

PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS):

PMS: Physical and emotional symptoms that start around ovulation (around day 14 of your cycle) and go away when your period starts or soon after.

COMMON SYMPTOMS:

- Emotional: mood swings, irritability, crying easily, depression, anxiety, internal tension, forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, brain fog
- Physical: headache, acne, breast tenderness, fatigue, joint or muscle aches, back ache, food cravings, bloating, upset stomach, diarrhea, constipation, cramping

DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT:

- PMS calendar: best way to determine timing and severity of symptoms, recommend use for 2-3 months to diagnose then use to follow benefit of treatment (app's are helpful)
- Often when tracking PMS symptoms, women will find that the symptoms are occurring all month and worse right before their period, knowing this really helps guide treatment
- PMS calendar: predict when the symptoms are coming, we all do better when we are prepared and not surprised each month by the symptoms

Lifestyle and dietary management (best results are when you make these changes all month):

- **Exercise** (helps emotional and physical symptoms): 30 minutes 5x/week (**frequency is more important than intensity**), best exercise: whatever you enjoy without injury, yoga, cardio (increase your heart rate), weight training
- **Stress reduction:** meditation, deep breathing (3 min/d or when your anxiety increases), yoga, setting boundaries, don't overload yourself during PMS, stress worsens PMS Sx
- **SLEEP!!!**, best benefit if you go to bed before 10pm
- **Diet** (helps emotional and physical symptoms):
 - Avoid inflammatory foods and reduce insulin spikes
 - don't skip meals especially breakfast
 - healthy fat at each meal/snack, these are high in calories: avocado, omega 3 fatty acids-wild salmon, lake trout, tuna, walnuts, nuts/seeds, flaxseed, full-fat coconut milk, olive, coconut, avocado, palm oil (not palm kernel oil), animal fats (only from organic animals), olives, ghee
 - **Sugar cravings** (hard to control): eat protein and healthy fat at every meal, decrease caffeine and alcohol, reducing sugar reduces cravings, **when you have cravings:** glutamine 500-1000mg empty capsule on your tongue when you have a craving, OR try Sweet Defeat lozenges on your tongue when you have a craving (by Sweet Defeat) - *don't use either if pregnant/breast feeding/diabetes/on diabetes medications such as metformin*
 - reduce sugar/sweets/carbs (look up glycemic index (GI) www.glycemicindex.com, eat foods with GI <55), look up your top 30 favorite foods and then make substitutions in same food category
 - reduce salt (avoid packaged foods, sodas)
 - limit/avoid alcohol and caffeine and sodas
 - Avoid foods that have hormones in them (conventional dairy and meat), best to eat organic
 - Consider eliminating foods that cause inflammation and food allergies/insensitivities: gluten, dairy, soy (elimination diet - avoid the food X 3 wks, if no benefit in 3 wks, unlikely to be a problem for you, if you feel better, slowly add back every 3-4 days to see how much you can eat)

- Foods TO Eat:
 - Meat: chicken, lean beef, salmon, fatty fish
 - veggies (6-7 servings daily) especially cruciferous veggies: broccoli/cauliflower/Brussels sprouts, eggs, increase whole grains (brown rice, oatmeal)
 - fruit (GI <55): berries, apricots, cantaloupe, oranges, pears, peaches, plums, kiwi, apples, cherries, prunes.
 - increase water intake (80 oz/d)
 - increase fiber (goal 30gm/d - don't increase too fast or you will have bloating)

Vitamins/supplements (try 2-3 based on symptoms, any of these may take 1-3 months to see benefit):

- Magnesium citrate (helps mood, water retention, sleep): 300-800 mg before bed(side effect: diarrhea)
- Calcium 600 mg 2x/d (reduces PMS symptoms by 50%, may work better with Magnesium, calcium causes constipation so combining will reduce diarrhea or constipation)
- Vitamin C 750 mg/d, naturally helps your body make prog
- B6 (mood/physical symptoms): 50-200 mg/d, take B complex
- Vitamin B2 400 daily to prevent headaches
- Feverfew (prevent headaches) 25 mg daily
- Turmeric (headaches, cramps, pain) 1000-2500 capsules/d
- Ginger (cramps, headaches, nausea) 1000 2x/d
- vitamin D3 1000-2000 IU/ d
- Omega 3 fatty acids 2-4 grams/d (avoid if on a blood thinner)
- Melatonin (sleep) 1-3 mg nightly
- vitamin E (breast tenderness) 600-800 IU/d
- chasteberry 500-1000 mg/d (good for **ALL** PMS Sx)
- St John's Wort (mood/physical symptoms) 500-1000/d, one study showed combining with Chasteberry, may help even more (**don't** take if on antidepressant or anti-anxiety med)
- evening primrose oil (breast tenderness)
- Progesterone cream 20 mg from day 12-28 (doesn't work for most women)
- Migraines: Tylenol + Advil +/- 4-6 oz of caffeine or Excedrin migraine (may work just as well as Rx migraine meds)
- Rhodiola: helps to balance the stress response, promotes calm and boosts mental and physical stamina. Dose: 200-400 mg in capsules or tablets daily (avoid if h/o bipolar)
(Preferred companies: Pure Encapsulations, Integrative Therapeutics)

MEDICATIONS:

- SSRIs: prozac, Paxil (can be taken daily or started on day 14 until day 2 of your period), benefit within 4-6 hours of starting
- Anti anxiety medications (most are habit forming)
- Diuretics for water retention
- Migraine meds
- Prescription progesterone capsules (work best for sleep issues), be careful, too much can make you feel bad
- Birth control pills

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

- Acupuncture can help PMS and menstrual cramps
- Light therapy (light box 10,000 lux) 20 min/d
- Massage

ANY CHANGE CAN TAKE 2-3 MONTHS TO SEE

IMPROVEMENT! Write down your changes and keep a menstrual calendar to monitor benefit. If you don't write it down and stay accountable, you won't make the changes.