

Women's Health Policy Template



At [Company], we recognise the importance of supporting the health of all of our employees.

Our Women's Health Policy aims to give our employees the necessary time to address any gynaecological and reproductive health challenges.

Our Women's Health Policy is intentionally kept separate from our pregnancy loss, menopause, and fertility policies, so the focus is to support our employees through women's health challenges specifically.

Our Women's Health Policy covers a range of health challenges, such as endometriosis, menstrual disorders, polycystic ovary syndrome, fibroids, and more. We've kept it broad and flexible because there's no one-size-fits-all approach to women's health challenges.



Although we use the term '**women's health**' throughout, this policy is inclusive of all employees with a uterus, **no matter their gender identity**. If you feel the language we've used could be changed to be more inclusive of you, **please let us know**. We are always open to learning.

Why do we need a women's health policy at [Company]?

Women's health has been underserved and overlooked for too long. We know the impact that gynaecological and reproductive health challenges can have on our people.



One third of women experience severe reproductive or gynaecological health problems that can have **debilitating symptoms**.



More than 1 in 10 women have endometriosis. The average person with endometriosis takes up to **20 sick days** per year for the most common symptom, severe pain.



1 in 10 women have PCOS, and the main symptom is **fatigue and exhaustion**. With 50% of women see more than 3 different doctors to establish a PCOS diagnosis.



Period pain leads to an average of **9 days of lost productivity** for women **each year**.

At [Company], we are committed to providing the right support to meet your needs and to ensure that you can bring your best self to work, without having to struggle through health challenges.

The practicalities of the policy



1 How many days you are entitled:

We trust you to do what is right for you.

You can take up to [x] days off per year for women's health challenges, and how and when you use them is up to you. If you need more time than that, let your manager or HR team know. We want this policy to work for you and we are happy to adjust it as needed.

If it's not time off that you need, flexible working arrangements, including working from home or adjusting working hours, are also available to support you through women's health challenges. Just let your manager know what would work best for you and we can go from there by having a confidential conversation.

Note for HR Managers: It's important to clearly state here whether the leave you are offering is **paid or unpaid leave for complete transparency.**

2 Where to find support:

We encourage you to speak to your line manager, HR manager, or whoever you feel most comfortable speaking to about what you're experiencing. Remember, all conversations will be kept completely confidential.

We also recognise that you might not feel comfortable speaking to someone at work about this, so we've listed some resources below that might help too.

If you need to take more than the [x] days you are entitled to (for example, for a surgery), a return-to-work discussion with your line manager or HR manager is recommended. Your reasonable adjustment form can be reviewed too, which our HR team can organise.

3 How to book time off for women's health challenges:

You can book time in the same way you book sick leave off, just make sure to use our designated women's health category in your HRIS.

Note for HR Managers: Set this up in your internal system

When you book time off for women's health, you'll be asked to write a reason for time off, as well as to include a doctor's note.

We know that getting a diagnosis for women's health conditions may take time (and even years!) so if you don't have a doctor's note, you can also show that you've seen a doctor about this issue, whether or not it's been diagnosed or treated.

4 How to access clinical care for women's health challenges:

★ If [Company] a Fertifa client

At [Company], we offer women's health support through Fertifa, our reproductive healthcare and wellbeing provider.

To use this support, you should download the Fertifa app from the iOS App Store or Google Play and get access to unlimited 1-2-1 support from Fertifa's in-house clinical team, for all women's health challenges topics.

You'll also have access to a suite of educational resources through the Fertifa App – you can browse articles, attend webinars, and join live Q&A sessions with doctors and nurses on the most common and complicated areas in women's health.



Below you can find some resources on some of the most common women's health issues. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it's a good place to start!

Endometriosis:

[What is endometriosis pain and what can it feel like?](#)

[What is endometriosis and how can it be treated?](#)

Fibroids:

[Diagnosis and treatment of fibroids](#)

HPV and cervical screening (smear tests):

[HPV symptoms and treatment](#)

[How smear tests work](#)

PCOS:

[How is PCOS diagnosed?](#)

[How do you treat PCOS?](#)

Urinary tract infections (UTIs):

[The signs and symptoms of a UTI](#)

Gynaecological cancers:

[Overview of gynaecological cancers](#)

Women's health terminology

We thought it might be helpful to outline the most common women's health conditions so that [Company] employees (and particularly line managers and HR teams) are all aware of what these health challenges are.

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a long-term condition where tissue similar to the lining of the womb grows in other places, such as the ovaries and fallopian tubes. Symptoms of endometriosis include pain in your lower tummy or back (pelvic pain) and severe period pain.

Fibroids

Fibroids are non-cancerous growths that develop in the muscular wall of the womb (uterus). Some can be the size of a pea, others can be the size of a melon. Symptoms can include heavy or prolonged periods, bleeding between periods, abdominal, pelvic, and lower back pain, and frequent urination, amongst others.

Hormonal contraception challenges

Taking hormonal contraception can lead to a host of side effects, including low mood and depression, headaches, and nausea.

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

Around 85% of people who have ever been sexually active will get HPV at some stage of their life. For most women, the condition will clear up on its own, but around 3-5% of women will have precancerous cells and need a LEEP procedure, which can cause severe abdominal pain.

Hysterectomy

A hysterectomy is the surgical removal of the uterus (womb). Sometimes, this surgery will also remove the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and cervix. You can't coceive after you have this procedure.



Women's health terminology (continued)

Menstrual or period disorders

This is a broad term that could include anything from painful cramps during your period to abnormal heavy bleeding.

Ovarian cysts

Ovarian cysts are fluid-filled sacs that can grow on the ovaries. They're very common, and most will go away without treatment. Sometimes, women will need surgery to remove them, and this can require a hospital stay.

Polycystic ovary syndrome

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a condition that affects how the ovaries work. Symptoms of polycystic ovary syndrome include irregular periods, facial hair, difficulty losing weight, and difficulty getting pregnant.

Thrush

Thrush is a yeast (fungal) infection that can affect the vagina, penis and skin. A lot of people think it only affects women, and while up to 75% of women will get it at some point in their lifetime, men can get it too. It usually causes itchiness, irritation, and a white discharge, and sometimes it can hurt to urinate.

Urinary tract infections

A urinary tract infection (UTI) occurs when bacteria infect the bladder, kidneys, or the connecting tubes. Common symptoms include a sudden urge to urinate and experiencing pain or a burning sensation during urination. Typically, UTIs can be managed with pain relief medication and drinking lots of fluids. In some cases, a GP will prescribe antibiotics to treat it. UTIs are unfortunately pretty common – around 40% of women will develop one in their lifetime.