

# The *Menopause* Conversation: Building Workplace Support



**SafeCare BC**

**Supporting wellness through healthy, safe, and injury-free workplaces.**

**[www.safecarebc.ca](http://www.safecarebc.ca)**



**Five million working  
women in Canada are  
over 40**



**Why this matters**



**1 in 10** women are  
leaving the workforce  
at the peak of their  
careers because of  
unsupported  
(peri)menopause



**Why this matters**





*I'm Lisa, I spent 20 years in education I knew how to do my job well.*

*And then... something changed.*

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**CSMC**



| **Certified Menopause Coaching Specialist**





**Be gentle with yourself, listen to your  
body, take what you need.**





## Where are you on the spectrum?

- Curious
- In the fire
- On the other side





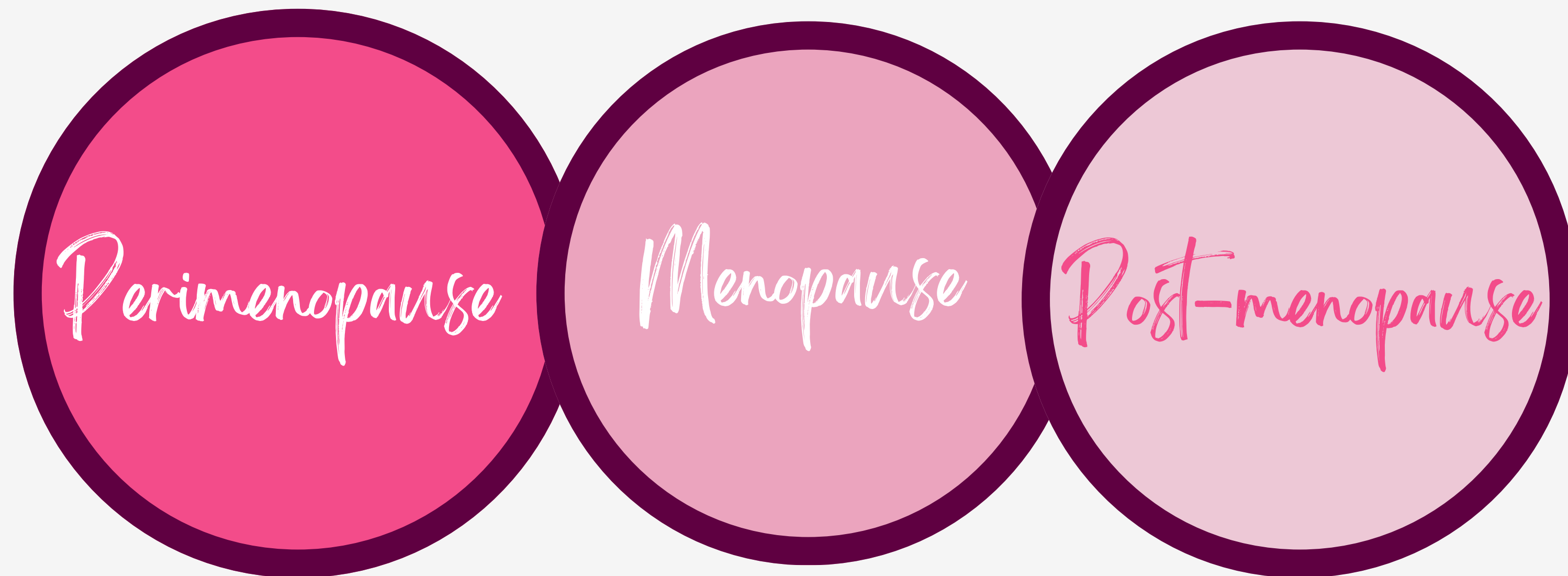
# Why Perimenopause Awareness Matters Now

*Think of it as future-proofing your wellbeing.*

- Your body is already shifting
- Healthy routines create your buffer
- You'll spot symptoms sooner
- Medical menopause can happen at any time.
- You'll better support the women around you



# The Truth of the Transition





# ***What is Menopause?***



***Menopause occurs when a woman has gone without a menstrual period for 12 consecutive months,*** typically happening in the late 40s to early 50s. During menopause, the ovaries gradually decrease production of estrogen and progesterone, leading to the cessation of menstruation and the onset/continuation of various physical and emotional changes.

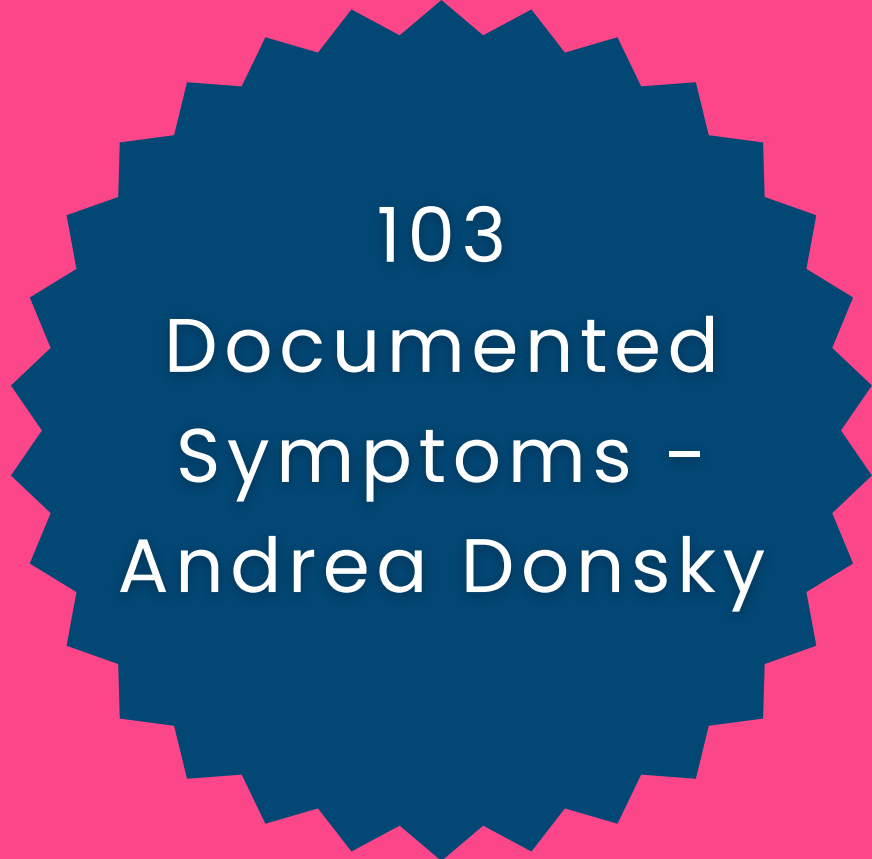


# ***What is Perimenopause?***

Perimenopause is the transitional phase leading up to menopause, typically starting in a woman's 40s but can begin earlier for some and later for others. During this time, hormone levels fluctuate (estrogen and progesterone), leading to a wide range of physical and emotional changes. Perimenopause can range from a few months to 10 years! It is the precursor to menopause.

## **Symptoms may include:**

1. Irregular periods
2. Hot flashes
3. Night sweats
4. Mood swings, depression, anxiety
5. Sleep disturbances
6. Vaginal dryness
7. Changes in libido
8. Weight gain: Changes in body composition



103  
Documented  
Symptoms –  
Andrea Donsky

9. Breast tenderness
10. Cognitive changes
11. Headaches
12. Joint pain
13. Digestive issues
14. Skin changes
15. Hair changes
16. Cognitive changes, memory and word recall



# What is Post-Menopause?

Post-menopause refers to the stage of a woman's life following menopause. During post-menopause, hormone levels stabilize at lower levels, and the body adjusts to the permanent end of menstrual cycles. This stage typically begins around the age of 50 and extends throughout the remainder of a woman's life.

*While menopausal symptoms may diminish or disappear, women may still experience health changes related to aging and no longer have the protective influence of estrogen.*

## **Increased risk of:**

- cardiovascular disease
- diabetes
- osteopenia and osteoporosis
- risk of falls
- pelvic floor dysfunction





# Post-Menopause Doesn't Mean "Done"

- **Bone health:** Risk of osteoporosis or fractures increases without warning.
- **Heart health:** Hormone changes can quietly raise risk for heart disease.
- **Cognitive shifts:** Memory, focus, and processing speed can subtly decline.
- **Vaginal & urinary health:** Dryness, thinning tissue, or incontinence may appear without major symptoms.



# *The Core 4*



## Sleep

- We need 7-9 hours to function optimally



## Movement

- Increased need for:
- resistance training



## Stress management

- how do you manage stress? How do you close the stress loop?



## Nutrition

- Increased need for:
- **protein** - 1.4–2.2 grams of protein per kilogram of bodyweight per day.
  - **fiber** - 22–28 grams of fiber per day.



# ***The Core 4***



## **Movement**

Increased need for resistance training

**Push** - 10 squats

**Pull** - 10 lat pull downs

**Core** - 10 standing knees raises per leg





# Commit to Yourself

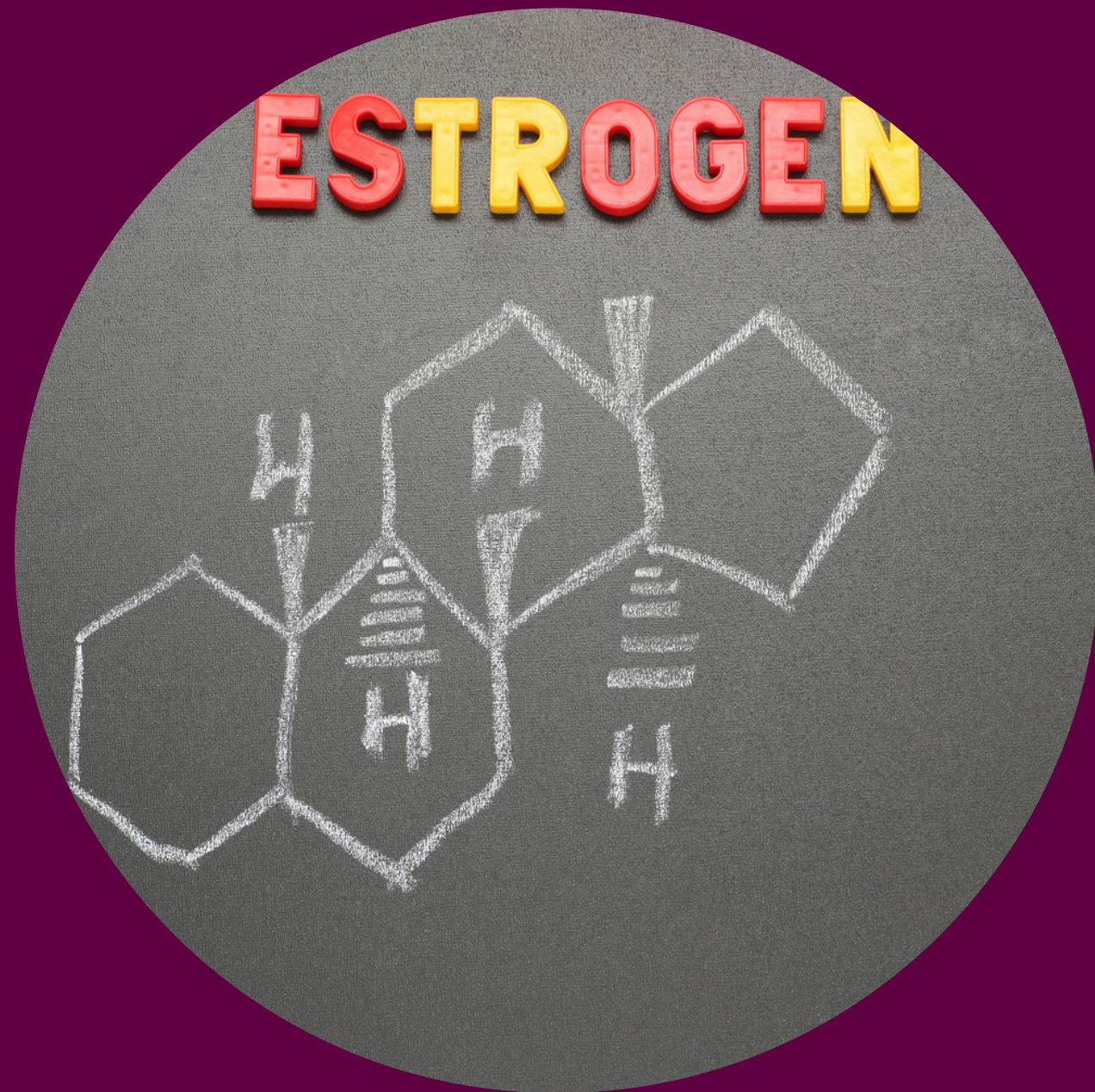


**Which pillar needs your attention? What is one action you can commit to today?**



# The 5th Pillar

## Menopause Hormone Therapy



- Estrogen (Estradiol)
- Progesterone
- Testosterone
- DHEA
- Veozah – non hormone treatment for night sweats and hot flushes
- Vaginal estrogen cream





# Health Canada Approved Uses of HRT

- **Moderate-to-severe vasomotor symptoms (VMS):** These include hot flashes and night sweats.
- **Symptoms of the Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause (GSM):** This encompasses a collection of vaginal and urinary symptoms, such as vaginal dryness, irritation, discomfort during intercourse (dyspareunia), urinary urgency, and recurrent urinary tract infections.
- **Prevention of osteoporosis (bone loss):** HRT is approved for the prevention, though not the treatment, of osteoporosis and related fractures in postmenopausal women
- **Hormone deficiency states:** It is indicated for women with hypoestrogenism due to conditions like premature ovarian insufficiency (POI), early menopause, or surgical removal of ovaries.





# Potential Risks

***For most women, most of the time, most current research suggest that MHT is relatively safe and may be a valuable part of healthcare during the menopause transition.***

- Weight changes – doesn't seem to affect weight gain or loss but it does change where it's stored
- Vaginal bleeding
- Fluid retention
- Nausea (with oral estrogen)
- Headaches
- Bloating
- Mood changes





# Potential Benefits

- **Better and more stable mood**
- **Better Sleep**
- **Better cognitive function and less brain fog**
- **More energy and less fatigue**
- **More regulated hunger and appetite**
- **Body composition changes – paired with exercise**
- **Less visceral fat**
- **Improved Sexual Desire**
- **Less joint pain**



# The Identity Shift: who was I and who am I now?

- What identities have you held?
- How is (peri)menopause shifting these identities?
- What part of your identity feels most in transition right now?





**We built workplaces around  
bodies that don't change**





- Reduced Confidence
- Changes in working relationships
- Increased sick days
- Stepping back from leadership

**What it looks like at  
work**





- 3.5 Billion annually in Canada
- Loss of experienced workers

# The cost





- rotating and overnight shifts
- disrupted sleep
- hot environments, uniforms and PPE
- limited control over breaks
- physically demanding work
- emotional labour and trauma exposure
- medication rounds, charting and high cognitive load
- staffing shortages and fear of burdening colleagues
- limited privacy for managing bleeding or urinary symptoms

## Health CareWorkers – Why Work Can Amplify Symptoms





# Call to Action

- Raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with many women's health issues.
- Flexible work arrangements
- Menopause supports at work





- quieter space for documentation
- written follow-up after complex instructions
- temporary adjustments to particularly demanding duties
- extended health benefits
- manager education
- clearly communicated accommodation process

**How we make a  
better space**





- access to water, washrooms and cooling
- breathable uniform options
- predictable or temporarily adjusted shifts
- additional recovery time after nights
- flexible break timing

**How we make a  
better space**





- C** Create privacy: Never raise symptoms publicly
- A** Ask, don't assume:  
"What would help you work safely and effectively?"
- R** Respond practically: Explore needs without diagnosing.
- E** Establish follow up:  
Agree on next steps and revisit them

# CARE Conversation Protocol





A woman with dark hair is laughing heartily while talking to a colleague whose back is to the camera. They are in a modern office with large windows and indoor plants. The scene is overlaid with a blue semi-transparent banner containing white text.

**Let's build workplaces where no one  
has to suffer in silence**





**Dr. Ready**

*Your (Peri)Menopause  
Prep Session*

- ★ Break down your symptoms
- ★ Build a clear, confident plan
- ★ Craft the exact questions to ask
- ★ Back you up with research
- ★ Give you the language to advocate for you



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