PERIODS & MENOPAUSE POLICY

DURO YOKOTA LTD.



PERIODS & MENOPAUSE POLICY

INTRODUCTION 3

SCOPE 3

PRINCIPLES 3

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE 4

PERIOD RELATED SYMPTOMS 4

EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES 5

MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES 5

SUPPORTING SENSITIVE CONVERSATIONS 5

WELLNESS ACTION PLAN (WAP) 6

WORKPLACE SUPPORTS 6

EQUALITY ACT 2010 - DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION 6

USEFUL LINKS 7

MONITORING & REVIEW OF POLICY 7

DATA PROTECTION 7

INTRODUCTION

Duro Yokota Ltd is committed to providing an inclusive working environment for all employees throughout all stages of their working lives. This includes enabling employees who are experiencing problematic periods or menopausal symptoms to get the support they need in order to manage their symptoms at work. To achieve this, it is important for managers and employees to have an awareness of periods and the menopause and to know that not everyone experiences these in the same way. These topics should not be taboo or hidden and can be discussed openly and without embarrassment.

No assumptions should be made that these issues only affect women, as people who identify as non-binary, transgender and intersex may also experience symptoms.

There can also be an indirect impact on the employee's colleagues and families as well as their partners. Partners of those going through the menopause may be indirectly affected, for example, if the employee is experiencing insomnia and night sweats, their partner may also experience disrupted sleep and fatigue. Employees may also experience relationship or other difficulties at home during this time.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the organisation.

Principles

Periods and the menopause can have a negative impact on an employee's personal and working life. Although not everyone will experience symptoms, by supporting those who do, it is hoped that this will improve their wellbeing at work and minimise any impact on attendance at work. By creating an inclusive working environment, it is hoped that this will encourage staff to ask for what they need, without judgement.



We will aim to:

- Create an environment in which employees can openly and honestly initiate or engage in discussions about periods and the menopause, whether they themselves, or someone they are supporting, is experiencing symptoms.
- Supply Free Sanitary products to any member of staff that requires them during their working day.
- Provide advice and information to managers about the symptoms of periods and the menopause and how they can best support employees who may be experiencing issues at work.
- Allow those experiencing symptoms to discuss these openly, if this is their preference, and ask for support/ reasonable adjustments in order to sustain their attendance at work.
- Recognise that the menopause is an individual experience, and that people can be affected in different ways and to differing degrees, and therefore, different levels and types of support and adjustments may be needed;

PERIODS & MENOPAUSE POLICY

DEFINITIONS

Menopause

The menopause is part of the ageing process for women when their natural oestrogen levels fall and where periods have ceased for twelve consecutive months. Some women experience a medical/surgical menopause which can occur suddenly when the ovaries are damaged or removed by specific treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or surgical hysterectomy.

Menopause that naturally occurs before the age of 40 is known as premature menopause and before the age of 45, early menopause. It is important to note that the menopause has many phases. Perimenopause or menopause transition can begin several years before the menopause and is the phase where the ovaries stop producing eggs and periods can be altered or absent due to a reduction in the hormone, oestrogen. During this phase, many may experience symptoms the same as those that occur during the menopause.

The next phase is the menopause when periods stop altogether. This can begin between the ages of 45 and 55. Some people will experience it at a younger age as outlined above and some symptoms may be experienced over varying lengths of time.

The phase after the menopause has ended is known as post-menopause. Symptoms are likely to continue, on average, for four years from the person's last period but may continue for a number of years beyond that. There is potentially an increased risk of certain conditions such as heart disease and osteoporosis during post-menopause because of lower levels of certain hormones. These risks are higher for those who have had an early or premature menopause.

Periods

A period is the part of the menstrual cycle where bleeding occurs. This can last anytime between 3 and 8 days and usually happens once monthly from puberty until the menopause.

Changes in body hormone levels before a monthly period can cause physical and emotional changes.

Symptoms of Menopause
For many people, the menopause can result in physical, psychological and emotional symptoms which may include:

- Hot flushes and/or sweats
- Headaches/migraines
- Anxiety and/or panic attacks
- Irregular heavy or light periods
- Joint stiffness, aches and pain
- Urinary problems
- Difficulty sleeping
- Poor concentration/memory
- Weight gain
- Irritability and/or mood swings

The above list is not exhaustive, and it is important to note that not everyone will experience symptoms during this time. For those that do, the type, amount and severity of symptoms can vary, ranging from mild to severe. Employees may wish to seek advice from their GP if their symptoms are having an impact on their daily lives.

Some people may experience an impact on their cognitive functions i.e. unable to remember things; loss of confidence; inability to readily find the right word to express thoughts; having thoughts completely disappear mid-sentence. It may become temporarily more difficult for them to carry out certain tasks and that performance is affected. These are symptoms that people might not associate with the menopause.

Menopause symptoms in other circumstances
There are other circumstances in which symptoms may be experienced:

- Whilst menopause is usually a process involving gradual change, it can sometimes be sudden and acute following serious illness, medication or surgery. People experiencing sudden menopause tend to experience more severe symptoms and may require treatment and/or post-operative care to manage further problems;
- Younger women undergoing treatment for conditions such as the following may experience menopausal symptoms whilst receiving treatment:
- Endometriosis (estimated to affect around 1 in 10 women of reproductive age)
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) (estimated to affect 1 in 5 women)
- Infertility (affecting around 1 in 7 couples)
- Diabetes (affecting 4.05 million people in the UK).
- Surgical and medical treatments as part of an individual's gender transition can result in menopause symptoms.

PERIODS & MENOPAUSE POLICY

Period-related Symptoms
Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS) is the name given to symptoms experienced in the weeks before a period. Symptoms of periods can include:

- Abdominal or pelvic cramping
- Lower back pain
- Bloating and sore breasts
- Food cravings
- Mood swings and irritability
- Headache and fatigue

Not everyone will experience every symptom or need help or support, however, most women are likely to experience symptoms to some degree. Employees may wish to seek advice from their GP if their symptoms are having an impact on their daily lives.

Employee's Responsibilities

- Taking personal responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and raising any concerns they have with their Line or senior manager.
- Seeking advice from their GP should symptoms begin to affect their ability to carry out the full remit of their role.
- Being open and honest when having conversations with managers, Human Resources and Occupational Health (where appropriate)
- Being willing to help and support colleagues.
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their period-related or menopausal symptoms.

Manager's Responsibilities

- Provide opportunities for staff to raise any issues relating to their wellbeing.
- Be open to discussing the concern that the employee has about the impact on work as a result of problems with their periods and the menopause, acknowledging the personal nature of conversations and treating them professionally and confidentially.
- Not make any assumptions regarding periods and the menopause and ensure they listen to the needs of each individual.
- Discuss and agree with the employee how best they can be supported and be prepared to make reasonable adjustments to take account of any symptoms they are experiencing.
- Use a Wellness Action Plan (WAP) to record adjustments agreed and any actions to be implemented, ensuring all agreed adjustments are adhered to and that ongoing conversations take place and review dates are set – see below for further information regarding WAPs.
- Be familiar with the useful links detailed on pages 6-7 to signpost employees to.
- Be aware of the potential impact of menopause on performance – if someone's performance suddenly dips, it is worth considering whether the menopause may be playing a part in this.
- Seek input from Citation for more advice and support (should this be necessary), reviewing any advice received and implementing any recommendations, where operationally feasible.
- Discuss what, if anything, the employee wants shared with colleagues, how this will be done, by who and in a way that respects the individual's privacy but that allows colleagues to understand.
- Deal with any inappropriate conduct aimed towards someone because of their symptoms.

Supporting Sensitive Conversations

General guidance is available for managers in order to support sensitive conversations Through Citation. It is recognised that some employees may find it particularly hard to talk to a manager about the impact of period-related and/or menopausal symptoms and may wish to refer to the following points:

How an employee can prepare to talk to their manager:

- Keep a symptoms diary noting how their symptoms are affecting them.
- Consider what reasonable adjustments may help, bearing in mind the need to be flexible and what is operationally feasible.
- Consider what timescale the adjustments are likely to be required for.
- How an employee can prepare what to say to their manager:
- Mentally rehearse what they want to say so the words feel and sound natural.

- Consider doing a role-play with a trusted colleague if this would be helpful.
- How an employee can explain their situation clearly:
- Talk to their manager about their current situation, what's happening and most importantly, how it's affecting their work.

How an employee can offer a solution:

- Consider how their circumstances could be improved and offer a reasonable solution i.e. working from home; coming in later if poor sleep is an issue; obtaining a fan or moving closer to a window if suffering from hot flushes; ready access to drinking water and washroom facilities.

Wellness Action Plan (WAP)

A Wellness Action Plan (WAP) is a working document and is a tool used to record information about what helps an individual to feel and stay mentally or physically well, what might trigger them to not cope as well and what the individual and others can do to provide support to alleviate any symptoms of being unwell.

A WAP does not have to be completed with a manager and individuals may wish to use the tool as a self-help strategy.

Workplace Supports

It can be recognised that some aspects of the workplace can exacerbate employees' period-related and/or menopausal symptoms. These can include:

- Inadequate ventilation.
- High temperatures.
- Humidity and dryness.
- Stress related to workload, deadlines and pressures.
- Inability to take regular breaks.

It is, therefore, important to consider whether any of the following supports and/or adjustments can be used, appropriate and reasonable to the working environment, to help people experiencing symptoms:

- Allowing the employee to have control of the temperature in their work environment i.e. having access to a fan, sitting near a window or away from a radiator;
- Having easy access to washroom facilities where sanitary products are available
- Option to access a rest room/quiet area for breaks.
- Having ready access to drinking water.
- Highlighting flexible working options (i.e. working hours and/or working arrangements i.e. agile working);
- Reviewing task allocation and workload, if any cognitive behaviours are impacted.
- Encouraging mindfulness activities whilst on breaks;
- Ensuring storage space is available for spare clothes/ toiletries.
- Signposting the individual to Employee Assistance Programme and other useful links.
- Making the employee aware of Wellness Action Plans, either as a discussion template or self-assessment tool.
- Carrying out a stress risk assessment to identify any stressors in the workplace.
- Recommending the employee seek advice from their GP if their symptoms are impacting on their daily life.

Shared Workspace

If adjustments affect other colleagues in a shared workspace, the employee can choose whether to share with colleagues the adjustments they have in place. Any employees who have concerns of the impact of these adjustments, should discuss this with their manager.

Equality Act 2010 – Disability Discrimination

Whilst the menopause is not in itself a disability, conditions arising from it may meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act 2010. Failing to provide support or reasonable adjustments to someone experiencing the menopause may therefore amount to discrimination.

Where, as a result of symptoms of the menopause, the employee's attendance or wellbeing at work is affected supports or reasonable adjustments should be considered where this helps an employee's return to work or for them to achieve acceptable levels of attendance.

PERIODS & MENOPAUSE POLICY

USEFUL LINKS

Name & Contact Information	About
NHS – Menopause Overview www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause	An overview of the menopause, together with information about symptoms & treatment options
Menopause Café - www.menopausecafe.net	Offers the opportunity to discuss the menopause with no agenda, objectives or themes
National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/ifp/chapter/about-this-information	Outlines how a GP will determine what types of treatments/ interventions they can offer
Menopause Matters - www.menopausematters.co.uk	Gives up-to-date information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms & treatment options
British Menopause Society - www.thebms.org.uk	Information & guidance to healthcare professionals specialising in all aspects of reproductive health
Daisy Network Charity - www.daisynetwork.org	Provides information & support to women with Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) / premature menopause
Hysterectomy Association www.hysterectomy-association.org.uk	Gives an insight into surgically induced menopause as a result of having a hysterectomy
Macmillan Cancer Support www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/menopause	Support & information to women undergoing treatment which may cause menopausal symptoms
NHS – Periods Overview - www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods	An overview of periods, together with information about different products & problems
Endometriosis UK - www.endometriosis-uk.org	Provides information & support to women with Endometriosis
Verity - www.verity-pcos.org.uk	Provides information & support to women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)
Women's Health – Menstrual Cycle www.womenshealth.gov/menstrual-cycle	Provides information & resources regarding periods
Diabetes.co.uk (the global diabetes community) www.diabetes.co.uk/menopause-and-diabetes www.diabetes.co.uk/periods-and-diabetes	A community of people with diabetes, family members, friends, supporters & carers, offering their own support & first-hand knowledge
Fertility Network - www.fertilitynetworkuk.org	Support for those who have ever experienced fertility problems
NHS – Mindfulness www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness	An overview of mindfulness, together with tips on how to be more mindful

Monitoring & Review of Policy

This policy will be continually monitored and reviewed as necessary to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and business requirements.

Approved by
D Beaumont



Data Protection

When managing or processing information relating to an employee experiencing an impact on work due to periods and/or the menopause, the organisation processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy, human resources data protection policy and employee privacy notice. Data collected from the point at which the organisation receives information relating to periods and/or the menopause is held securely and is accessed by, processed by and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of supporting the employee in accordance with this policy.

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