

World Menopause Day – 18 October 2022



Pharmacists available to provide practical support and advice

18 October 2022 Marking World Menopause Day, pharmacists are today offering advice on how best to recognise and manage menopausal symptoms. The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has

issued a reminder that **all pharmacies have a private consultation room** and will be able to provide advice and support to those who require it.

Menopause is the point in time when the menstrual cycle ceases. It typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 and the resulting reduction in hormone levels often leads to a range of challenging symptoms. The period of these symptoms can last several years, so it is important to avail of support to manage these. Peri-menopause can occur for a number of years prior to this. Pharmacists are often the first port of call for anyone with symptoms of peri and menopause.

Providing advice to those who may be experiencing symptoms of menopause Kathy Maher, said “Society has become much far more comfortable speaking about menopause in recent years. However, there are many ways to treat symptoms of menopause and many people are still unfamiliar with these. Speaking to your pharmacist is an excellent first port of call for any questions you may have.”

“The most obvious and practical advice is that when experiencing menopause symptoms you should look after your health. Getting plenty of rest, eating well and taking time to relax, will all help to minimise the effects of menopause, enabling you to continue to live their best lives without suffering in silence.

“The use of HRT medications has increased, and many more people are benefitting from these treatments. Shortages in certain HRT medications have caused major distress to those who rely upon in recent months. Pharmacists work hard to find substitutes for patients when needed and it is always working discussing this with your pharmacists if you have a concern.

“There are many practical things that can be done to help deal with hot flashes. From wearing lighter and looser clothing to taking cool showers and having cold drinks. But through speaking to your pharmacist, you may also be able to identify additional ways to alleviate these symptoms.

“Difficulty sleeping, irritability and low mood are unfortunately very common not talked about signs of menopause. These are common complaints that pharmacists deal with for many people and can provide advice on how to deal with.

“Many are reluctant to ask questions about the intimate impacts of the menopause, such as vaginal dryness. But there is no reason for embarrassment and in the privacy of a consultation room you can receive advice about available moisturisers or sexual lubricants. Similarly, damage to skin or even hair loss can cause significant distress, but there are treatments

available for this as well.

As half the population will go through menopause at some point Kathy Maher concluded that pharmacists are very familiar with all the main symptoms. “Your community pharmacist is there to help you, in whatever way you need.”