



## **Sample After Visit Summary for Self-Management of Menopause**

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### **Today's Visit**

Today we talked about menopause and how it affects you. Menopause can cause many changes in the body, and people experience it differently. We reviewed your symptoms, your health history, and what matters most to you.

Together, we discussed this condition and made decisions using shared decision-making. This means your preferences, goals, and quality of life are a big part of the plan.

### **Common Menopause Symptoms**

**What is happening to your body?**

Menopause, when it occurs naturally, is a transition that happens when the ovaries gradually stop producing estrogen. It usually begins in the mid-40s and is complete when you have gone 12 months without a period around age 50.

During this time, you may experience:

- Hot flashes and night sweats (may last 4–8 years on average)
- Vaginal dryness, irritation, or pain
- Sleep problems
- Mood changes, including irritability or low mood
- Urinary urgency or frequent urinary tract infections

These symptoms are common and up to 80% of people experience hot flashes, and more than 50% experience vaginal dryness. Menopause is a highly individual experience, shaped not only by biological changes but also by personal beliefs, cultural and societal influences, life circumstances, and each person's unique physical and emotional experience. This means that you may have symptoms, not listed above, that signal you are experiencing the menopause transition.

You are not alone there are effective things you can do on your own to optimize your wellbeing. If you are interested in prescribed treatments or approaches to specific needs, please call so that we can set up a time to discuss.

## **What you can do right now, without a prescription**

For hot flashes and night sweats:

- Dress in layers and keep your bedroom cool
- Identify and avoid your personal triggers (common ones: alcohol, spicy foods, caffeine, stress, hot environments)
- Reduce or quit smoking — smoking worsens hot flashes
- Try cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). This is available through apps, books, or online programs. CBT has been shown in clinical studies to reduce hot flash severity, improve sleep, and reduce anxiety. Many women report feeling more in control of their symptoms after learning CBT techniques

- Clinical hypnosis (available via smartphone apps) has also been shown to reduce hot flashes by about 74% in clinical studies

#### For vaginal dryness and discomfort:

- Use an over-the-counter vaginal moisturizer regularly (3–5 times per week). Studies show these are as effective as prescription estrogen creams for many people. Look for polycarbophil or hyaluronic acid-based moisturizers which are available over the counter. Some people find relief using food-grade coconut or olive oil.
- Use a water- or silicone-based lubricant if needed for intercourse

**Note:** Vaginal moisturizers and lubricants are different products. Moisturizers are used regularly to maintain tissue hydration. Lubricants are used only during sexual activity.

#### For sleep:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule
- Limit screen time before bed
- Avoid alcohol close to bedtime as it can disrupt sleep quality
- Keep your bedroom cool and dark

#### For mood changes:

- Regular physical activity (even 30 minutes of walking most days) can improve mood, sleep, and overall well-being
- Stay connected with friends, family, or support groups
- If you feel persistently sad, anxious, or unable to enjoy things you used to, please tell us so that we can discuss. Effective treatment options are available.

#### For optimal wellness:

- Mediterranean-style diet and a fruit-rich diet has been shown to modestly lower the risk for hot flashes and night sweats in some people
- Aerobic and resistance training may lead to decreased severity of hot flashes and night sweats in some people

#### **When to contact us:**

- Symptoms that interfere with your daily life, work, or relationships

- Vaginal bleeding after you have gone 12 months without a period
- Symptoms of depression or anxiety that are not improving
- Urinary symptoms such as burning, urgency, or recurrent infections
- Questions about whether hormone therapy or prescription medications might be right for you

## Helpful, Trusted Resources

You may find it helpful to learn more at your own pace using these reliable sources:

NIH – My Meno Plan - <https://mymenoplan.org/>

Black Women’s Health Imperative - <https://powerinthepause.bwhi.org/> with resources  
<https://powerinthepause.bwhi.org/resources>

NIH National Institute on Aging - Menopause -  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/menopause/what-menopause>

International Menopause Society - <https://www.menopauseinfo.org/>  
Videos available in Cantonese, Vietnamese, Mandarin

Queer Menopause – <https://www.queermenopause.com/>

Fenway Institute LGBTQIA+ Support Groups - <https://fenwayhealth.org/the-fenway-institute/lgbtqia-aging-project/programs-support-groups/>

US Dept of Health and Human Services - Office on Women’s Health - Menopause  
<https://womenshealth.gov/menopause>

The Menopause Society – Meno Notes -  
<https://menopause.org/patient-education/menonotes>

CDC Women’s Health - <https://www.cdc.gov/womens-health/features/menopause-womens-health-and-work.html>

NIH - National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health -  
<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/menopausal-symptoms-in-depth>

Society for Women’s Health Research -  
[https://swhr.org/health\\_focus\\_area/menopause/](https://swhr.org/health_focus_area/menopause/)

We are here to help. Do not hesitate to bring up any symptoms, even if it feels embarrassing. These are medical issues with real solutions

### **Culture, Community, and Care**

How menopause is experienced and talked about varies across cultures. In some communities, it is rarely discussed openly. In others, it is seen as a powerful transition. Many people navigate it without knowing what is happening or feeling that their symptoms are understood by their care team.

Whatever your background, your cultural values and your lived experience belong in this conversation. If there are things you believe in, practices that help you, or concerns about treatments based on your background or community, please bring them to us. We want to understand what matters to you.

### **Your next steps from today's visit**

[This section should be customized by the clinician for each patient, including:]

- Specific self-management strategies discussed today
- Any new medications or changes
- Follow-up appointment date
- When and how to call the office