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# Beyond HRT: Building better menopause & midlife health benefits





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## Redefining menopause and midlife health in the workplace

Menopause affects over **one million people** each year in the U.S. alone—yet it's still often stigmatized, overlooked, and undertreated. Many people experiencing menopause are left to manage their symptoms alone, lacking support from healthcare providers and receiving limited or no menopause benefits in the workplace.

Companies are beginning to recognize the need to better support employees experiencing menopause, with **almost a quarter** saying they offer some form of menopause benefits. But what does effective menopause and midlife health care actually look like? Supporting symptom management through prescriptions like HRT is an important piece of the puzzle, but menopause benefit programs need to offer more.

Menopause and midlife health benefits should address every aspect of an employee's midlife health, providing clinical care, emotional support, and financial guidance. When done well, they can help create a workplace culture where employees experiencing menopause can thrive, extending their career spans, improving productivity, and driving long-term ROI.



In this guide, you'll learn the effects that menopause has on your employees, explore appropriate treatments, and understand how to build **holistic, inclusive menopause and midlife health benefits** that truly make a difference for your employees—and your company.





75%

of menopausal women will experience some vasomotor symptoms, the most common among them being hot flashes and brain fog



80%

of OB-GYN residents indicate they are “barely comfortable” discussing or treating menopause

## What is menopause?

A person enters menopause when they've gone 12 months without a period. But the time leading up to that point—referred to as perimenopause—typically lasts between three and seven years. During perimenopause, employees will experience fluctuations in their levels of estrogen and progesterone, as well as a number of physiological changes. These symptoms include physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges.







## The impact of menopausal symptoms at work

Living with menopause symptoms can have a dramatic impact on your employees' day-to-day life. One study found that **as many as one third of women** find coping at work moderately or severely difficult due to their symptoms, which can include physical discomfort and mood symptoms like anxiety or depression.

These symptoms impact how employees show up in the workplace and their performance. **Over a quarter of women** report missing at least one day of work due to unmanaged menopause symptoms, and even when employees are able to cope with their symptoms, they can negatively impact their productivity.



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**Over a quarter of women** report missing at least one day of work due to unmanaged menopause symptoms



Some employees leave the workforce entirely due to their symptoms, increasing turnover across the organization and leading to a dearth of gender diversity. Companies see this reduction in diversity reflected in their bottom line, as diverse teams **outperform homogeneous ones** by over 35%, and replacing an employee can cost **up to 200%** of the employee's annual salary.



# \$150B

Global productivity losses from menopause top \$150B per year

# ~20%

of people with menopause in the U.S. have quit or considered leaving a job due to their symptoms

# 200%

Replacing an employee in a leadership position can cost up to 200% of the employee's annual salary





# Understanding menopause treatments

There are many ways to lessen the severity of menopause symptoms, and symptom management doesn't always require medical treatment and prescription medications. By understanding the treatments that are available, HR leaders can better support employees who may be struggling in the workplace.



# Menopausal hormone therapy (hormone replacement therapy)

Menopausal hormone therapy, otherwise known as **hormone replacement therapy (HRT)**, is the most common treatment to relieve menopausal symptoms.

There are different types of hormone therapy that can be prescribed based on a person's lifestyle, preferences, stage of menopause and whether or not they've had a hysterectomy. They typically come in the form of tablets, a skin patch, gel, cream, or a vaginal ring.

*“The increased **risk of breast cancer** from undergoing hormone therapy treatment is very small. To put it in numbers: the incidence of breast cancer in the general population is three women out of 1,000. Hormone therapy of the kind used to treat menopausal symptoms increases that to 3.8 per 1,000 per year.”*



**Dr. Stephanie Faubion**

from a recent edition of *The Preprint*

## BENEFITS OF MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

Menopausal hormone therapy replaces the hormones estrogen and progesterin, which the body makes a reduced amount of throughout menopause. These hormones are important for keeping bones healthy, and as a result, hormone therapy is often used to treat osteoporosis. Hormone therapy may help relieve vaginal dryness and mood swings, among other menopause symptoms. Many consider it to be an effective way to **reduce hot flashes** and night sweats.

## RISKS OF MENOPAUSAL HORMONE THERAPY

Some employees opt to take hormone therapy, however it may not be suitable for everyone, including those with a history of certain types of cancer, including breast cancer, blood clots, or untreated high blood pressure. There is a small increased risk of blood clots and breast cancer with five or more years of continuous use—this risk decreases once menopausal hormone therapy is stopped.

These risks can depend on the individual's age, health history, and the type of menopausal hormone therapy they are taking. A healthcare provider can help employees understand if hormone therapy is right for them.



## Non-hormonal medical treatment

Many people find that alternative treatments such as herbal supplements can help to relieve hot flashes and other symptoms. It's important for employees to discuss this option with a healthcare provider before use and to remember that the effectiveness can vary.

Other medicines such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and prescription drugs for conditions such as high blood pressure can also help to treat depression, hot flashes, and other symptoms. Over the counter products, including vaginal moisturizers and lubricants, are specifically created to treat vaginal dryness and discomfort during sex.

*“While HRT is an important piece of the puzzle, menopause treatments and support can and should extend far beyond that. At Maven, we advocate for a **holistic and comprehensive approach to menopause care**, tailored to the individual, which for some can reduce the need to seek prescription medication.”*



**Dr. Stacey Silverman Fine**  
Maven OB-GYN



# Lifestyle and holistic approaches

A healthy lifestyle can help counter the negative impact that menopause symptoms have on employees' mental and physical health. Some strategies for a healthy lifestyle include:



Eating a balanced diet that is rich in fruit, vegetables, and nutrients to help maintain a healthy weight. Avoiding caffeine and spicy foods which may trigger hot flashes.



Getting mental health support to help cope with other menopausal symptoms such as trouble sleeping, mood changes, and relationship strains.



Regular exercise to help manage stress and improve overall health.



Drinking plenty of water to help stay hydrated and reduce hot flashes.



Trying to adhere to a good sleep schedule by getting plenty of rest and practicing good sleep habits.



Stress management and self-care in the form of meditation, acupuncture, mindfulness, or yoga.



Talking to a physician about dietary supplements such as vitamin D and calcium to support healthy bone density and mental health.



Wearing lightweight clothing, using fans or air conditioning, and keeping the office at a comfortable temperature to help reduce hot flashes.





# Designing holistic, comprehensive menopause benefits

As HR leaders look to better support employees in midlife, more are starting to offer menopause benefits. These benefits can help employees navigate the physical and emotional changes that accompany menopause, helping them to take charge of their midlife health.



## Menopause benefits that drive impact

Historically, menopause benefits have focused on support for prescriptions like HRT, ignoring all the other health and lifestyle factors that could also mitigate symptoms. Overall, appropriate menopause support is still not well understood, even by those going through it. While helping employees access prescriptions like HRT is important, comprehensive menopause benefits should extend far beyond prescription support. Menopause benefit vendors should offer holistic care that addresses menopause from every angle, offering:

#1

### On-demand access to specialty care

Because symptoms can be so diverse, and local providers may feel untrained or unprepared to treat menopause, many of your employees will need virtual access to specialty care providers. These providers should be specifically trained and certified in providing midlife health support, and may include OB-GYNs, mental health providers, sex coaches, nutritionists, physical support coaches, and career coaches.

Specialists should be able to provide same-day care, including prescribing when necessary, in all 50 states and globally. By offering access to a range of providers, employees will feel empowered to address their menopause symptoms holistically, instead of only relying on one treatment.





#2

## Menopause education and support

Beyond specialists, employees should have access to expert-reviewed resources to help them better understand menopause, know what to expect, and learn how to manage their symptoms. These resources could include articles, virtual classes, webinars, and drop-in communities where employees can connect with others navigating menopause.

#3

## Personalized support and referrals to in-person care

Every employee experiences menopause differently, and each needs a personalized care plan to help them best manage their symptoms. Benefits should provide concierge-level support like Care Advocates that connect employees with virtual specialists and resources, as well as provide referrals for vetted local providers when needed.



#4

## Midlife health support

To fully meet the needs of all employees, support should extend past menopause into midlife health. Benefits should also offer holistic support for men, offering care including prescription support and education for hormonal health. Access to on-demand specialists and reliable content reviewed by experts can help men as they take charge of their midlife health.





# Accommodations in the workplace to support employees experiencing menopause

Beyond menopause benefits, accommodations can be made to make day-to-day work more comfortable and welcoming for employees experiencing menopause. These changes can help showcase your organization as a menopause-friendly workplace, and help reduce stigma around those experiencing menopause.





#1

## Flexible working environment

Employees should feel comfortable asking for the support that they need, whether it be an adjustment to their role or flexible hours.

When employees experience menopause symptoms like hot flashes, trouble sleeping, or brain fog, allowing for more time working from home and flexibility for medical appointments can make a difference.

Employees should make changes to workplace policies to cover menopause at work, and communicate them with the wider company. You may also wish to consider creating comfortable, private spaces for onsite workers to rest when experiencing hot flashes or other uncomfortable symptoms.

Some companies are also beginning to offer menopause leave. Like sick leave, employees can feel empowered to take paid time off to deal with symptoms, without risking their jobs or needing to take unpaid leave from work.

#2

## Wellness programs

Wellness programs that focus on stress reduction and nourishing habits can benefit all employees, but they are especially helpful for those experiencing menopause. By offering programs such as yoga classes or mindfulness sessions, you can promote overall well-being and help employees better manage menopause symptoms.



#3

## Peer groups and community

Menopause often impacts employees at the height of their careers, and there can be days when symptoms feel debilitating. Creating a space where employees feel safe and empowered to **share their experiences**—and ask for help—can make a difference. Offering employees access to online or in-person support groups and training managers to handle conversations around menopause can be a lifeline to employees as they balance work and menopause.

#4

## Training and awareness programs

Most managers and leadership teams don't fully understand the menopause process and what it entails. Even if they're going through it themselves, symptoms can go unnoticed or it can be difficult to self-diagnose menopause as the cause. Building a culture of openness around menopause and its effects can help make the working environment more comfortable for employees experiencing menopause.

Educate managers and teams about menopause, sharing how it can affect a person's daily life, and how symptoms can make work difficult. This education could include e-learning, webinars, employees sharing personal stories, newsletters, and more. Menopause Awareness Month is every October, and can be an ideal time to kick off internal campaigns. Company-wide education can help to reduce stigma and promote an inclusive culture for employees experiencing menopause.



### NOTE

## Understanding legal and ethical considerations

While menopause is not considered to be a **disability** in the U.S., persisting symptoms that have a long-term impact on normal day-to-day life can fall under section 6 of the Equality Act, including bleeding and anxiety.

Organizations should be very mindful not to discriminate against an employee because of their experience with the menopause (and therefore age), and should make all possible adjustments to help them in their role. They must also ensure privacy and keep all personal discussions confidential.





# How Maven supports employees through menopause & midlife health

The menopause journey is closely linked to other aspects of emotional and physical health—which is why Maven focuses on inclusive, holistic, and specialized support that treats the whole person, not just symptoms.



## Maven members experiencing menopause receive:

Early identification of menopausal symptoms and treatment guidance for chronic conditions

24/7 virtual access to a range of specialists, including those who can prescribe HRT

Dedicated Care Advocates providing hands-on support and navigation on and off of Maven

1:1 mental health support throughout their menopause journey

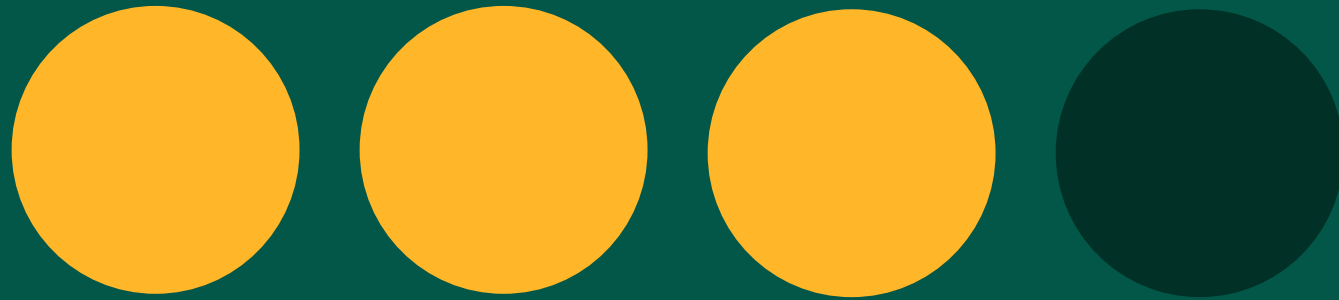
Guided education and provider-moderated drop-in groups to connect with peers on a similar journey

The option for seamless employer reimbursement for menopause-related expenses through Maven Wallet

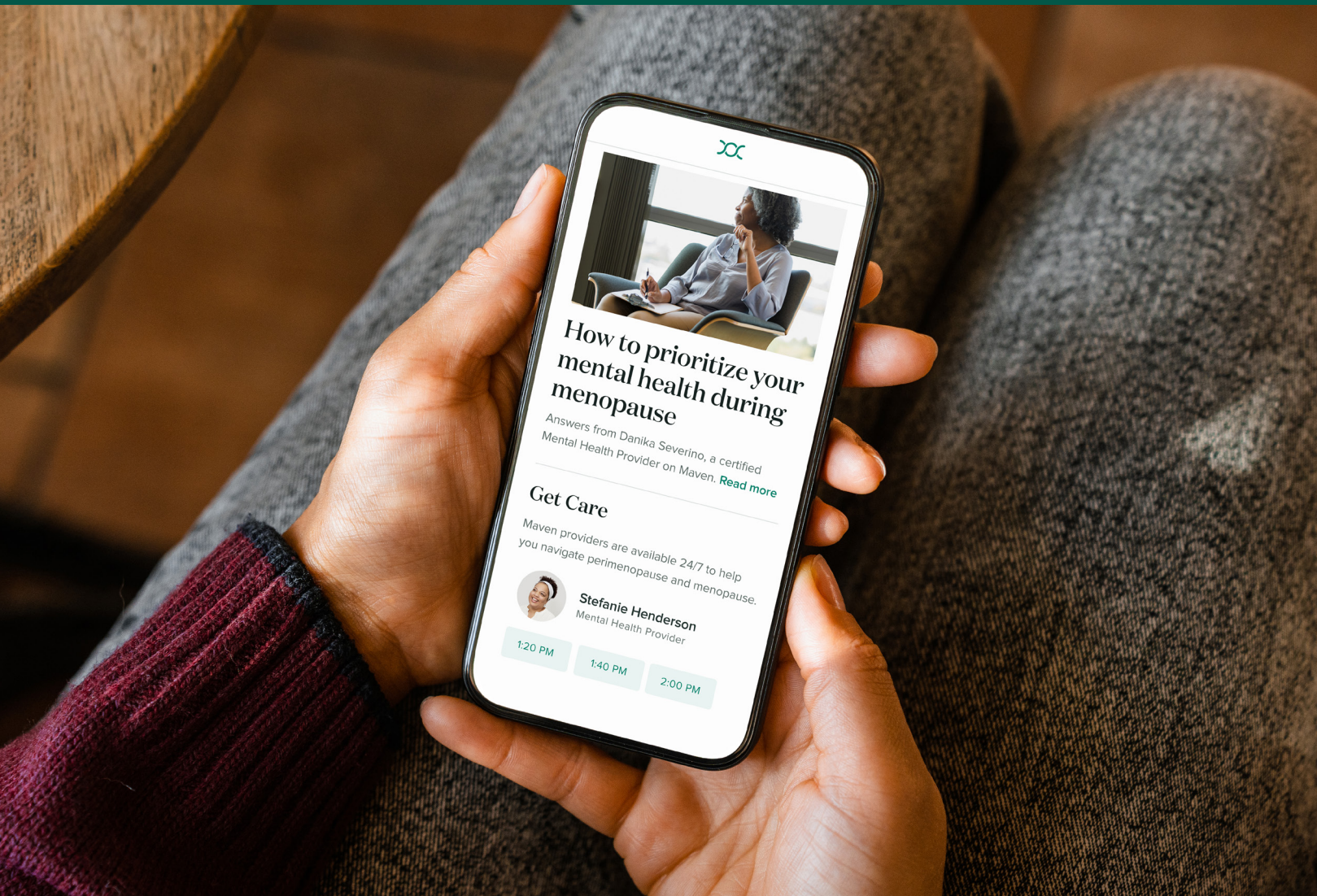
We also support men as they navigate through midlife health, providing access to specialists and resources to help them manage metabolic health, mental health, nutrition, and sexual & reproductive health.







**3 out of 4** Maven Menopause & Midlife Health members feel they have knowledge and skills to manage their health during menopause. Before Maven, **only 1 out of 5** members felt they had this knowledge.



## Maven members see improved menopause symptoms

↓ 44%

44% of members report reduced anxiety

↓ 37%

37% of members report reduced depressive moods

↓ 35%

35% of members report reduced sleep problems

↓ 30%

30% of members report reduced hot flashes



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Maven is the world's largest virtual clinic for women and families on a mission to make healthcare work for all of us. From preconception and family building to pregnancy, postpartum, return to work, parenting, menopause and beyond, Maven's intuitive platform removes barriers to accessing holistic support, while improving health outcomes and return-to-work rates and reducing costs for employers.

By offering members high-touch care navigation, specialized care teams, and evidence-based care management programs, Maven delivers the right care at the right time. To learn more, [get in touch with us today.](#)

