

Beat PMS/PMT Naturally with Nutrition

Pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) or pre-menstrual tension (PMT) is common and can affect as many as one in two women.

There are four sub-groups of PMS:

- PMS-A which main symptoms are Anxiety, irritability and insomnia
- PMS-C which main symptoms are sugar cravings, increased appetite, headaches and fatigue
- PMS-D which main symptoms are Depression, forgetfulness and confusion
- PMS-H which main symptoms are fluid retention, weight gain, bloating and breast tenderness.

PMS-A

Starting as much as two weeks before a period and slowly getting worst as the period approaches this is the most common group of symptoms.

A deficiency in B vitamins and magnesium means that the liver is less productive at breaking down oestrogen and an excess starts to build up which upsets the brain chemicals which are thought to be the cause of the PMS symptoms of anxiety, irritability and insomnia.

To combat PMS-A symptoms:

Include in the diet foods that are rich in the B vitamins such as whole grains, oats, soy flour, pasta, meat, seafood, nuts, pulses, yeast extract, eggs, green leafy vegetables, poultry, oily fish, dried fruit, beans, liver, bananas, walnuts and avocado.

Include in the diet foods rich in magnesium such as nuts, green leafy vegetables, egg yolk, peas, whole grain cereals, soy beans, seafood, seaweed products, meat and bananas.

Constipation can cause the retention of excess oestrogen; avoid constipation by eating a high fibre diet and drinking plenty of fluids. Dietary fibre can be found in whole grain cereals, seeds, nuts, root vegetables, fruits and in supplement form bran, psyllium seed, linseed and ispaghula husks. Fluids can be taken as mineral water, fruit juices and herbal teas.

If symptoms are very severe then supplements of B vitamins and magnesium should be taken.

PMS-C

Many women find that a week before their period starts they have a craving for carbohydrates especially chocolate and sweets. These cravings are due to low blood sugar levels thought to be produced by low progesterone and high oestrogen levels.

Consuming chocolates and sweets is a temporary measure, these will raise the blood sugar level which will result in the eliminating the cravings but only for a few hours and then the cravings come back and start all over again. The body releases adrenaline to raise low blood sugar levels, these produce side effects of shaking, pounding heart and sweating.

To combat PMS-C symptoms:

Eat little and often, six little meals during the day instead of three.

Avoid alcohol, sweets and chocolates as these will in the long run lower blood sugar levels.

To keep a more stable blood sugar level and to stop the levels dropping to sharply, eat plenty of high fibre foods such as whole grain cereals, seeds, nuts, root vegetables, fruits and take in supplement form any of the following bran, psyllium seed, linseed and ispaghula husks.

Consume large amounts of magnesium food such as nuts, green leafy vegetables, egg yolk, peas, whole grain cereals, soy beans, seafood, seaweed products, meat and bananas.

To ease the symptoms of a shaking and pounding heart cut down on caffeine beverages such as tea and coffee and other stimulants such as smoking.

Research has shown that Chromium influence blood sugar levels. Consume foods that are rich in chromium such as mushrooms, egg yolk, cheese, fruit and fruit juices, honey, vegetables, black pepper, thyme, red meat, chicken, shrimps and whole grain cereals.

PMS-D

Often, a few days before a period starts, depression sets in normally followed by anxiety symptoms. The depression is caused by the upset of brain chemicals caused by the low oestrogen levels.

To combat PMS-C symptoms:

Eat plenty of foods rich in vitamin B6 such as liver, whole grains, meat, oily fish, soy products, nuts especially walnuts, bananas, green leafy vegetables, avocado, egg yolk, wheat bran, wheat germ, kidney, cantaloupe and cabbage.

Consume plenty of foods rich in vitamin B3 such as liver, lean meat, whole wheat products, oily fish, eggs, roasted peanuts, poultry, avocados, dates, figs and prunes. Foods rich in zinc, magnesium and iron are also beneficial as they help the body excrete lead which has been linked to blocking the effects of oestrogen. Foods rich in zinc are red meat, seafood, whole grains, offal, pulses, eggs, cheese, brewers yeast, pumpkin seeds and ground mustard. Foods rich in magnesium are figs, lemons, grapefruit, corn, almonds, nuts, seeds, dark green vegetables, apples, soy beans, seafood, seaweed products, meat and eggs. Foods rich in iron are shellfish, red meats, sardines, wheat germ, wholemeal bread, egg yolk, green vegetables, dried fruit, pork liver, beef kidney, oysters, nuts, beans, asparagus and oatmeal.

Counselling or psychiatric help may be needed in severe cases of depression and anxiety.

PMS-H

The brain chemicals become affected when oestrogen levels are high and progesterone levels are too low, one of these brain chemicals increases levels of a hormone called aldosterone. Aldosterone controls the amount of water and salt the adrenal glands produce and the amount the kidneys retain.

Bloating and weight gain occurs when the body retains too much salt and water when there is an excess amount of Aldosterone.

To combat PMS-H symptoms:

Avoid refined carbohydrates such as white bread and flour and eat a diet rich in fibre. High fibre foods are whole grain cereals, seeds, nuts, root vegetables, fruits and fibre supplements are bran, psyllium seed, linseed and ispaghula husks.

Salt encourages water retention so it needs to be cut out, use plenty of herbs instead to give flavour.

Avoid salty foods such as salted peanuts and crisps.

Consume large amounts of mineral water. Water in fact acts as a diuretic which increases the amount of urine the kidneys produce thus ridding the body of salt and water. It does not increase bloating.

Mild diuretics such as watermelon, cucumber, camomile, thyme, parsley and raspberry leaf tea and herbal diuretics can relieve bloating.

Bloating can also be relieved by vitamin B6, foods rich in vitamin B6 are liver, whole grains, meat, oily fish, soy products, nuts especially walnuts, bananas, green leafy vegetables, avocado, egg yolk, wheat bran, wheat germ, kidney, cantaloupe and cabbage.

The following supplements may help if you are suffering from PMS/PMT.

Vitamin B6 start off with one 40mg tablet after an evening meal, if this is not sufficient try 50mg tablet twice daily in the next menstrual cycle. This still does not help then increase up to 200 mg daily dose in each menstrual cycle. Extra vitamin B6 is needed if the patient is a smoker, on the pill or drinks alcohol regularly.

The tablets should be taken three days before the onset of PMS symptoms and stopped two days into the period. Do not take over 200mg of vitamin B6 daily as side effects may occur.

Vitamin B complex to be taken daily following the instructions on the pack.

Magnesium - to be taken daily following the instructions on the pack.

Zinc 30 - 50 mg daily for 3 months then 15 mg daily as maintenance

Evening primrose oil - Evening primrose oil is very good at relieving premenstrual breast pain,

Evening primrose oil is available on NHS prescription for the treatment of sore breasts. Take a capsule with or after food.

Vitamin E - to be taken daily following the instructions on the pack. Some women find that vitamin E supplements are helpful, particularly for PMSD symptoms.

Other therapies a woman suffering from PMS symptoms may want to try are:

Herbalism, Chinese medicine, Aromatherapy, Homeopathy and acupuncture.

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Reference website: <http://www.fascinatinglist.com/fitness-health/article4148.htm>