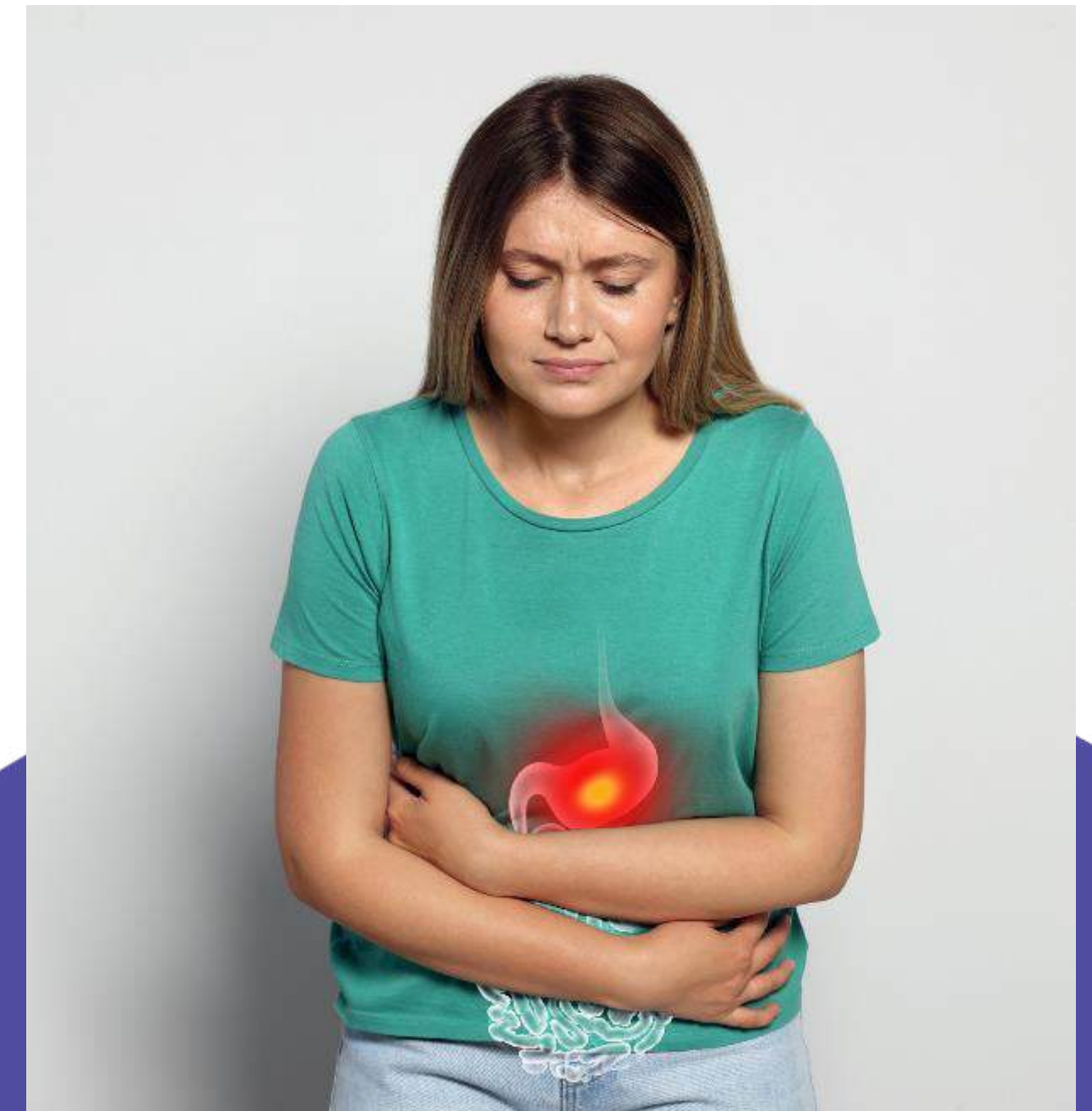


Hormonal Changes & Gut Microbiome

Oestrogen and other hormones influence the composition of the gut microbiome. Decreased oestrogen levels can alter the gut microbiome, potentially leading to digestive issues and altered gut flora.

Reduced oestrogen levels can affect gut motility and mucus production, contributing to these symptoms - metabolism, increase inflammation, digestion, including bloating, constipation, and changes in bowel habits. and impact overall health.

Gut dysbiosis can affect mood and cognitive function, potentially worsening symptoms such as anxiety and depression during menopause.



Weight Management

Weight gain and obesity are common concerns during menopause and can be influenced by gut health.

An imbalance in gut microbiota can affect metabolism and appetite, contributing to weight gain and exacerbate mood swings

Poor Diet

Diets high in caffeine, alcohol, and sugar, and low in essential nutrients, can worsen menopausal symptoms.

High caffeine and alcohol intake can exacerbate hot flashes and disrupt sleep.



Cardiovascular Disease

Menopause is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases such as coronary artery disease, heart attack, and stroke.

Changes in lipid profiles, increased arterial stiffness, and changes in body fat distribution can contribute to this increased risk.

Menopause can lead to an increase in blood pressure, partly due to hormonal changes and weight gain.

Elevated blood pressure is a major risk factor for cardiovascular diseases and can lead to complications such as hypertension.

A study by the Irish Heart Foundation highlighted the link between menopause and increased risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, and diabetes among Irish women.

It suggests that early intervention and lifestyle modification can help mitigate these risks.

Bone Health

Proper nutrient absorption is critical for maintaining bone health, especially during menopause.

Changes in gut health can impact the absorption of key nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D, which are essential for bone health.

Bone health is a significant concern during menopause due to the decline in oestrogen levels, which plays a crucial role in maintaining bone density.

The loss of oestrogen accelerates bone loss, increasing the risk of osteoporosis (a condition characterised by weak and brittle bones, often resulting from significant bone loss) and fractures.



Brain Health

Brain health is an important aspect of overall well-being during menopause. The hormonal changes can influence cognitive function, mood, and mental health.

Cognitive Function and Memory

Oestrogen has neuroprotective effects, and its decline can impact cognitive function and memory.

Women may experience difficulties with concentration, memory recall, and overall cognitive performance.

Cognitive changes may range from mild forgetfulness to more noticeable difficulties in memory and attention.



Mood & Mental Health

The decline in oestrogen levels may affect neurotransmitter systems that regulate mood.

Hormonal fluctuations can contribute to mood swings, anxiety, higher stress and depression.

Women may experience symptoms such as irritability, anxiety, and depressive moods, which can impact overall mental health.



Sleep and Cognitive Function

Menopause can affect sleep quality due to symptoms like hot flashes and night sweats, which can, in turn, impact cognitive function and memory.

Poor sleep quality can exacerbate cognitive difficulties and affect overall mental health.

Neuroprotection and Alzheimer's Disease Risk

Oestrogen is thought to have neuroprotective effects that may help reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's disease.

The decline in oestrogen during menopause may increase the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.



Underlying Health Conditions

Conditions such as thyroid disorders, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases can influence the severity of menopausal symptoms.

Certain Medications

Some medications can exacerbate menopausal symptoms or interfere with hormone levels.

Medications such as antidepressants, antihypertensives, and certain cancer treatments can worsen symptoms like hot flashes and mood changes.



Menopause Supports

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

Non-Hormonal Treatments

Lifestyle Factors

Complementary Therapies

Medications and Therapies

hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and osteoporosis

medications, are used to manage bone health during menopause.

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is sometimes used to manage menopausal symptoms and may have effects on brain health. HRT works by replacing the oestrogen that has been lost in perimenopause and menopause.

The impact of HRT on cardiovascular health is complex; while it may offer some protection against heart disease, it also carries risks, particularly with certain types of HRT.

(always follow health care advice for your individual needs)



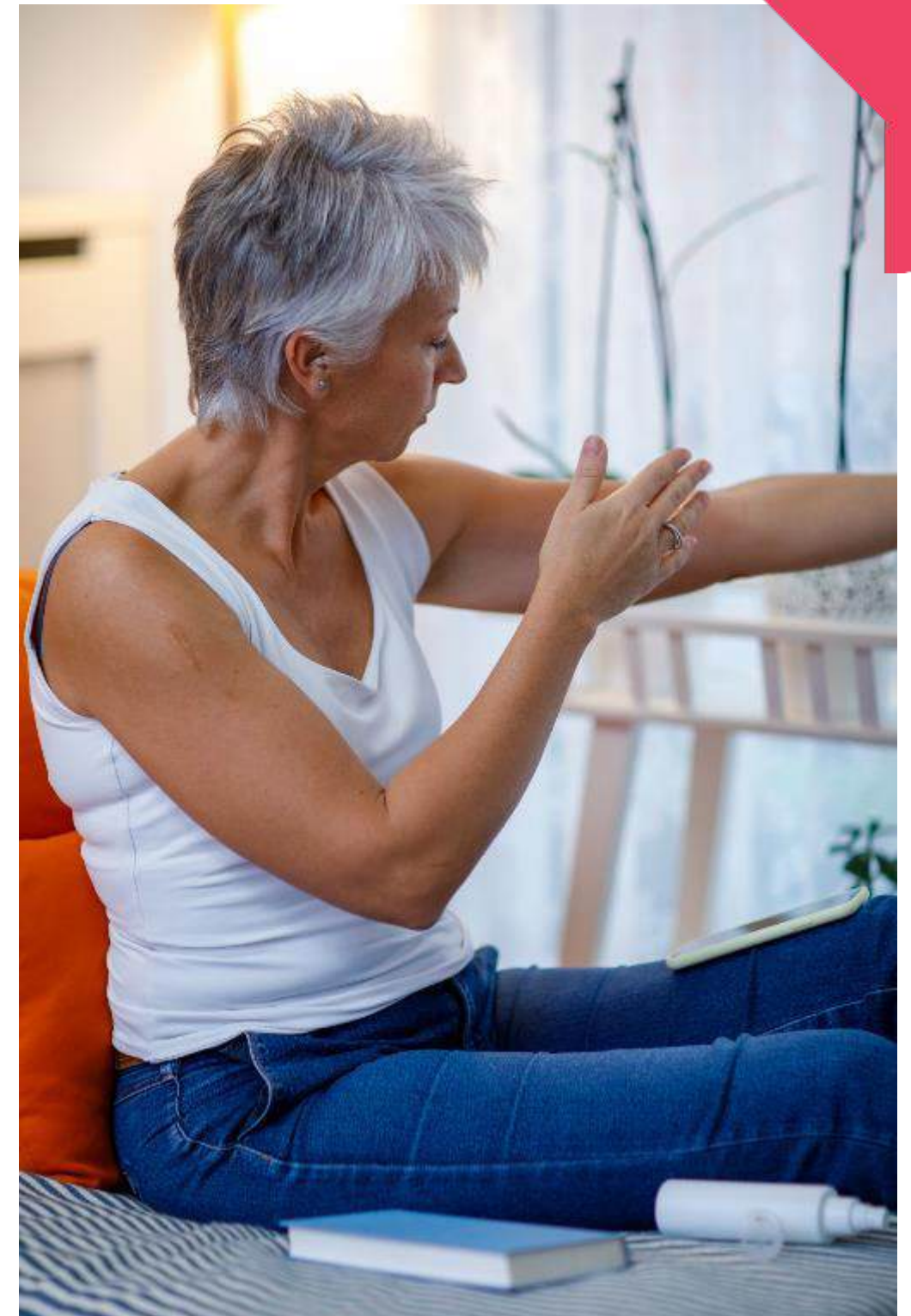
Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)

HRT reduces menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and sweating.

There are 2 main types of HRT –

combined HRT (oestrogen and progesterone) and oestrogen only HRT.

HRT is linked to a higher risk of breast cancer. Combined HRT (oestrogen and progesterone) is more likely to cause breast cancer than oestrogen only HRT. The longer HRT is used, the higher the risk. However, the risk returns to that of a woman who never used HRT if you cease to use it.



Then once started on HRT it can sometimes take time to find the optimal dosage.

Many women report that HRT has turned their lives around, that they have gotten their old selves back. They do not want to go back to their pre HRT days.

For many it is a critical to their quality of life.

Free for women in Ireland from 2025.



On May 12th 2023, the FDA approved the new US-made drug Vezoah. This oral tablet is the first treatment of its kind. Fezolinetant blocks the neuron receptor responsible for hot flashes.

Unlike HRT (hormone replacement therapy), fezolinetant is **a non-hormonal** treatment.



Fezolinetant can be used to treat those who cannot take HRT or for whom HRT is contraindicated. Currently, the alternatives to HRT are limited.

Women who have had breast cancer or ovarian cancer, or who have an increased risk of developing these cancers, may be prescribed fezolinetant as a non-hormonal alternative to HRT.

Some women with a history of heart disease, heart attack, or stroke may also be unsuitable for HRT, but may be suitable to use fezolinetant.

While oestrogen is generally regarded as being more effective in treating hot flushes, clinical trials for fezolinetant demonstrated an impressive level of efficacy – which is excellent news for those searching for a comparable alternative to HRT.



Non Hormonal Supports

it is important to consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new therapy or supplement to ensure it is safe and suitable for individual needs.

Herbal Remedies

Black Cohosh

Commonly used to reduce hot flashes, night sweats, and mood disturbances. Some studies suggest that black cohosh may have estrogenic effects and help manage symptoms, but results are mixed.

Evening Primrose Oil

Used for managing hot flashes, night sweats, and breast tenderness. Evidence is limited, but some women find it beneficial for mild symptoms.

Sage

Reported to reduce hot flashes.



Calcium and Vitamin D

Adequate calcium and vitamin D intake is crucial for bone health. Calcium helps build and maintain bone, while vitamin D enhances calcium absorption.

Vitamin E

Some studies suggest that Vitamin E supplementation can help reduce the severity of hot flashes in menopausal women.

Magnesium

Magnesium is important for bone health, muscle function, and overall metabolic processes. Deficiency is common in postmenopausal women.



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a psychological therapy that helps women cope with menopause symptoms by changing negative thought patterns and behaviours. It is effective in reducing hot flashes, night sweats, and mood-related symptoms.

Reflexology

A practice of applying pressure to specific points on the feet or hands, which is believed to correspond to different body organs. Reflexology has been found to reduce stress and improve sleep in some menopausal women.



Therapies

Aromatherapy

The use of essential oils, such as lavender, peppermint, and clary sage, can help manage symptoms like hot flashes, anxiety, and insomnia. Aromatherapy massages have shown to be particularly beneficial.

Homeopathy

Alternative medicine that stimulates healing response using specific substances that mimic the symptoms.

'Treating like with like'.



Therapies

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is used to balance the body's energy flow (Qi) and may help reduce hot flashes, night sweats, and mood swings. Some studies show a reduction in the frequency and intensity of hot flashes.

Stress reduction/relaxation techniques

Mindfulness and meditation

Practices can help manage psychological symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. MBSR helps women develop coping strategies for managing menopausal symptoms.



Relaxation Techniques

Mindfulness and meditation

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Yoga

Regular yoga practice has been shown to help reduce hot flashes, improve sleep, and reduce anxiety and depression. It combines physical postures, breathwork, and meditation to support overall well-being.



Lifestyle Factors

Lifestyle factors such as diet, physical activity, smoking, and alcohol consumption play a crucial role in cardiovascular health during menopause.

Dietary Supplements

Phytoestrogens

These plant-based compounds, found in soy, flaxseeds, and legumes, can mimic oestrogen and potentially reduce hot flashes and improve bone density.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Found in fish oil supplements, omega-3s can help reduce the frequency of hot flashes and support overall cardiovascular and cognitive health during menopause.



Fundamentals Of Good Nutrition

Eat regularly

Your body needs fuel regularly, though out the day. At least three meals- breakfast, lunch and dinner. Planned snacking can be really helpful at managing mealtime portion control, if you know you tend to overeat at dinner it's worth trying a mid afternoon snack.

Balance your food groups

Try to ensure half your plate is made up of vegetables, fruit or salad. One quarter should be made up of protein and the remaining quarter from carbohydrates.





Snacks

Snacks should be made up of two food groups e.g. Carbohydrate + protein, Fruit + protein.

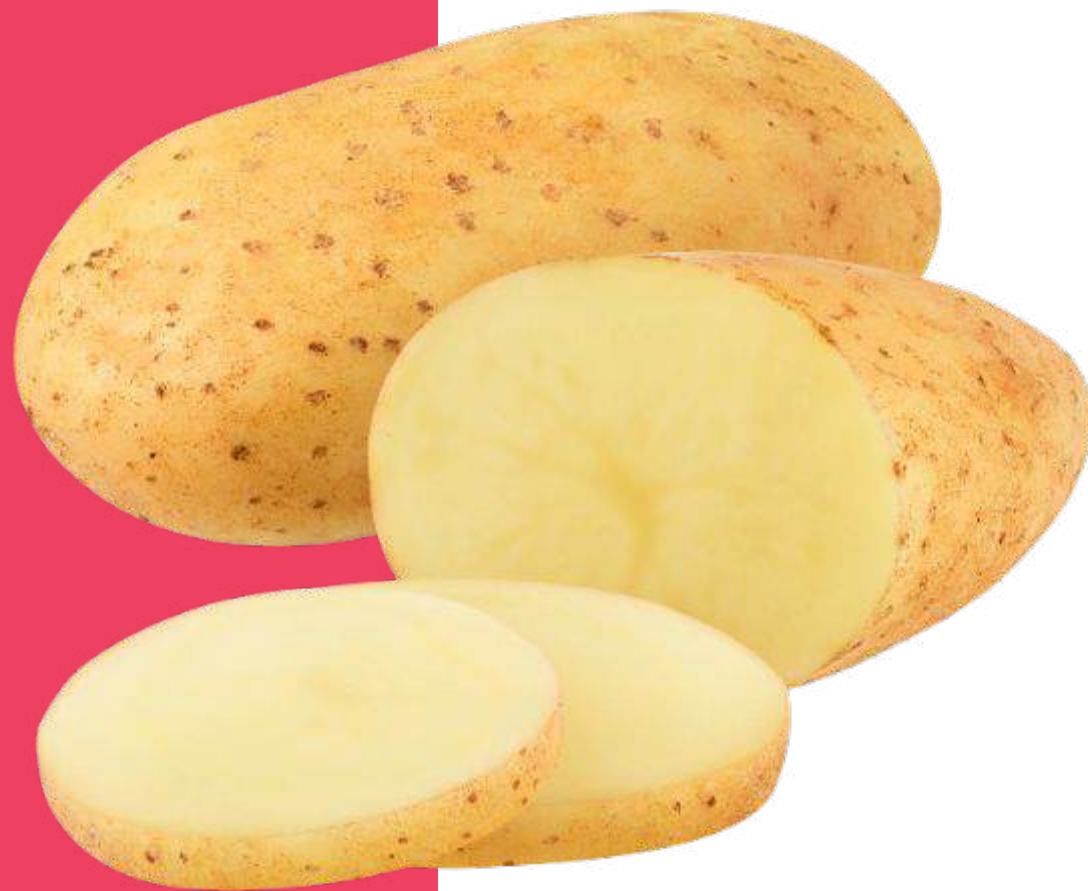
Proteins

Achieve balance with variety

Red meat - choose lean cuts. Dry fry when you can.

Fish - have at least one serving of oily fish e.g. salmon, sardines, trout, mackerel or pilchards.

Vegetarian - if you eat eggs make sure you include pulses, nuts, tofu and quorn.



Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are not the enemy! Your body needs carbs as fuel. Confusion arises about carbohydrates is because they come in different guises.

Limit simple sugars like syrups, table sugar and treacle -

Wholegrain and low glycaemic carbs are best, try to have at each meal.

Wholegrain and/or low glycaemic carbs-

- Bread- Granary, Rye, Wholemeal seeded bread
- Potatoes- sweet potatoes, baby new potatoes
- Pasta- dried wholegrain pasta (cooked al dente, with a bite)
- Cereals- oats, no added sugar muesli
- Grains- Brown basmati rice, red rice, cous cous, bulgar wheat, quinoa, barley



Dairy foods and dairy alternatives

Peri menopause and menopause trigger your bones to lose some of their strength. Your body needs the necessary nutrients to support good bone health and maintain bone density.

The two main bone nutrients are calcium and vitamin D – you should take a vitamin D supplement every day containing 400IU or 10ug Vit D. (ask healthcare provider).



Dairy foods and dairy alternatives

Most women need 800mg calcium per day to maintain good bone health- some need up to 1200mg/day. The best dietary source of calcium is milk and dairy foods and you need three servings per day to meet your requirements.

If you prefer to use dairy alternatives like soya, nut, oat or rice “milk” it’s essential you make sure that you are using a calcium-enriched variety.



Fruits and vegetables

Fruits, vegetables and plant foods need to make up the main part of a healthy diet.

The recommended five a day is the minimum you should eat to get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs to be healthy.

Try to eat a rainbow of different coloured fruit and veg- the different colours indicate different vitamins and minerals.

Drinks and fluids

Maintaining good hydration is as important as eating well.

Most fluids count towards your intake, not just water.

You can check if you're hydrated enough by having a look at your urine when you go the bathroom. If your urine is a very pale colour you are well hydrated.

If it's darker than that you should drink a little more.

There is some evidence that caffeine and alcohol can make hot flushes worse. Limit tea and coffee to 1-2 cups per day or use decaffeinated varieties.

Make sure you keep your alcohol intake within safe limits or try avoiding altogether for a short time to see if it helps.





Lifestyle Modifications

Exercise

Regular physical activity, including aerobic exercise, strength training, weight bearing and resistance exercises are beneficial for maintaining bone density and overall bone health.

Lack of Physical Activity

Sedentary lifestyles can negatively affect menopausal symptoms by impacting weight management, bone health, and overall well-being.



Sleep Hygiene Practices

Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, creating a calming bedtime routine, and optimising sleep environments can help alleviate sleep disturbances common during menopause.



Smoking

Smoking is associated with a range of health issues that can exacerbate menopausal symptoms.

Smoking can intensify hot flashes, contribute to earlier onset of menopause, and increase the risk of osteoporosis and cardiovascular diseases.

Summary



Factors such as stress, poor diet, lack of physical activity, sleep disorders, smoking, obesity, certain medications, and underlying health conditions can all exacerbate menopausal symptoms.

Addressing these factors through lifestyle changes and medical management can help mitigate the severity of symptoms and improve quality of life.

Supports

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)

Services such as counselling services mental health support, stress management resources and wellness coaching.

Menopause Support Groups and Networks

both online and in-person, where women can share experiences and seek support from peers.



National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)

The NWCI is a strong advocate for women's health and rights, including those going through menopause.



The Irish Menopause Society

This organisation provides valuable resources and information to women experiencing menopause, including educational materials, access to support groups, and guidance on navigating healthcare options.



Menopause Hub and Private Clinics

The Menopause Hub is Ireland's first dedicated menopause clinic offering multidisciplinary support, including medical advice, nutrition, counselling, and lifestyle coaching. They offer more personalised and accessible care for women experiencing menopausal symptoms.



National Maternity Hospital Menopause Clinic (Dublin)

Offers a comprehensive menopause service, including consultation, HRT, and non-hormonal treatment options.

Provides care for women experiencing early or complex menopause, including those who have had cancer or surgical menopause.

Requires a GP referral.

The Rotunda Hospital Menopause Clinic (Dublin)

Provides specialised care for menopausal women, particularly those with complex medical histories.

Offers both hormonal and non-hormonal treatments.

Access requires a referral from a GP or another healthcare provider.

Galway Clinic Menopause Service (Galway)

Offers consultations and personalised menopause management plans.

Provides advice on HRT, lifestyle changes, and alternative therapies.

A GP referral may be needed for access.



Cork Menopause Clinic (Cork)

Offers individualised treatment plans, including HRT, lifestyle advice, and alternative therapies.

Focuses on a holistic approach to managing menopause symptoms.

Operates both in-person and online consultations. Referral not required.

The Hermitage Medical Clinic (Dublin)

Offers a menopause clinic run by experienced gynaecologists.

Provides a wide range of treatment options, including hormonal and non-hormonal treatments, specialist nurses, doctors with an interest in menopause, and access to HRT.

Requires a referral from a healthcare professional.

Online Menopause Clinics and Telehealth Services

Some Irish clinics offer online consultations for menopause management, making it easier for women in rural areas or those unable to attend in person.

These services provide virtual consultations with gynaecologists, endocrinologists, or menopause specialists.



www.gov.ie/menopause

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/m/menopause>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/h/hormone-replacement-ther>

<apy-hrt-/> www.themenopausehub.ie

[International Menopause Society](#)

Irish Family Planning Association - Menopause Check-up;

www.ifpa.ie

<https://wellwomancentre.ie/health-matters/menopause/>

Women's health clinic; www.womenshealthclinic.ie

www.wellnesswarrior.ie

My second spring- Women's Resource www.mysecondspring.ie

www.IMSociety.or

Podcasts

The Menopause Doctor Podcast by Dr. Heather Hirsch

The Menopause Movement Podcast with Dr. Michelle Gordon

Pause & Effect Podcast

On My Last Eggs Menopause Podcast

The Hot Flash Inc Podcast

Menopause Chicks Podcast

The Fempower Health Podcast

The Happy Menopause Podcast with Jackie Lynch

Menopause Café Podcast



Personal Action Plan



01

What are your top takeaways from this webinar?

02

What will you start doing today to support yourself?



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Event

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS?

Ask Away.

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