

CARROT

A report from Carrot Fertility

Menopause in the workplace 2023



Menopause in the workplace

Since we published our first Menopause in the Workplace report in 2022, menopause has made headlines with breakout articles in major publications and prominent celebrities sharing their personal experiences. While it's promising to see more public conversations about menopause, there's still a lot that we aren't seeing in the news. We surveyed 2,000 women across the U.S. and the UK to better understand whether increased awareness has led to better symptom management and a more positive experience in the workplace.

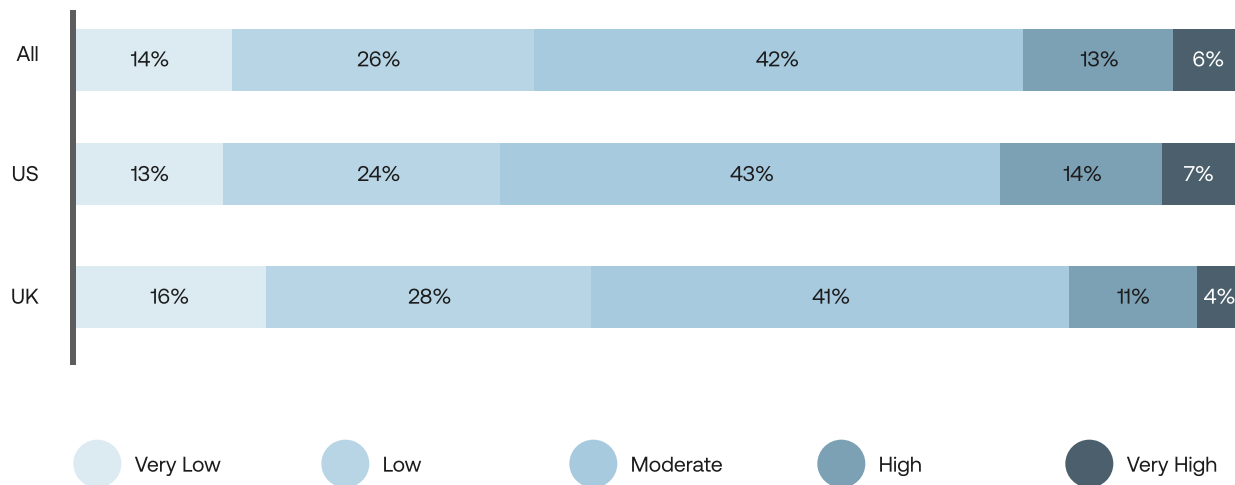
Our survey results reveal that so far, managing menopause at work remains challenging. Stigma and silence around this life stage — at work, at the doctor's office, and even among friends — leave many women feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, and less confident. At the same time, our findings suggest that employers continue to have a significant role to play in starting the conversation and creating a supportive environment for some of their most important employees. And when that support is available, it can have a significant impact on how women experience this inevitable life stage.

SECTION 01 / SECTION 02 / SECTION 03 / SECTION 04

Most women have a limited understanding of menopause before symptoms start

For most women, menopause is a mystery. Less than one in five say they had a high level of understanding of menopause before symptoms began.

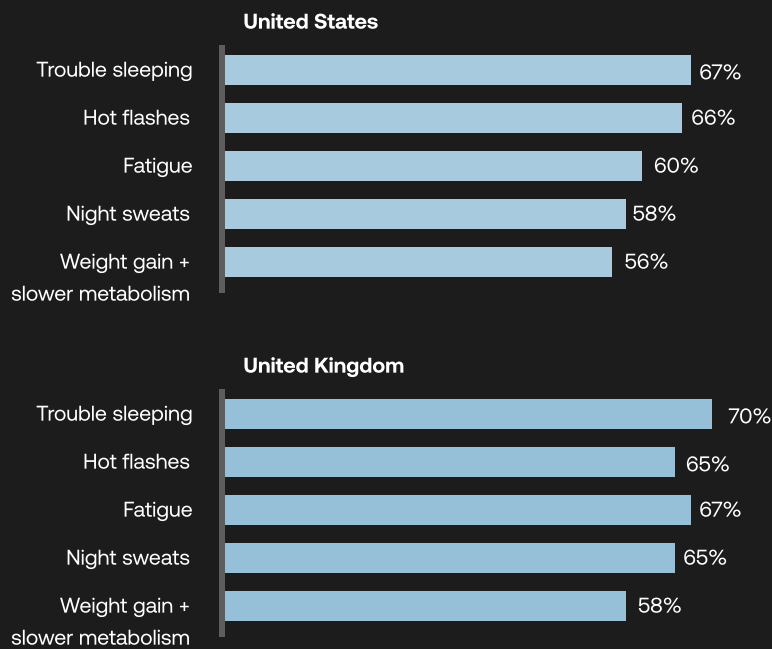
Level of understanding about symptoms and treatment options before menopause started



SECTION 01 / SECTION 02 / SECTION 03 / SECTION 04

Hot flashes are the most commonly reported first symptom, recalled by 28% of respondents, perhaps because they are the most represented in pop culture and a physical symptom. Trouble sleeping is the most common symptom experienced, reported by 68% of respondents, and is also the symptom most often considered serious. Notably, women of color were more likely to report serious symptoms. For example, a higher proportion of women of color report serious hair thinning.

Menopause symptoms reported by respondents



While respondents reported serious symptoms, few discussed them with their doctor. Only 28% of respondents have discussed menopause with their doctor more than one to two times, and 32% overall (U.S. 25%/UK 39%) have never done so. Among those who did seek information from their doctor, however, having the conversation paid off: 66% of respondents were satisfied with the support they received.

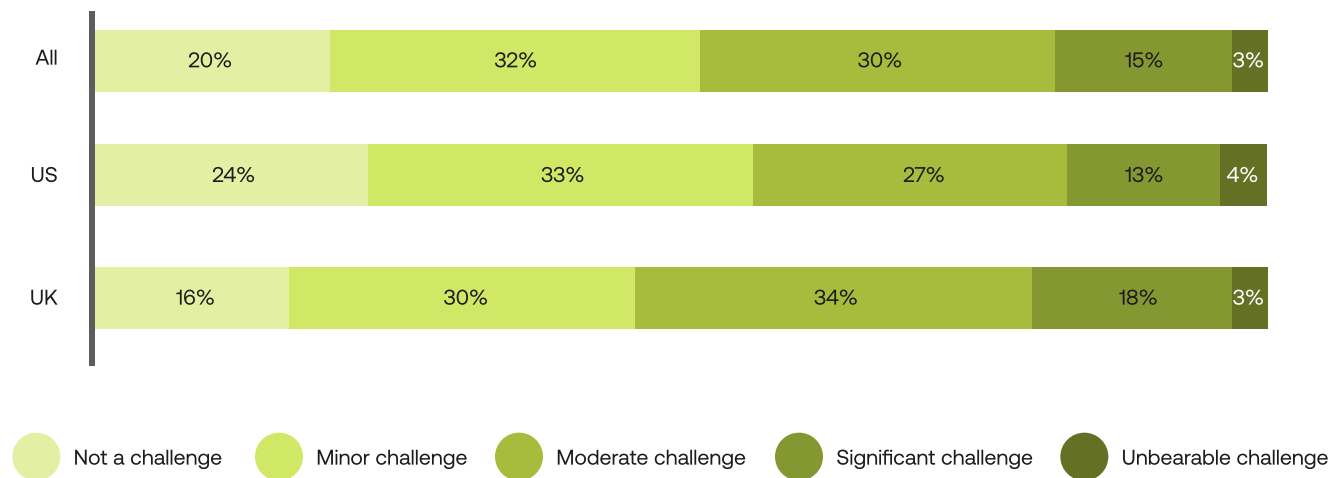
Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is the main pharmaceutical treatment option for menopause, but **beliefs about its potential side effects** have significantly reduced its popularity over the last several decades. Just 17% of respondents in the U.S. and 25% in the UK have used HRT to manage symptoms. While around a third of respondents in both countries reported feeling concerned about potential health risks associated with HRT, 30% in the U.S. and 26% in the UK were interested in talking to their doctor about potential risks and benefits.

SECTION 01 / SECTION 02 / SECTION 03 / SECTION 04

Menopause symptoms impact concentration and hurt confidence at work

Menopause symptoms are disruptive in the workplace, with 80% of respondents reporting that managing symptoms at work is challenging.

How challenging is it for you to manage your menopause symptoms at work?

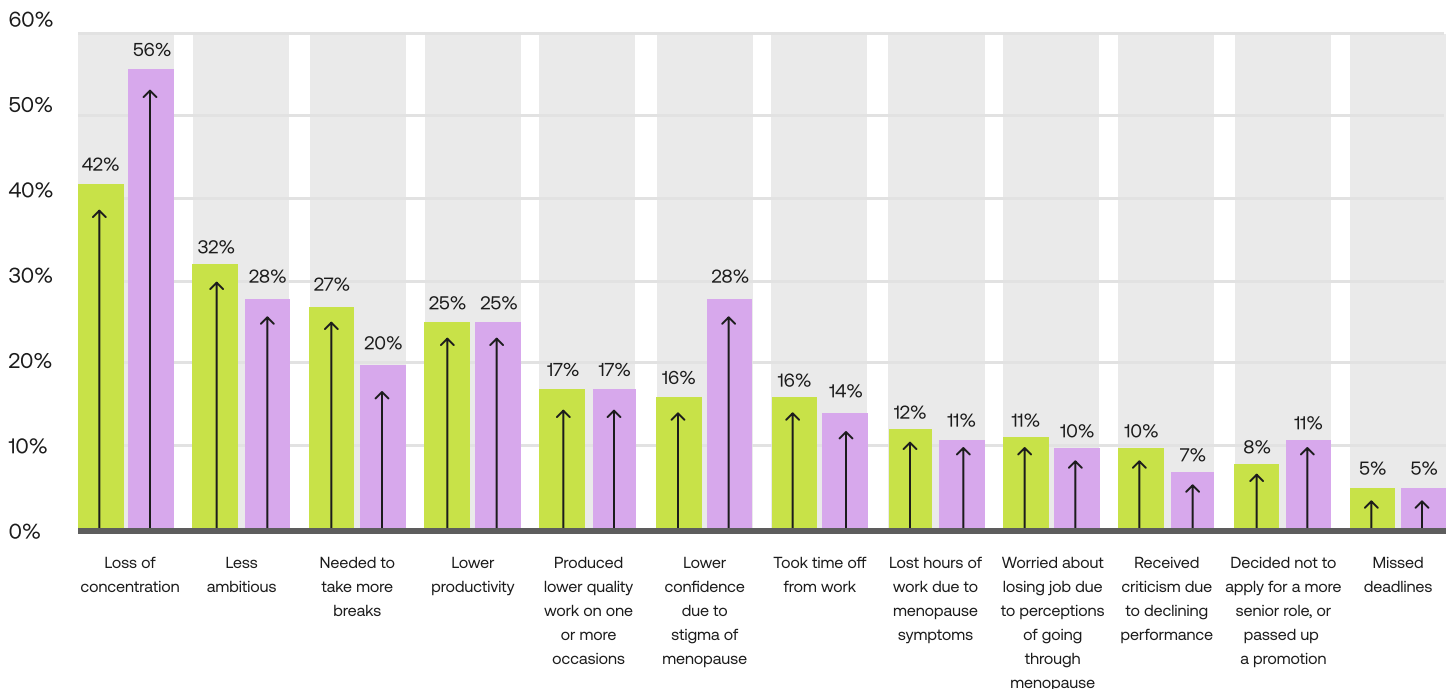


Loss of concentration is the most common workplace impact of menopause, reported by 42% of U.S. respondents and 56% of UK respondents. Women in the UK, in particular, report that symptoms have a negative impact on their confidence at work; 28% say they feel less confident because of stigma associated with menopause, compared with 16% of U.S. respondents. Moreover, an average of one-third (31%) of women surveyed feel that going through menopause while working will damage their

career growth. For U.S. women, 27% reported needing to take more breaks. Nearly one in three respondents in both countries say that menopause made them feel generally less ambitious, which is particularly notable considering that many are at the height of their careers during this life stage. Considering that many of those in senior leadership may be experiencing these symptoms, the potential impact on productivity can be significant.

Ways menopause has interfered with work

■ U.S. ■ UK



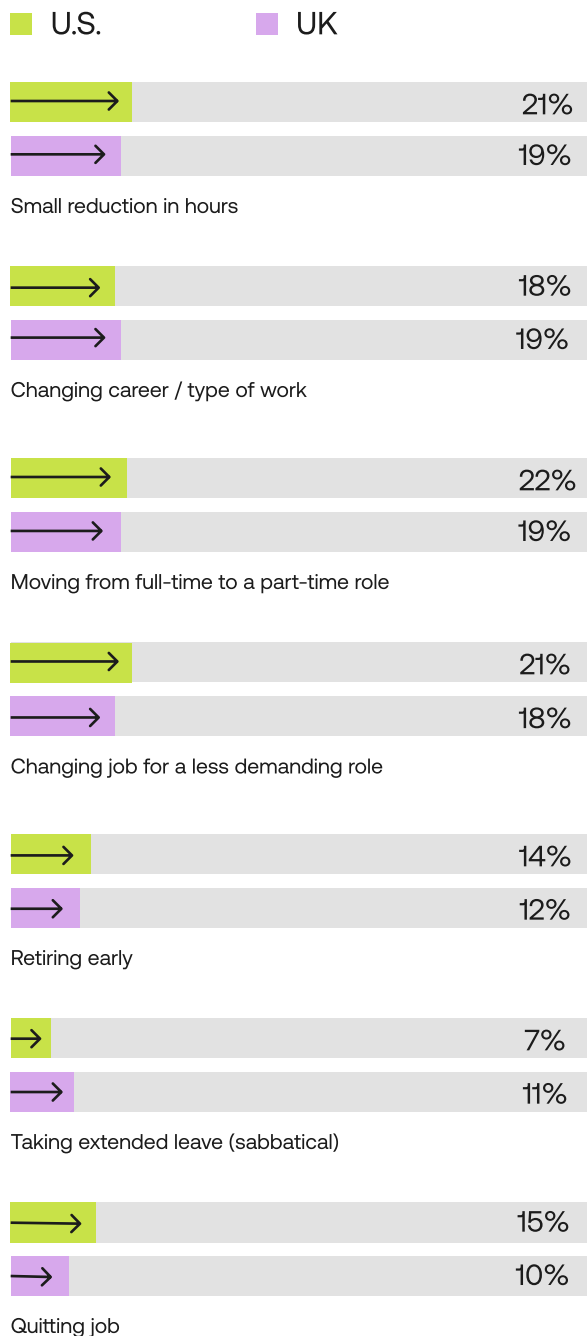
Women report feeling embarrassed and uncomfortable when symptoms strike at work. Overall, 72% of respondents have had to deal with feeling self-conscious or uncomfortable after experiencing a menopause symptom at work. To cope, the most common tactic was to go to the restroom for privacy (39%), followed by crying either at work or at home. When respondents took time off related to menopause symptoms, 79% concealed the real reason at least some of the time.

Over half of respondents (54%) have considered at least one form of work routine shift to better handle symptoms, including reducing hours, changing careers, and moving from a full-time to a part-time role. In addition, 31% of Americans and 34% of British respondents have considered at least one type of major change, including retiring early, taking extended leave, or quitting altogether.

Women of color are more likely to consider shifting from full-time to part-time to manage menopause. They are also more likely to feel like menopause may damage career growth, including 58% of women of color in the UK, compared with just 32% of white UK respondents and 22% of white Americans.

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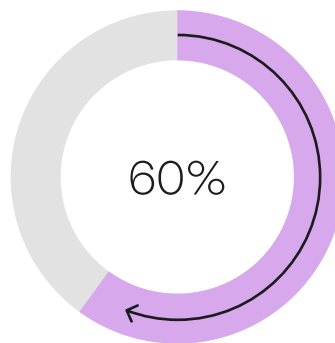
Work actions considered to help manage menopause symptoms



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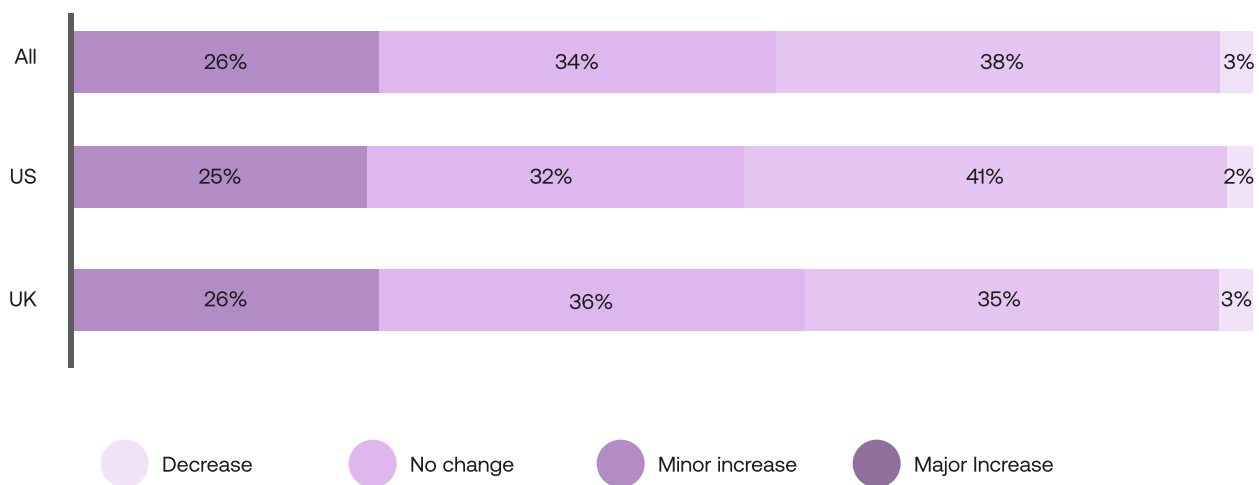
Workplace support remains rare but would increase employee satisfaction

Despite the significant impact menopause symptoms have on employees, workplace support remains relatively uncommon, especially significant support. In total, 24% of respondents say their primary employer offered menopause healthcare benefits, though just 9% said those benefits were significant. Among those not offered significant benefits by their employer, 60% say it would have increased their job satisfaction if they did have significant support.



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Impact of menopause support benefits on job satisfaction



SECTION 01 / SECTION 02 / SECTION 03 / SECTION 04

American and British respondents had different types of workplace support for menopause, with coverage for counseling or medical care being the most common option in the U.S. (36% U.S./22% UK) and workplace support groups most common in the UK (20% U.S./36% UK). Overall, flexible hours (32%) are the most common benefit provided and are also the type of workplace support respondents ranked as most valuable.

Respondents were also highly interested in benefits that cover counseling or medical care (37% U.S./27% UK) and getting help finding a doctor specializing in menopause (32% U.S./28% UK). U.S. respondents were more interested in receiving financial reimbursement for hormone replacement therapy compared with British respondents (30% U.S./18% UK).



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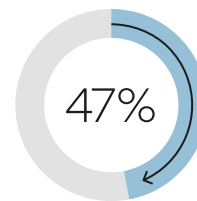
CARROT MEMBER

Open conversations about menopause in the workplace — and beyond — remain limited

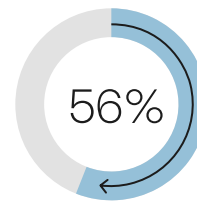
While respondents would welcome menopause support, most people do not feel comfortable asking for it. A majority of respondents (54%) say they do not feel comfortable asking their employer for workplace benefits. Among this 54%, the top reasons for hesitancy are perception of being unable to manage their job responsibilities (40%) and stigma (37%). Lack of awareness of how to ask for support was also common — 31% say they haven't asked because they're not sure who or how to ask. Ageism is another concern common among this cohort, with 47% (50% U.S./44% UK) having experienced ageism at work.

Concerns about and experiences with ageism are even more common among women of color. Women of color reported experiencing ageism at work occasionally or more often and are more likely to feel like menopause may damage career growth. Compared to white women, they are more likely to receive criticism.

Discomfort discussing menopause extends into conversations with colleagues and even friends, especially in the U.S. Only 23% of respondents have shared their experiences with menopause outside of their social circles. More than half (56%) of American respondents and 41% of British respondents are uncomfortable discussing menopause with work colleagues, 26% in the U.S. and 15% in the UK are uncomfortable discussing menopause with friends, and 20% in both countries are hesitant to discuss with relatives. Overall, 14% of respondents have told no one about their menopause experience.



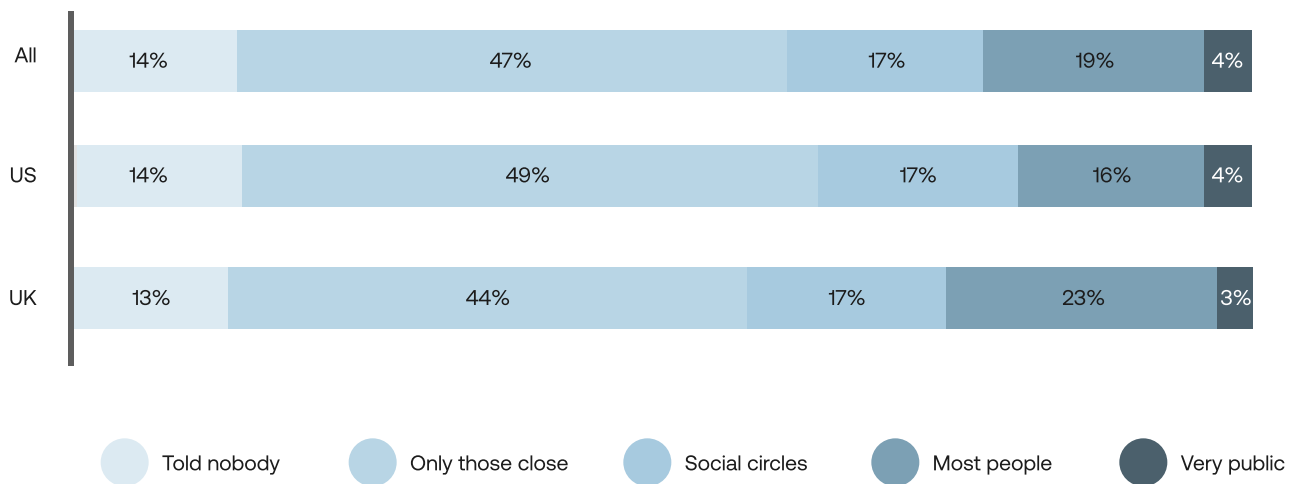
(50% U.S./44% UK) have experienced ageism at work



56% of American respondents and 41% of British respondents are uncomfortable discussing menopause with work colleagues

Women of color, however, are more open about the challenges of managing menopause at work, being more likely to vocalize it as an unbearable or significant challenge. They are also more likely to be open about menopause on social media or other public forums

How public or private respondents have been about their own menopause experience



Menopause conversations in the U.S. vs. UK

Over the last two years, the British Parliament has held multiple hearings on menopause in the workplace and called for the implementation of menopause workplace policies. We were curious to see whether these new policies have started showing an impact on how those in the UK feel about menopause at work. While responses were similar across the U.S. and UK, British respondents were more likely to report lower confidence due to the stigma of menopause (UK 28%/U.S. 16%). They were also more likely to have workplace support groups for menopause (UK 36%/U.S. 20%), suggesting that these groups have been one response to the UK’s call to action for improved resources. UK respondents were also more

likely than American respondents to consider support groups valuable (UK 25%/U.S. 15%).

Compared with American respondents, British respondents were less likely to feel uncomfortable talking about menopause with work colleagues, though a significant proportion still reported feeling uncomfortable (UK 41%/U.S. 56%). Based on our results, it appears that providing employees with the opportunity to connect with others who have shared experiences has begun to chip away at some discomfort, though both countries still have plenty of progress to make.

More public discourse is welcome and would help reduce stigma

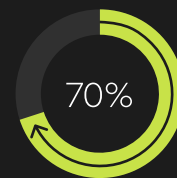
Respondents almost unanimously agreed that having more open conversations about menopause is crucial to inspiring employers to provide more resources. An impressive 90% of respondents agree that “more public awareness and discussion of menopause, symptoms, and their impact on women will help generate additional support.”

In the UK especially, respondents also shared an interest in hearing menopause experiences from celebrities and public figures, with 55% of Americans and 70% of British respondents saying they would feel better hearing these stories. In addition, 31% of British respondents say they would feel much better and empowered to share their own experience, compared to 22% of Americans.



9 out of 10

of respondents agree that “more public awareness and discussion of menopause, symptoms, and their impact on women will help generate additional support”



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Employers can seize the opportunity to expand support

Menopause is an inevitable life stage for half of the population, but most don't feel prepared for the physical and emotional symptoms it brings. Part of the problem is a lack of conversation, driven in part by ageism and stigma, which leads many to suffer in silence.

Perimenopause typically starts at the peak of women's careers, but our survey found that symptoms negatively impact concentration and how employees feel about career growth. Employers have a significant role to play in encouraging open conversations and providing benefits that empower employees to continue to feel confident through this life change.

When you're ready to learn more about providing comprehensive menopause support to your employees, **get in touch.**



Demographics and methodology

2,000 respondents, equally divided between the U.S. and UK, are all women between the ages of 45 and 60, currently employed for wages, and are either perimenopausal, currently menopausal, or recently completed menopause. The margin of error for the entire sample is 2%, and each country's sample has a margin of error of 3%.

Ethnicity, education, income, and geographic distribution are aligned with each country's demographic profile of employed women between 45 and 60 years old.

2,000

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About Carrot

Carrot Fertility is the leading global fertility care platform, serving people of every age, race, income, sex, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, and geography. Trusted by hundreds of multinational employers, health plans, and health systems, Carrot's comprehensive clinical program delivers industry-leading cost savings for employers and award-winning experiences for millions of people worldwide. Whether there is a need for care through fertility preservation, male-factor infertility, pre-pregnancy, IVF, pregnancy and postpartum, adoption, gestational surrogacy, or menopause, Carrot supports members and their families through many of the most memorable and meaningful moments of their lives. With Carrot, you can pursue your possible.

Carrot has received national and international recognition for its pioneering work, including Best Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Product from the Anthem Awards, Fast Company's Most Innovative Companies, CNBC's 100 Barrier Breaking Startups, and more. Carrot is regularly featured in media reporting on issues related to the future of work, women in leadership, healthcare innovation and diversity, equity, and inclusion, including MSNBC, The Economist, Bloomberg, The Wall Street Journal, CNBC, National Public Radio, Harvard Business Review, and more.

Carrot teams span more than 40 states across the United States and dozens of countries around the world. Carrot has received numerous workplace awards, including Fortune's Best Workplaces in Healthcare, Quartz's Best Companies for Remote Workers, and Great Place to Work and Age-Friendly Employer certifications. Learn more at carrotfertility.com.