

Question: Is it normal to have painful periods as you grow older?

Panel answer: It is not common to have painful periods as you get older but periods often get heavier and if there are clots this may be associated with pain.

Question: I have a coil to help with my periods but since having it three years ago I've not had a period. Is that normal?

Panel answer: If you have a Mirena IUS then periods often stop completely, which is normal and safe.

Response from other attendee: Yes the coil can stop your periods totally it has done the same for me, I've not had a period for 5 years, I love it.

Question: What support can we expect from work?

Panel answer: Workplaces can and should be menstrual friendly, also menopause friendly, offering uniform adjustments, work from home options if severe symptoms, access to cold water and fans when women have hot flushes, pads and tampons in the women's rest rooms, HR policies and women's health champions in the work place.

Question: Could migraines be related to one of common symptoms of Menopause?

Panel answer: The peak age of migraine prevalence is during the perimenopause - menopause transition - this is due to fluctuating hormones.

The drop in oestrogen hormone makes migraines more frequent. Similar to getting migraine during menstrual periods when oestrogen levels are low.

Panel comment: There is no time limit on how long you can have HRT. This is individualised - every year there should be a review and if the woman is well, with no other medical problems and is keen to continue there is no necessity to stop at a particular age.

Question: Do you have any tips on how to lose weight when you have PCOS, Adenomyosis and endometriosis? My gynaecologist won't remove my uterus because my BMI is too high. I am active and eat healthily but losing weight is difficult.

Panel answer: Losing weight if you have PCOS - it is best to try to increase the amount of protein you are eating and reduce the amount of carbohydrates that you are eating. Women with PCOS find that they put on weight easily as their bodies are very efficient at putting refined sugar in their diet into fat cells. Up your exercise too.

Weight loss is hard especially with PCOS. Low carbohydrate diets with moderate caloric restriction and increase in exercise does help. Consistency is key - the Zoe programme is often useful because it teaches you how your body responds to carbs but is not available on the NHS.

Question: Can you give me any advice to help me control Lichen Sclerosus please?

Panel answer: Lichen sclerosus is a very itchy and painful vulval condition. It responds well to applying a strong steroid ointment and to washing with a soap substitute such as Epaderm cream or Dermol.

Also:

- www.lsvcukawareness.co.uk Lichen Sclerosus UK awareness
- LSSN - lichen sclerosus support network <https://lssupportnetwork.org/>
- www.nhs.uk/conditions/lichen-sclerosus

Question: Can self-screening cervical kit be sourced / bought privately via clinics?

Panel answer: You can buy the self-screening on the internet but do ensure you use a trusted source. At the moment the kits are only being handed out in certain areas when the research is ongoing into checking that they do work. Initial research is really promising so hopefully will be rolled out across all the NHS in next few years.

Question: Is there any recommended cervical screening for the 70+ age group.

Panel answer: If your smears and screening have been consistently normal and you have had regular screening there is no need to continue cervical screens after age 70 years. If you are in 70+ age group and have not had HPV or abnormal smears by then, the chances of getting cervical cancer at that age is very low indeed.

Question: What happens when you stop taking HRT - do you still have to go through all the same symptoms - just a bit later in life?

Panel answer: Hormone therapy does NOT postpone the menopause. Often the symptoms fade away and women do not notice much difference when they stop.