

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) includes symptoms that occur in conjunction with your period. It is believed that they are caused by rapidly changing hormones in preparation for the end of the menstrual cycle. While the symptoms of PMS can be painful, they should not be debilitating. Your period is just one part of your life, and your PMS should be too.

Symptoms

While symptoms vary widely from woman to woman, they may include:

- Aches and pains
- Anxiety
- Bloating
- Breast tenderness
- Fatigue
- Headaches/Backaches
- Irritability
- Mood swings and/or depression
- Skin problems/acne
- Tearfulness
- Trouble concentrating

Diagnosis

Your health care provider will need to run additional tests in order to rule out other causes for your symptoms. He or she may run a thyroid test because thyroid problems are also very common in women of childbearing age.

In addition, your provider may have you keep a diary of your PMS symptoms, including how long they last and their severity. This diary and the definition of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology will help the provider make a diagnosis.

The definition states that you have PMS if :

- Symptoms are present 5 days before period for at least 3 menstrual cycles in a row.
- Symptoms end within 4 days after your period begins.
- Symptoms interfere with some of your normal activities.

Treatment

Relief of PMS symptoms begins with a thorough assessment of the symptoms and their impact on your daily life. Treatment includes:

- Learning about your symptoms and understanding that the feelings you are having are related to your menstrual cycle. One tip to know your symptoms better is to RECORD YOUR FEELINGS IN A DIARY.
- EATING A BALANCED DIET, including reductions in the amount of caffeine, salt, and sugar consumed. Occasionally, nutritional supplements are recommended.
- EXERCISING REGULARLY will help you to deal with extra stress and monthly symptoms.
- OVER THE COUNTER PAIN RELIEVERS can relieve the pain of cramps, headache or breast tenderness.

For More Information:

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