

MENOPAUSE EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE



Your employee guide to perimenopause and menopause: learn about workplace accommodations, advocate for yourself, and understand your rights and protections.

Start the Conversation

Questions for HR or a trusted supervisor.

1. On the medical plan I have, is menopause treatment covered?
2. Can I use PTO or sick leave for this?
3. Is telework available if I need to work from home temporarily?
4. Is there flexibility in my routine for short-term symptom management?

Workplace and Community Supports

- Employee assistance programs
- Insurance-based telehealth nurse lines
- Unions
- Affinity groups

Workplace Environmental Adjustments & Strategies

Examples of supports you might inquire about.

**Not all options will be available in every workplace.*

- Extra or frequent breaks throughout the day
- Access to cold water or cooling devices (e.g., fans, towels, misters)
- Consistent access to restrooms
- Flexible uniforms or adapted dress codes to allow dressing in layers
- Comfortable workspaces (e.g., adjustable temperature, dedicated rest areas)
- Designated areas to freshen up, change clothes, or access sanitary products
- Flexibility in work hours, meeting schedules, and telework options (based on job duties or operational needs)
- Access to task management tools
- Time off for medical appointments
- Employee resource groups, individual coaching or therapy sessions (whether employer-sponsored, employee-led, or externally provided)
- Employee assistance programs (EAP)

Existing Workplace Protections and Accommodations

- The Washington Law Against Discrimination (Chapter 49.60 RCW) prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of a worker's disability, sex, gender, and age.
- Protected Leave: For menopause symptoms that make a person unable to perform essential job functions, Washington State paid sick leave, Washington's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML), or federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) may be available.
- Disability Protections: Employers may be required to make reasonable accommodations to workplace rules or conditions to allow an employee with a disability to do their job.

State law defines "disability" as a sensory, mental, or physical impairment that is medically diagnosable, including some temporary conditions.

For questions, please reach out to wswc@wswc.wa.gov.
For more information and resources, visit wswc.wa.gov/menopause-equity