



## 5 minute guide: Talking to your GP about menopause

If menopausal symptoms are getting in the way of you enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor.

Here are some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

### **Don't wait**

It's all too common to feel you must simply 'put up' with menopausal symptoms as a part of life, but if they are affecting you then there are things you can do and support available. There's no need to wait until symptoms feel unbearable.

### **Read the NICE guidelines**

This stands for National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and these guidelines are what your doctor will use to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer.

There are [guidelines for patients](#) which are really useful to read before you see your GP so you know what to expect. Print them off and take them with you if that helps.



### **Prepare for your appointment**

It's easier for your doctor to understand what's going on if you provide them with all the information.

That may sound obvious, but blood tests to say where you are on the menopause transition aren't always available or accurate – your hormones can fluctuate daily during this time. So your doctor will be thinking about what to recommend for you based on your symptoms.

Keep a list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, hot flushes, how you're feeling and any changes you've noticed. It's also worth talking to friends and family, if you can – they may have noticed changes that you aren't aware of.

Write them down and take them to your appointment. Your doctor will thank you for it and it's more likely that together you'll find the right solution faster.

And, if you have any preferences about how to manage your symptoms and long-term health, tell them that too e.g. do you want to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT), a herbal approach, make changes to your lifestyle. It's your choice, but it's a good idea to ask your GP their opinion based on your medical history.

### **Ask the receptionist which doctor is best to talk to about menopause.**

It might not be your usual GP, it could be someone who has had special training in the subject.

### **Ask for a longer appointment.**

If you don't think your standard appointment will be long enough then see if you can book a double appointment. Some surgeries offer this.

### **Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion.**

If you don't feel you've received the help you need, ask to speak to someone else. Don't be put off, you know how you're feeling and how it's affecting you.

### **Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area.**

If there is and you think this would be helpful, ask for a referral.

### **Take your partner or a friend with you.**

They will know how the symptoms are affecting you, could support you at the appointment and also find out how to continue supporting you.

Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms and what kind of help you need. Don't think you have to struggle through menopause when there is help available.