

## **Indian Express Opportunity**

### **Topic - Balancing work-life during perimenopause and menopause**

Questions -

#### **1. How can being on your menopause/perimenopause affect your regular life? What are the problems one might face?**

Ans : Your body goes through a lot of changes during menopause. There are extreme shifts in your hormone levels, you may not sleep well because of hot flashes and you may experience mood swings. Anxiety and fear could also be at play during this time.

The cessation of menstrual periods is often associated with a variety of unpleasant symptoms, including anxiety, depression, decreased libido, vaginal dryness, insomnia, difficulty concentrating and vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes and night sweats). These symptoms may last years after the menopause transition

#### **a) How menopause can affect your everyday life ?**

Menopause means different things to different women. Some women welcome the end of monthly turmoil of cramps, bloating and PMS. Other women would prefer the predictable hassle over hot flashes and insomnia. But menopause is a fact of life and with it your life will change in many ways. Not all of these changes are negative, though.

Hot flashes and sleep problems - Hot flashes are common during perimenopause. The intensity, length and frequency vary. Sleep problems are often due to hot flashes or night sweats but sometimes sleep becomes unpredictable even without them.

Mood changes - Mood swings, irritability or increased risk of depression may happen during perimenopause. The cause of these symptoms may be sleep disruption associated with hot flashes. Mood changes may also be caused by factors not related to the hormonal changes of perimenopause.

Vaginal and bladder problems - When estrogen levels diminish, your vaginal tissues may lose lubrication and elasticity, making intercourse painful. Low estrogen may also leave you more vulnerable to urinary or vaginal infections. Loss of tissue tone may contribute to urinary incontinence.

Decreasing fertility - As ovulation becomes irregular, your ability to conceive decreases. However, as long as you're having periods, pregnancy is still possible. If you wish to avoid pregnancy, use birth control until you've had no periods for 12 months.

Changes in sexual function - During perimenopause, sexual arousal and desire may change. But if you had satisfactory sexual intimacy before menopause this will likely continue through

Loss of Bone - With declining estrogen levels, you start to lose bones more quickly than you replace it, increasing your risk of osteoporosis - a disease that causes fragile bones.

Changing cholesterol levels - Declining estrogen levels may lead to unfavourable changes in your blood cholesterol levels

#### **b) What are the signs of menopause?**

You may be transitioning into menopause if you begin experiencing some of all the following symptoms:

Hot flashes - also known as vasomotor symptoms (a sudden feeling of warmth that spreads over your body)

Night sweats - and / or cold flashes

Vaginal dryness

#### **Symptoms and causes**

Vaginal dryness - that causes discomfort during sex

Urinary urgency (a pressing need to pee more frequently)

Difficult sleeping (insomnia)

Emotional changes (irritability, mood swings or mild depression)

Dry skin, dry eyes or dry mouth

Breast tenderness

Worsening of premenstrual syndrome (PMS)

Irregular periods

Some people might also experience :-

Racing heart

Headaches

Joint and muscle aches and pains

Changes in libido (sex drive)

Difficulty concentrating or memory lapses (often temporary)

Hair loss or thinning

## 2) **What are the things you can do to feel better ?**

Ans : Eating well, exercising and looking after your mental wellbeing can help with symptoms during perimenopause and menopause. It can also help you keep as well as possible in the future.

How can i reduce perimenopause symptoms

### a) **How is perimenopause treated ?**

Eat a healthy diet with fruits and vegetables and whole grains

Get at least 1,000 - 1.200 mg of calcium each day through your diet or supplements.

Exercise regularly

Find what triggers your hot flashes (for example , alcohol, coffee or tea by keeping a record)

### b) **How do you stay healthy in perimenopause?**

As you enter perimenopause there are few things you can do to stay healthy and relieve symptoms:

Quit smoking if you smoke cigarettes

Exercise regularly

Eat more protein - omega - 3 fatty acids, fiber and calcium

### **Estrogen therapy :**

This is the best treatment for hot flashes, night sweats and vaginal dryness. People who had surgery to remove their uterus called a hysterectomy only need to take estrogen and dont need to take combine hormone therapy.

### c) **What is the best diet for perimenopause?**

Eating a healthy diverse, fiber -rich diet - with plenty of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, fish , lean meats and healthy fats like olive oil- can relieve or prevent some of your symptoms

There is no magic cure for perimenopause but your doctor can help manage many of your symptoms through prescribed treatments, as well as home remedies. You should always talk to

your doctor before starting any new treatment, including over-the-counter and herbal remedies. Some of the most common treatments include :

Hormone therapy - Helps reduce hot flashes and may prevent bone loss.

Vaginal estrogen - Relieves vaginal dryness, discomfort during sex and some urinary symptoms.

Low-dose antidepressants - Helps reduce hot flashes and mood disorders

Gabapentin - Help reduce hot flashes

Calcium and Vitamin D supplements or other osteoporosis treatments - Aids in strengthening bones

Vaginal lubricants - Increase comfort during sex

Incontinence treatments - Various lifestyle changes and medical options for gaining bladder control

Herbal and Dietary supplements - May relieve hot flashes and other menopausal symptoms

Exercise - Stimulates heart and bone health and maintains healthy weight

Diet - Helps manage healthy weight

Splash cold water on your face

Avoid caffeine, alcohol and tobacco

Exercise regularly

Avoid spicy food

Maintain a healthy weight

Practice relaxation and meditation

Consider acupuncture

**Talk to your Doctor before taking any over-the-counter herbal or vitamin supplement**

**3) How do you ensure you're maintaining a balance between your work and life during this time and giving yourself ample of time to rest as well ?**

Ans : With a whopping of 25% of women considering leaving the workplace due to menopause and more than 10% actually leaving, establishing a menopause friendly workplace is essential to help retain valued skills and knowledge within your workplace

## Top ten Tips for - Creating a menopause friendly Workplace

Communicate with your team

Knowing your symptoms

Implement training for managers and people professionals

Ensure your health and safety is up to scratch

Strengthen your menopause policy

Prioritise flexibility

Consider appointing menopause champions

### 1. Know your symptoms

The menopause entails a great deal more than just hot flashes. Symptoms of the menopause can also include mood swings, brain fog, memory issues and difficulties concentrating as well as low mood, depression, anxiety and a lack of self-confidence. Many menopausal people also have difficulty sleeping which can lead to tiredness at work, affecting job performance.

As a leader, it's important that you fully understand all aspects of the menopause.

### 2. Prioritise flexibility

There are some simple things that you can do to help make menopausal symptoms easier to manage in the workplace. For eg : a simple desk fan can help with hot flushes and a drinks dispenser can help everyone stay cool.

If you are in a position to do so, offering flexible working arrangements can also decrease anxiety and stress levels. Being adaptable to your workers' needs, as well as being compassionate about what they're going through, it has been proven to help improve up a peer to peer menopause support network.

### 3. Improve work / life balance

We spend the majority of our lives at work and balancing our busy work life with our families and health can be difficult, especially when dealing with symptoms of the menopause. We expect our employees to be focused and productive while at work and to help maintain this, it's important to encourage staff to have a healthy work / life balance. This will protect them from potentially burning out and exacerbating symptoms of the menopause.

Lifestyle changes to help menopause and perimenopause

Eating well, exercising and looking after your mental wellbeing can help with symptoms during perimenopause and menopause

It can also help you keep as well as possible in the future :

**Do**

**Get plenty of rest including keeping to regular sleep routines**

**Eat a healthy diet**

**Have calcium-rich food - like milk, yoghurt and kale to keep bones healthy**

**Exercise regularly, try including weight - bearing activities where your feet and legs support your weight like walking, running and dancing**

**Do relaxing things like yoga, tai-chi or meditation**

**talk to other people going through the same thing, like family, friends and colleagues**

**Talk to Doctor before taking herbal supplements or complementary medicines.**