

THE (M) FACTOR²

BEFORE THE PAUSE
PERIMENOPAUSE



DISCUSSION GUIDE

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PERIMENOPAUSE

INTRODUCTION

The (M) Factor 2: Before the Pause continues the groundbreaking work of the original film by exposing the silence surrounding perimenopause—the critical transition before menopause that affects women’s physical, mental, and emotional health. The film features leading experts, everyday women, and male partners, shining a light on how early awareness, prevention, and education can transform lifelong health outcomes.

This guide is designed to help hosts and audiences engage in meaningful dialogue about the film’s central themes, including preventive care, heart and bone health, the connection between menopause and cancer, the role of men as allies, and why education must begin earlier.



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***YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS
TODAY FOR THE LIFE YOU WANT IN THE FUTURE.***

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WARM UP & ENGAGEMENT

QUESTIONS

WHICH PART OF THE FILM RESONATED MOST WITH YOU—PERSONAL STORIES, MEDICAL INSIGHTS, OR THE FOCUS ON PREVENTION—AND WHY?

HOW DID THIS FILM SHIFT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF PERIMENOPAUSE AS A STAGE THAT STARTS EARLIER AND INFLUENCES LONG-TERM HEALTH?

WHICH STATEMENT BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU ARE FEELING AT THIS MOMENT AFTER WATCHING THE (M) FACTOR 2?

- A. SHOCKED. THERE WAS A LOT THAT I WAS NOT AWARE OF.
- B. NOT SURPRISED. I'M AWARE OF THE STATISTICS AND THE ISSUES DISCUSSED IN THE FILM.
- C. OVERWHELMED. I'M JUST TAKING IT ALL IN. I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START.
- D. MOTIVATED. THERE'S A LOT TO DO TOO ADDRESS THIS. I'M READY TO MOVE THIS FORWARD AND DIALOGUE.
- E. OTHER

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE: THE FACTOR THAT MOST CONTRIBUTES TO SUBSTANDARD PERIMENOPAUSE CARE IS...

- A. UNDERFUNDING AND EXPOSURE ABOUT PERIMENOPAUSE
 - B. IMPLICIT GENDER BIAS IN MEDICINE
 - C. LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AMONGST PHYSICIANS
 - D. LACK OF MENOPAUSE MEDICAL SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE TO CARE FOR FEMALE PATIENTS
 - E. ALL OF THE ABOVE
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSITION

- The film calls perimenopause a “zone of chaos.” How do fluctuating hormones affect multiple body systems, and why is early education so important?
- Why do so many women enter perimenopause without understanding what’s happening to their bodies? How can healthcare systems bridge that gap?

HEART HEALTH

- Cardiologists in the film describe heart disease as “the number one killer of women.” How does declining estrogen affect heart health, and what preventive steps can women take in their 30s and 40s?
- What can healthcare providers, employers, and policymakers do to promote heart screenings and awareness for women before menopause?

BONE HEALTH

- Dr. Vonda Wright urges women to “lay down bone by 40.” What lifestyle habits—exercise, nutrition, or hormone therapy—most effectively protect bone density?
- How do women’s attitudes toward strength training and nutrition change once they understand bone health as part of preventive care?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CANCER & MENOPAUSE

- The film revisits the controversy around hormone therapy after the WHI study. How has new research reshaped the understanding of HRT and cancer risk?
- Dr. Corinne Menn and others highlight nuanced decisions for breast cancer survivors. How can shared decision-making help women feel more empowered?

MEN AS ALLIES

- The “Husbands’ Group” shows men learning to support their partners through perimenopause. What stood out about how these men approached empathy and communication?
- How can men, partners, coworkers, family members, help reduce stigma and normalize discussions about women’s midlife health?

INNOVATION & SOLUTIONS

- The film features women in healthtech asking, “Where’s all the women’s health data?” How can technology, AI, and wearables close data gaps in women’s health?
- What are the potential risks of bias in AI and digital health platforms, and how can they be addressed to ensure inclusivity?
- How do innovations, from nutraceuticals to smart clothing, expand opportunities to improve women’s quality of life?

2 MILLION

Women in the US enter
Perimenopause every year
— NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it critical for younger women to understand perimenopause?
- Why do you think this aspect of women's health is often overlooked?
- The film touches on the disparities faced by Black and Latina women in perimenopause treatment. How do these disparities manifest, and what steps can be taken to ensure more equitable care?
- Perimenopause can last up to 10 years or more for some women. What if we recognized perimenopause as the beginning of transformation, not the end?
- The U.S. healthcare system is often criticized for not adequately preparing medical students and physicians to treat perimenopause or menopause symptoms. How has medical training failed to prepare providers for this? What specific training or policy changes are needed to improve perimenopause and menopause management?
- For many women, perimenopause is still a taboo subject. How can we break the silence and stigma surrounding perimenopause, especially when it comes to communicating sexual health and lifestyle changes with your husband or life partner?

40–50%

OF WOMEN EXPERIENCE LOSS OF SEXUAL
DRIVE IN PERIMENOPAUSE AND MENOPAUSE
— NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The emotional and physical impacts of perimenopause can be profound. How can communities and healthcare providers better support women through this transition to reduce suffering and improve their quality of life?
- What policies and workplace practices could better support early prevention plans for employees going through perimenopause, How does early awareness shape long-term health, career, and personal outcomes?
- Perimenopause is linked to an increased risk of serious health conditions like cardiovascular disease, brain fog and fatigue. How can women proactively manage their health during perimenopause to mitigate these risks?
- How can we rebrand perimenopause as a powerful and respected life transition?
- What led you to produce this film and why now?



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WRAP UP

QUESTIONS

- Several experts argue that perimenopause care must start younger. What does prevention look like in one's 30s, and how could it reshape women's long-term health?
- How can schools, employers, and media help normalize conversations about perimenopause, just as they have for puberty and pregnancy?
- What message or moment from The (M) Factor 2 will you carry with you?
- What's one action you can take to raise awareness, advocate for better care, or support someone navigating perimenopause?
- Many stories and experiences have been featured in the film. Whose story/experience resonated with you and what did you learn from it?
- After watching this film and engaging in our discussion, what is the first step you will take to either educate others about perimenopause or advocate for better menopause support in your community or workplace?
- Describe how you are feeling after watching this film. What do you think you need to take care of your short and long term self and medical care needs?
- Healthcare Practitioner / Administrators: Multiple organizations and medical facilities in regions across the US were featured in the documentary. What is one big idea you learned about today that you could apply to your own medical practice to help younger women be proactive about taking advanced self care steps for perimenopause?

