



Menopause Foundation  
of Canada

# Take Charge of Your Menopause Care:

A Guide to Finding and  
Getting the Menopause Care  
You Deserve



## Your health matters.

You're in the prime of your life, and you want to feel healthy, energized, and fully you. But unmanaged menopause symptoms can take a toll, not just now, but on your long-term health too.

You're not alone. More than ten million women in Canada are 40 and older—in the heart of the menopause zone. What they have in common is this: they deserve care that helps them feel like themselves again. So do you.

Your healthcare practitioner is a key ally. The Menopause Foundation of Canada (MFC) created this guide to help you feel confident and prepared to have a high-quality discussion with your healthcare practitioner, so you can get the care that works best for you.

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*“It's been so challenging attempting to decipher and navigate my way through the mass of symptoms, physical and mental changes, all while continuing to be a grounded parent and balancing my career and home life.*

*Signed, desperate for menopausal understanding, hope and compassion.”*

Katherine

**Menopause** = one day 12 months after your last period

**51** = average age women reach menopause

**1 in 100** = will reach menopause before age 40

**1 in 1,000** = will reach menopause before age 30

**Up to 10** = number of years women can be in perimenopause

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*Menopause is seen as something women must endure, like a woman's burden. This is unacceptable. Women deserve to feel healthy...there is preventative care, lifestyle choices, and safe and effective treatment options to help women thrive during their menopausal years.”*

Dr. Wendy Wolfman, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist,  
Menopause Specialist  
Toronto, Ontario  
MFC Medical Advisory Board Member



# Taking Care of Your Mid-Life Health

Menopause is a major health transition bringing hormonal shifts that can trigger over 30 symptoms and even impact your long-term health. Taking proactive steps to safeguard your mid-life health makes good sense. Important checks include:



## Heart Health

Stay active, eat well, and check in with your healthcare provider regularly. Those 40-plus, or earlier if you have risk factors, should start screening for type 2 diabetes, cholesterol and have regular blood pressure checks.



## Cancer Screenings

Regular cancer screening can help find problems early. Screening recommendations vary by province, age, and personal risk. Ask a healthcare provider about breast, colon, and cervical cancer screening, and when you are due for your checks.



## Bone Health

Support your bones with 1,200 mg of calcium and 1,000 IU of vitamin D daily after age 50. Note that calcium is best absorbed from food. Bone density testing should be based on personal risk but done no later than age 70.



## Genitourinary Health

For lasting relief, prescription local vaginal estrogen treats the root cause. Dryness and discomfort can be managed with vaginal moisturizers and lubricants, but they do not restore normal function.



## Mental Health

Hormonal changes can affect your mood—and may trigger anxiety or depression. If you're struggling, it's OK to ask for help. Talk to your healthcare practitioner about your mental health at every stage of menopause.

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*It is so valuable for women to have the opportunity to talk about midlife health concerns and about preventative healthcare sometime in their late thirties or early forties, so they can have a better understanding of what is coming and how they can be better equipped to move into this next chapter with information they can start applying today.”*

Dr. Shafeena Premji, Family Physician, Menopause Specialist  
Calgary, Alberta  
MFC Medical Advisory Board Member



# Menopause and Health Equity

Access to menopause care isn't equal, and for many women and gender-diverse people, getting help is harder than it should be.

Here's why:



## **Missing voices, missing care.**

Members of Indigenous, Black, racialized, newcomers to Canada, gender-diverse, and other marginalized communities face systemic health inequities compounded by discrimination and racism, including in menopause care. Research into the needs and experiences of underserved communities, culturally aware menopause information, and better access to diversity-informed care are needed.



## **Minimal training for healthcare practitioners.**

Most doctors get minimal menopause education in medical school, leaving many unprepared to provide comprehensive menopause care. This guide will help you, help them.



## **Millions don't have a regular health provider.**

About 5.4M Canadians (17% ) go without, and rural and remote areas are hit hardest. New options, like virtual menopause clinics, are gaining traction.



## **Coverage for medicines depends on your plan – or where you live.**

Access to therapies like menopause hormone therapy (MHT) depends on which province you call home or what your private plan covers. Advocates are pressing for change.



## **Every experience is unique.**

Menopause is universal, but the experience is individual. Personalized care discussions are needed, particularly for women with more complex health histories, such as breast cancer, heart disease, or premature or surgically induced menopause.



## **Outdated stigmas persist.**

Menopause remains a taboo topic in many families, communities, and workplaces. Talking about it helps break the silence and build support.

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*Access to menopause care should not depend on income, postal code, race, gender identity, or whether someone has a regular healthcare provider. We need to do better. Menopause care must be equitable, accessible, and responsive; care that is culturally safe, respects our differences, and meets people where they are, based on their needs and goals.”*

Dr. Sheila Wijayasinghe, Family Physician and Menopause Specialist  
Toronto, Ontario  
MFC Medical Advisory Board Member



“

*I thought menopause was hot flashes and period changes. Boy, was I hit with a stroke of reality. We need to better educate women as well as doctors so that we can continue to lead long and productive lives.”*

Claire

## Wanted: Your Menopausal Health Partner

Finding knowledgeable care can be tough. Depending on your situation, try these steps.

### Is your healthcare practitioner unable to help?

- Point your healthcare practitioner to evidence-based menopause assessment and management tools, such as the Menopause Quick6 ([MQ6](#)) or the Centre for Effective Practice’s [Menopause Management](#) resource. Ask them to go through one of these validated algorithms with you to find the path appropriate for your unique needs.
- If you feel you are not getting the answers you need, ask for a referral to another practitioner (family doctor or nurse practitioner) in the practice or region—one up to date on clinical practice guidelines and comfortable treating women with menopause symptoms using hormonal and nonhormonal treatment options.
- You can also ask to be referred to a menopause specialty clinic in your region. Keep in mind specialist wait times can be long (12-18 months or more). The sooner the referral, the better.

### Don’t have a regular health provider and need menopause care?

- Go to a walk-in clinic and ask for a referral.
- Consider one of the new private clinics that offer virtual consults on menopause with healthcare practitioners. There is often a fee associated with these services, so be sure to read MFC’s [How to Assess Virtual & Private Menopause Clinics](#) first, to make sure you choose an evidence-based, credible clinic.
- Want to research menopause specialists yourself? The Menopause Society has a “Find a Menopause Practitioner” search feature. While not all listed are Menopause Society-certified, this list provides a good starting point. Instructions on using the database to find Canadian practitioners can be found [on the MFC website](#).

## Top Tips

Success means getting the care you need to feel your best. Here are some strategies:

### 1. **Book a dedicated appointment.**

Menopause deserves your full attention—and your healthcare practitioner’s. Don’t tack it onto another visit. Schedule time (ask for a longer appointment) just for this.

### 2. **You are an equal partner in your menopause care team.**

You’ve tracked symptoms, done your research, and know your body. Share your insights, including which symptoms are bothering you the most, and if you have a treatment in mind, say so. Your voice matters.

### 3. **Don’t assume menopause is the cause of every symptom.**

Hot flashes? Probably. Heart palpitations? Maybe. Some symptoms overlap with other conditions. Get a full evaluation to make sure you get the right diagnosis and care. Part of this is making sure your other health screenings are up to date.

### 4. **There is no “one-size fits-all” approach.**

There are lifestyle changes, prescription options, and non-prescription options available today to manage the broad range of symptoms people experience. It is not unusual to need a variety of supports to thrive at this stage of life.

### 5. **If symptoms persist, talk to your healthcare practitioner.**

If symptoms aren’t improving, don’t settle, speak up. Adjustments to your dose or type of treatment may be needed, and you don’t have to suffer in silence if things are not improving.

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*“It took me nearly a year to find a doctor who would truly listen. I felt unheard and exhausted. Then, I found a gem—a doctor who finally had a real conversation with me, acknowledged my struggles and prescribed hormone therapy. It has been life changing. The right care can transform lives and I’m living proof.”*

Tara

**Physicians are the preferred source of information about menopause, yet just one-quarter of women say their doctor proactively spoke to them about it. Don’t wait - start the conversation!**

Ready to make the most out of your time with your healthcare practitioner? **Track, learn, and prepare** so you are primed for positive progress.

# 1

## Track

Appointments are short, and remembering everything on the spot is tough. Tracking your symptoms provides your healthcare practitioner with a clear view of what you're experiencing.

Ideally track your period (if you are still having it) and symptoms for at least three months to give a full picture and to help your practitioner rule out other possible causes. The [MenoPause Symptom Tracker](#) from the Menopause Foundation of Canada, endorsed by the Canadian Menopause Society, is a quick and simple way to monitor common symptoms.

Now is a great time to get familiar with the wide range of menopause symptoms—there are more than 30. That's because estrogen receptors are found throughout the body, including the brain, which means menopause can affect you in many ways. Symptoms generally fall into four key categories:

- **Physical** – i.e., hot flashes, night sweats, headaches, heart palpitations
- **Mood & Mental Health** – i.e., anxiety, irritability, depression
- **Genitourinary & Sexual Health** – i.e., vaginal dryness or burning, painful sex, urinary urgency or incontinence
- **Cognition & Sleep** – i.e., brain fog, memory issues, sleep disturbances

For more on menopause and its symptoms, visit [menopausefoundationcanada.ca](http://menopausefoundationcanada.ca).

MFC [research](#) reveals that

# 95%

of women experience an average of seven menopausal symptoms.

“*If you are over the age of 45 and having symptoms, you are considered to be in perimenopause—no special hormone testing required. If you've had a hysterectomy, an endometrial ablation, or use a hormonal IUD, diagnosis of menopause relies on tracking your symptoms, not looking at period changes. Women 45 and under require lab testing as well as other investigations to determine if they are in early menopause (40- 45) or premature menopause (under 40).”*

Dr. Michelle Jacobson, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist,  
Menopause Specialist  
Toronto, Ontario  
MFC Advisory Board Member



## 2

# Learn

Knowledge is power, especially when it comes to understanding your body. With more and more conversation about menopause in media, books, and on social media, it can be hard to figure out what's credible. Start with evidence-based resources written for you, like:

- [MFC's website](#) offers a range of trusted, evidence-based resources. Be sure to check out Menopause Essentials, MFC's new, go-to guide through the menopause journey, including stages, symptoms, and the lifestyle choices, treatments, and preventative care options available to support you.
- [The Menopause Hub](#) is a collaborative online source from the Canadian Menopause Society and The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.
- Both organizations also offer more information for women: check out the [Canadian Menopause Society's page for women](#) and SOGC's [Menopause and U](#).
- [The Menopause Quick Six \(MQ6\) For Women](#) offers Canadian-developed information.
- [The Menopause Society](#) is the online hub for the organization formerly known as the North American Menopause Society.
- [International Menopause Society](#) is the leading global organization for menopause practitioners.

**There is no one-size-fits-all solution, as every woman's menopause journey is unique. But the more you know, the more confident you'll feel making the choices that are right for you.**

These evidence-based sources are written for a medical audience; consider sharing them with your healthcare practitioner:

- The Canadian Menopause Society's [Pocket Guide Menopause Management](#) summarizes the latest Canadian and international guidelines.
- [The Menopause Quick 6 \(MQ6\)](#) provides practitioners with a treatment decision guide and other resources for managing menopause symptoms.
- The Centre for Effective Practice's [Menopause Management](#) tool is a Canadian-developed assessment/management tool for family physicians and primary care nurse practitioners.
- Health Quality Ontario's [Menopause: Care for Women and Gender-Diverse People](#) is Canada's first provincial quality standard for menopause care. While this is an Ontario document, its contents are useful regardless of geography.
- The Menopause Society's [2022 Position Statement on Hormone Therapy](#) and [2023 Position Statement on Nonhormone Therapy](#) provide evidence-based treatment guidance from a North American lens.

# 3

## Prepare

Appointment coming up? Let's get organized.

Jot down the questions you want to ask your healthcare practitioner. Here are a few to get you started:

- Do my symptoms and their pattern suggest perimenopause/menopause?
- Are there other potential causes for my symptoms? How will we rule them out?
- What other tests/evaluations should I be doing (cholesterol, thyroid, etc.)?
- What are my lifestyle and treatment options, and the risks/benefits of each?
- How long should it take before I notice a difference? What if I feel I need an adjustment or a different approach?

Your family history is another part of the puzzle. Make note of anything relevant—especially your mother's or siblings' menopause experience and any personal or family history of breast cancer. This information may help guide your treatment choices.

The day before your appointment, gather your list of questions, your notes on your family history, your symptom tracker, and any resources you would like to share. You're ready!



**“I had no idea that I was going through perimenopause/menopause until it was “too late” and the symptoms had unknowingly had a negative impact on my health and my daily life. Had I been more fortunate to have been forewarned and educated about what to expect, I truly feel that I’d be in a different place today. Education is power.”**

Gayle

# It's finally here! Time to maximize your appointment

You've tracked your symptoms and done your homework. Now it's time to make your appointment count. Whether you go to your appointment alone or bring along a friend/ally, here's how:

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*If something does not feel right, please go and get it checked out. Advocate for yourselves, the same as we have done for our parents and our children and our spouses. Our lives matter!”*

Shelly

## ✓ Start strong.

Open with your goal: “I’m here to talk about menopause and find the best way to manage my symptoms and reduce long-term risks.”

## ✓ Be direct about symptoms.

Use your tracker to highlight key symptoms, how often they happen, and how they affect your life. Focus on what's impacting you most. For example:

- “I wake up drenched in sweat almost every night and can't sleep.”
- “It feels like sandpaper during sex—it's painful and stressful.”
- “I am feeling very anxious, and it is impacting my family and work.”

## ✓ Share what you've learned.

Discovered research or guidelines you feel might be helpful? Speak up. Try openers like:

- “I came across the Guidelines and saw that...”
- “I found some evidence-based info I'd love to share...”
- “I think this might help explain my symptoms...”

## ✓ Ask your questions.

Have the list of questions you prepared before your appointment out and ready. Ask them, and make sure you get the answers you need, especially about treatment options, risks, and benefits.

## ✓ Leave with a plan.

Don't leave your appointment without a plan forward.

- Got a treatment plan? Fantastic! Time to get started on the path to feeling better.
- Need a follow-up? Fantastic! Book it before you leave.

**After your appointment, take a moment to thank yourself for being proactive about your health...for taking charge. Way to go!**



## Be your own menopause health champion!

You are your strongest advocate for your own health and wellbeing. If you feel your menopause symptoms are being dismissed, misunderstood, or you are not getting the help you need at your appointment, don't give up. You deserve to feel healthy!

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*Advocating for your own health is never wrong. If you feel like people are not listening to you, if you feel like something is not right and you are being dismissed, keep advocating. Keep looking for better quality information. Keep looking for a provider that can help.*

Dr. Kelsey Mills, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Menopause Specialist  
Victoria, British Columbia  
MFC Medical Advisory Board Member





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Explore this Guide and MFC resources, links and information at [MenopauseFoundationCanada.ca/take-charge-of-your-care-guide](https://MenopauseFoundationCanada.ca/take-charge-of-your-care-guide)



## About the Menopause Foundation of Canada

The Menopause Foundation of Canada (MFC) is a national non-profit advocacy organization created to raise awareness of the impact of menopause on women and society. MFC's mission is to eliminate the social stigma and taboos associated with menopause. The organization is dedicated to closing the menopause knowledge gap, improving access to menopause care and treatment and creating menopause inclusive workplaces. Learn more at [MenopauseFoundationCanada.ca](https://MenopauseFoundationCanada.ca)

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Statistics Canada. Key Findings from Health of Canadians Report, 2025.  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/250305/dq250305a-eng.htm>.

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