

Know Before You Go: Talking to Your Health Care Provider about Menopause

If menopausal symptoms are affecting your quality of life, it's time to consult your doctor.

Here are some practical tips to make the most of your appointment:

Before the Visit:

1. When you make the appointment, ask specifically to discuss menopause. Let the scheduler know that this is what you want to talk about. I read this interesting study presented at the 2021 NAMS conference that found women were more likely to get treatment for their symptoms when the appointment was focused on menopause. So, it's worth mentioning!

2. Start tracking your symptoms a few weeks before your visit. Keep a journal of what's going on, when symptoms happen, and how often. This will give your doctor a clear understanding of what's happening. Also, make sure to document your medications, supplements, allergies, and know your family history. This info can affect treatment options. If you've had recent blood work or tests, send them to the doctor ahead of time.

3. Think about what you want to achieve from the appointment. Consider your goals, your top nagging symptoms, and the type of care you're looking for. It's helpful to write down your questions beforehand so you don't have to rely on your memory in the moment.

During the Visit:

1. Give your provider a heads up. At the beginning of the appointment, when a nurse or medical assistant is taking your vitals, just remind them of the reason for your visit. Something like, "Please let the doctor know I have some questions about menopause I'd like to discuss."

2. Ask your doctor about her approach to menopause. Find out about her experience in treating menopause and whether she's certified by the North American Menopause Society. It's also good to ask about her general approach to hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and supplements for menopause treatment.

3. Be clear when describing your symptoms. Don't hold back! Be specific about how often you experience headaches, how long they last, your sleep patterns, vaginal dryness, and any concerns you have. Let her know you're worried or bothered by these symptoms.

4. If you want specific tests, don't be afraid to ask. Some doctors may say they're unnecessary, but if it's important to you, make sure to ask. You can even request that they document in your chart that you asked for the tests and the doctor declined.

After the Visit:

1. Schedule a follow-up appointment if you need more information or want to continue the conversation. Specify the purpose of the follow-up to ensure you get the information you're looking for. You deserve to have all your questions answered!

2. If the doctors you're seeing don't meet your needs, don't hesitate to find another one or get a second opinion. Trust your gut and take care of yourself. Remember, if you don't advocate for your health, who will?

Remember, your GP is there to help and support you, so you should feel comfortable and confident discussing your symptoms and the kind of assistance you need.

We hope these tips help you make the most of your doctor visit! You've got this, and we are here cheering you on!

Certified HCPs from The Menopause Society can be found [here](#).

