



F*CK, WHY DIDN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS SOONER?

Shelly and I talk about feeling unprepared for perimenopause, finding information and saying the things we so often keep to ourselves. These conversations matter. So do we.

A very open conversation with Shelly Horton about perimenopause and being heard.

PERIMENOPAUSE, OUT LOUD.

01 CAN WE PLEASE STOP WHISPERING ABOUT IT?

Hormonal changes are something we can talk about. Shelly's invitation is to open the conversation, instead of treating it as a topic we should keep quiet.

02 EVEN A HEALTH REPORTER CAN FEEL UNPREPARED.

Shelly talks about not having the everyday conversations that might have helped her understand what was happening. If it feels unfamiliar, that doesn't mean you've done anything wrong.

04 YES, YOU CAN ASK ABOUT THAT TOO.

Shelly talks openly about vaginal discomfort and feeling reluctant to bring it up. Intimate symptoms belong in a conversation with your clinician, just like any other concern.

03 WRITE IT DOWN. MEMORY CAN BE A FUNNY THING.

Looking back at her symptom diary, Shelly saw that her recovery had taken longer than she remembered. The record helped her put the pieces in order.

05 WE STILL HAVE PLENTY TO BRING TO THE TABLE.

Shelly challenges the idea that women's value ends when they stop having babies. Our experience and wisdom deserve to be seen and heard.



BRING BACKUP. GET A SECOND OPINION.

More useful bits from the conversation, each with one way to use it.

Pick the one that fits your week.

06 TAKE SOMEONE WITH YOU

Shelly suggests bringing a partner, sister or friend to early appointments, especially when brain fog makes explaining hard. **Try it:** Ask someone you trust to come to your next GP appointment.

07 LET YOUR TEAM TALK

Shelly's GP listens to her psychiatrist and physio, so they work together rather than separately. **Try it:** Ask your GP how your clinicians can share relevant information.

08 DISMISSED? FIND ANOTHER DOCTOR

Symptoms brushed off as stress, weight or age are Shelly's warning sign. She looked for menopause expertise. **Try it:** Seek a second opinion from a GP with menopause expertise if you're not heard.

09 MORE THAN ONE THING HELPED

Shelly describes psychiatric care, exercise, eating and protecting sleep alongside medication. Her story, not a plan for everyone. **Try it:** Ask your GP what support could sit alongside your current treatment.

10 DARK, COOL AND REGULAR

Shelly protects her bedtime and keeps her room dark and cool. Personal habits, not guaranteed fixes. **Try it:** Choose a regular bedtime and make your room dark and cool this week.



WRITE IT DOWN. TAKE IT IN.

Make room for the question.

1 GIVE YOURSELF SOMETHING TO TAKE TO THE APPOINTMENT.

If you've noticed changes, jot down when they happen and how they affect your day. Keep the notes private. They can help you explain what's going on.

2 LET'S MAKE ROOM FOR THE QUESTION.

Take your notes to your GP. Ask about possible causes, options and what happens next. You don't have to work it all out on your own.

3 TALK, IF YOU'D LIKE TO.

Choose someone you trust and talk about what you wish you'd known. You decide how much to share. There's no requirement to make it public.

ONE THING BEFORE 50. OR STARTING NOW.

That question you've been brushing off deserves time with someone who can help. Your comfort and everyday life matter too.

OVER TO YOU

The change I'd like to talk through is...

The question I'll take to my GP is...
