

PMS-A Monthly Struggle in Women



Anjana Agarwal*

Nutritionist and Aromatherapist, SNT Women's University, India

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***Corresponding author:** Anjana Agarwal, SEO Home Science, Nutritionist and Aromatherapist, SNT Women's University, NIOS, Noida, India, Tel: +91-9958593488; Email: dranjanaagarwal@gmail.com

Opinion

A global question from every other girl in new generations is that why am I a girl who has to undergo sufferings every month? I get goose bumps as periods come close with the chain reaction of tension, tiredness and tears. Further many emotional buttons push and hefty cravings for chips, ice creams, colas, chocolate or chat trigger.

What it is?

Menstrual cycle is a natural process of revealing the ability of the woman to get pregnant. Normally it is of 28 days consisting of two phases, i.e. follicular phase and luteal phase; during which an egg either gets fertilized for pregnancy or gets released during menstruation. Release of unfertilized egg along with some uterine tissues via vaginal bleeding is referred as menstruation which occurs every month. A day or week before monthly menstruation, many females face challenging symptoms which is PMS or Premenstrual Syndrome. Though its cause is still unclear, but it is found associated with rise in estrogen and progesterone hormones during luteal phase and aggravated by nutritional deficiencies, toxic environmental exposure and stress. PMS is often considered normal and tried to get managed with suitable therapy and medicines. It results in moodiness, bloating, food craving, weight gain, fatigue, breast tenderness, mild to severe headache, acne, crying for no reasons, change in sex drive, sleep pattern appear before onset of periods or menstruation. Onset of symptoms and degree of severity of them vary from lady to lady and period of period. In some cases only they need clinical treatment. However, PMS symptoms sometimes overlaps with other health issues like depression, anxiety disorder, thyroid, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue, dysmenorrhea and endometriosis.

PMS is often aggravated by exposure of the body by xenobiotics and endocrine disruptors compounds (EDC). EDC are common in our surrounding in the form of radiation, plastics, pollution and wide range of chemicals in food chain, household cleaner, medicines, cosmetics, industries and automobiles. As the name suggest these disrupts the hormones

and lead to hormone imbalance and myriad health problems including PMS. Dietary habits and lifestyle greatly impacts PMS and its severity. Excessive consumption of salt, sugar and alcohol worsen symptoms of PMS. Vitamin and mineral deficiencies also intensify symptoms of PMS. A lady craving for sugar-laden foods is a manifestation of the body's attempt to increase serotonin level in order to improve her mood and behaviour. High sugar intake tends to cause spike in insulin level and increase water retention in the body and deplete minerals. Hike in serotonin level after sugar intake is temporary and soon serotonin level is down triggering series of negative thinking and bad behaviour. Interesting serotonin can be synthesized nutrient building blocks such as omega-3, magnesium, tyrosine and tryptophan. Sprinkle of one table spoon of roasted flax seeds powder over a bowl of curd or breakfast cereals, snacking with banana, moong sprouts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, vegetables containing spinach and other greens, beet, carrot, beans and capsicum, milk, paneer, if become integral part of your daily diet can be supportive to fight gluttony and gloominess. Whole grains are rich source fibre and B -vitamins. However, they should be added in the diet without additives, preservatives, trans fats and saturated fats because latter may consequently result in irritability, mood swings and depression. Caffeine and nicotine elevate the mood temporarily but have adverse effect on the brain and body later on. Rejecting junk food and accepting balanced diet is easy and effective way to alleviate symptoms of PMS.

Nutritionally, B vitamins particularly vitamin thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B6, folate and vitamin B12, and the vitamin C, E, D and among minerals like calcium, magnesium and potassium are crucial in reducing the PMS symptoms. Food should also contain high protein. These nutrients help to synthesize and secretion of adequate amount of hormones and serotonin, GABA and other related compounds. Further Exercise helps to improve mood and reduce lethargy. Yoga and exercise during menstruation is bafflement in the society. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) helps to reduce the problematic thoughts and behaviour which are common during PMS.



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