

Cheat sheet 2: Be a health boss with your doctor

If you've been banging your head against the GP brick wall trying to get help for your perimenopausal or menopausal symptoms, you're not alone. I hear it all the time: women being told 'menopause is natural so you have to put up with it' or 'HRT is dangerous'. It's so infuriating. If that sounds all too familiar, don't worry, I've got your back. You may have to sift through the pebbles to uncover a diamond but once you find a doctor who listens, is informed and understands you are advocating for your own health, it's life-changing. I see my doctor as my health ally, my teammate and my coach making sure I'm in the best health I can be. Here's your cheat sheet for talking to your doctor, so you can finally get the help you deserve.

1. Start with your current doctor (if they're worth their salt)

Got a decent doctor? Great! But don't assume they know everything about peri and menopause. As I explained earlier, many of them have had zero or very little menopause training. They're not incompetent, just not educated in this area (you know, between the gazillion other things they juggle). So, come armed with the facts. Share what you've read, seen or heard, including info from this book, of course. Hand them a fact sheet downloaded from your country's menopause society and ask them to support you in getting your symptoms under control.

2. Keep a symptom diary (see Cheat Sheet 1)

Doctors love a bit of data. If you rock up to your appointment with a diary tracking your hot flushes, rogue periods, mood swings or any of the other fun peri symptoms, you're helping them see



the patterns. Plus, it backs up your case that you need treatment, and you need it now. You can find more examples of symptom diaries online, including the one recommended by the Australasian Menopause Society.

3. Write down your questions

Hello, brain fog! We've all been there, sitting in front of the doctor, suddenly unable to remember a single thing we meant to ask. Avoid the frustration by writing down your questions in advance. It'll help you stick to the important stuff, especially when emotions are running high.

4. Bring backup

Sometimes it's hard to advocate for yourself, especially when you feel like bursting into tears at the drop of a hat. Take a partner, friend or family member along for support. They can help make sure your concerns are heard and keep the doctor on track if things start getting brushed aside.

5. Don't settle for dismissal

If your doctor still isn't listening, it's time to escalate. Head to the Australasian Menopause Society website and search for a doctor using your postcode. These are doctors with a genuine interest in managing peri and menopause, and they won't make you feel like you're being hysterical for wanting help. If you're in another country, see what your local menopause society provides.



Don't stop until you get the support you need. This is your health and you have every right to feel like yourself again. Stay strong.