



OPTIONS CENTER HEALTH TOPIC



PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME

Taken from lectures of Dr. Janet R. Lang

Premenstrual syndrome is a disorder characterized by a variety of symptoms that worsen during the last two weeks of a woman's cycle. Often the onset of menstruation will bring the lessening of the symptoms. It is estimated that as many as 75% of all women experience some premenstrual symptoms at one time or another. About half of these women report symptoms severe enough to disrupt their day-to-day activities and around 5% of all women have symptoms so severe as to be incapacitating.

For many years physicians have discarded this syndrome as purely psychological and have recommended women to see a psychiatrist. Currently it is given greater credence by the medical community and there are drug companies marketing antidepressants to the millions of women who suffer from PMS. Despite increasing amounts of research into the causes of PMS, little is known except that it seems to be related to hormonal imbalances.

Theories about the cause of PMS range from poor diets, hormonal imbalances, food allergies, hypoglycemia, stress, maldigestion/mal-absorption, changes in brain chemistry, vitamin and/or mineral deficiencies, and toxic liver/colon syndromes. It is probable that the cause is based on a number of factors because the numbers of symptoms reported are so varied.

There have been over 150 different symptoms reported to worsen during a woman's cycle. Here are just a few of the most common:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Headache | <input type="checkbox"/> Short temper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet cravings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Bloating | <input type="checkbox"/> Low backache |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sadness | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue | <input type="checkbox"/> Acne |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swelling in limbs | <input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings | <input type="checkbox"/> Abdominal cramping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying spells | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicidal thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> Breast pain/tenderness |

Conventional treatment has been largely disappointing. Drugs are often prescribed to alleviate symptoms like bloating and fluid retention, depression and cycle irregularities. But often these drugs come with side effects that are just as undesirable. Stress reduction, diet changes and nutritional supplements will make dramatic improvements.

Additional Considerations

- ✓ Adrenal support is essential to balancing female hormones as they can contribute up to 36% of the ovarian hormone precursors (in premenopausal women) when working effectively. B-Complex will support the body when under stress.
- ✓ Good glycemic control is a very effective therapy to reduce PMS symptoms as it positively affects adrenal function and inhibits proinflammatory prostaglandins.
- ✓ Vitamin E is excellent for patients with sore breasts and improves oxygen utilization, while limiting free radical damage.
- ✓ Caffeine consumption will increase the risk of women experiencing PMS symptoms by nearly 4 times. This is due to the stimulation that caffeine provides to the adrenals driving them to produce cortisol and not sex hormone precursors.
- ✓ Food cravings associated with menopause -- especially sugar, bread and alcohol -- can be eliminated by increasing intake of protein.
- ✓ Dairy products must be kept to a minimum as they promote the excretion of magnesium and block its absorption. Most women with PMS have magnesium deficiency.

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