

Pre Menstrual Syndrome

What is PMS?

Premenstrual syndrome is a group of symptoms that may vary from mild to severe. One out of three women of childbearing age will experience PMS. Little is known about its cause and treatment.

When does PMS occur and what are the symptoms?

It is important to understand that PMS occurs between midcycle and the onset of menstruation. Symptoms may appear at puberty or as late as menopause. The onset of symptoms seems to follow a shock to the endocrine (hormone) system. Such shocks are menstruation, childbirth, tubal ligation, hysterectomy, going on and off the birth control pill, or major life stress. It appears that PMS is hereditary and symptoms can worsen with age.

Some of the most common symptoms of PMS are:

- irritability
- mood changes
- cramps
- headache
- fatigue
- depression
- swelling and bloating
- breast tenderness
- constipation
- tension

How can you tell if you have PMS?

To begin, do the following steps:

1. Identify your symptoms.
2. Keep a daily record of your symptoms.
3. Go over your daily records with your health care provider.

Is there a cure for PMS?

The symptoms of PMS can be treated. Try the following measures to relieve the discomforts of PMS:

- Eat 6 small meals instead of 3 regular meals a day.
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep nightly.
- Exercise daily (relieves tension and decreases water retention.)
- Add Vitamin B6 foods in your diet (corn, liver, wheat, yeast, unsalted sunflower seeds and peanuts).
- Eat at least 45 grams of protein daily.
- Decrease fluid retention by using a natural diuretic; (1 lemon in water daily or 100% Minute Maid juice).
- Avoid salty foods such as pickles, potato chips, other "fast foods".

- Learn the rule of the S's: no salt, soup or sauces.
- Eat frozen foods instead of canned food.
- Drink no more than 1 carbonated drink a day.
- Eat bananas and oranges for potassium replacement.
- Eat fruit instead of sweets for snacks.
- Decrease stress through exercising, dancing, or focusing on fun and relaxing activities.
- Over-the-counter drugs available for relief of PMS symptoms (Tylenol and a mild fluid eliminator) may be helpful.

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