

Premenstrual Disorders

What is premenstrual syndrome?

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) causes symptoms in the week before your period. You may have physical symptoms (like cramps, bloating, or headache) or mood symptoms (like feeling more tense than usual, having trouble concentrating, or being irritable). You may crave certain foods, have trouble sleeping, or lose interest in things you usually enjoy. These symptoms get better soon after your period starts.

Many women have a few of these symptoms each month, but they are usually mild. Women with PMS have symptoms almost every month that affect what they do or how they feel.

What is premenstrual dysphoric disorder?

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) has many of the same symptoms as PMS, but they are more severe. If you have PMDD, you may have trouble doing your job or getting along with family and friends the week before your period. You may feel depressed during this time.

How do I know if I have PMS or PMDD?

Talk to your doctor if you have symptoms that happen most months in the week before your period. He or she will ask about your periods

and how you feel at different times during the month. Your doctor may have you keep a record of your symptoms. You may need to have blood tests to look for other causes of your symptoms.

How are PMS and PMDD treated?

Medicines for depression are one of the most effective ways to help PMS and PMDD symptoms. Some types of birth control pills can help PMS. These pills are sometimes used to make the time between periods longer, which may help with symptoms. Taking a calcium pill (up to 1,500 mg each day) may also help PMS.

Your doctor also may talk with you about other treatments, such as cognitive behavior therapy.

What if my symptoms get worse?

Call your doctor right away if you start feeling more depressed or have thoughts of suicide.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP's Patient Information Resource
<http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/premenstrual-syndrome-pms.html>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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