

What every employer needs to know about women's health



A guide for line managers and HR professionals



Periods and menstrual health

Around **80% of women** experience period pain at some stage

- From short-term sickness leave, to long-term absence, to staff engagement and productivity – menstruation is more than just an issue for employees' health and wellbeing, it affects business too.
- [Almost a quarter of women have taken time off work](#) because of their period in the last 6 months, but more than a third lie about the real reason for their absence for fear of embarrassment or judgement.

Reminder: not all women have periods and not all who have periods are women



Eating Disorders

[Over 15% of UK adult women](#) have an eating disorder

- Eating disorders negatively impact health, emotions and ability to function in important areas of life, including performance at work. The most common eating disorders are anorexia, bulimia and binge eating.
- 30% report feeling stigmatised or discriminated against because of their eating disorder at work.

Tip: Flexible working allows colleagues to take breaks when needed and attend any appointments



Mental Health

Women in full-time employment are [nearly twice as likely to have a common mental health problem](#) as full-time employed men

- As well as having a huge impact on individual employees. Issues like anxiety and depression can be severe and long-lasting and have a big impact on people's ability to get on with life, especially in the workplace.
- Poor mental health has a severe impact on employers – including increased staff turnover, sickness absence due to debilitating depression, burnout and exhaustion, decreased motivation and lost productivity.

Tip: Give colleagues the right tools to help access the support they need. Tools can range from educational materials and training to personalised health support



Sleep

[Women are more likely to have trouble sleeping](#) and up to 40% more likely to suffer from insomnia than men

- Insomnia is a common sleep disorder that can make it hard to fall asleep, hard to stay asleep. Women often face distinct challenges to quality sleep as a result of biological factors such as menopause or social and cultural norms.
- Insomnia compromises productivity, leading to missed days at work and low performance while at work.

Tip: Encourage sleep and recovery: Ask employees what will help them and encourage them to take the lead on implementing change



Gynaecological conditions – endometriosis and PCOS

Endometriosis and PCOS affect 1 in 10 women

- Endometriosis can cause extreme pain, heavy bleeding and sometimes fertility issues.
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a common condition that affects how a woman's ovaries work. This can cause a range of symptoms including irregular periods, weight gain and in some cases, infertility.
- Endometriosis and PCOS are common and often debilitating on the individual and the knock-on effect on the workplace can be significant. These conditions can mean individuals are subject to invasive exploratory surgery and treatment using laparoscopy.

Tip: The first step to address these issues is to start the conversation. Raise awareness around periods and the conditions that may affect them with all-staff training modules, Lunch & Learns and resources to normalise the topic



Health and lifestyle

[60% of women in the UK](#) are either overweight or obese

- Poor diet and an unhealthy lifestyle can impact colleagues' physical and mental health, often leading to more serious health complications.
- Women who are severely obese are [more likely to change what they do at work](#) due to ill-health and almost three times as likely to lose their job due to health.

Tip: Encourage healthy habits by setting up a team on Strava or organising a steps competition for female colleagues – this could be used as a fundraiser to raise money for a women's health charity

How can Peppy's Women's Health service help?

The Peppy app connects your colleagues to real-life women's health experts via one-to-one chat and virtual consultations, plus on-demand articles, videos and audios.

Find out why you should offer Women's Health support from Peppy's experts

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