

PMS - Premenstrual Syndrome

Premenstrual syndrome or PMS is one of the most common forms of hormonal imbalance, affecting over 80% of women in the United States but is undiagnosed by most physicians.



Premenstrual Syndrome:

PMS is a disorder characterized by a set of hormonal changes that trigger disruptive symptoms in a significant number of women for up to two weeks prior to menstruation. Of the estimated 40 million sufferers, more than 5 million require medical treatment for marked mood and behavioral changes. Often symptoms tend to taper off with menstruation and women remain symptom-free until the two weeks or so prior to the next menstrual period. These regularly recurring symptoms from ovulation until menses typify PMS, premenstrual syndrome.

Characteristics

Over 150 symptoms have been attributed to PMS. After complaints of feeling "out-of-control", anxious, depressed and having uncontrollable crying spells, the most common complaints are headache and fatigue. But symptoms may vary from month to month and there may even be symptom-free months. No women present with all the PMS symptoms. Characteristically symptoms may be both physical and emotional. They may include physical symptoms as headache, migraine, fluid retention, fatigue, constipation, painful joints, backache, abdominal cramping, heart palpitations and weight gain. Emotional and behavioral changes may include anxiety, depression, irritability, panic attacks, tension, lack of co-ordination, decreased work or social performance and altered libido.

Originally described in 1931 by an American neurologist, the grouping of symptoms has remained the same:

Aside from the regularity of symptoms seen prior to menstruation, there are certain elements which distinguish PMS from other disorders:

*PMS may often be triggered by hormonal changes. It tends to begin at puberty, after pregnancy, after starting birth control pills, after hormone related surgery as hysterectomy or tubal ligation or around the onset of the menopause. In fact, it is not unusual for the PMS sufferer to confuse her symptoms with those of an early menopause.

*Heredity appears to be a factor although specific symptoms may differ between sisters or mother and daughters.

*There is often an aura of increased activity prior to the worse symptoms of PMS or migraines. At this time, the woman may clean the house, function with little sleep, and feel euphoric. This is followed by the PMS symptoms, migraine, fatigue, exhaustion, depression and the inability to function. Women typically feel “out of control” at this time and this can cause the signs and symptoms of depression.

The female hormone estrogen starts to rise after menstruation and peaks around mid-cycle (ovulation). It then rapidly drops only to slowly rise and then fall again in the time before menstruation. Estrogen hold fluids and with increasing estrogen comes fluid retention: many women report weight gains of five pounds premenstrually..

PMS Relief:

You don't have to just live with PMS. As is true of most expressions of hormonal imbalance, there are multiple underlying causes, and for that reason it is rare that a single remedy will resolve all symptoms of PMS. But a foundation of support for the body usually leads to relief. That support enables the body to make and balance its hormones as it was designed to do. Good nutrition, dietary supplements and adequate levels of natural progesterone are essential.



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