

## Easing PMS Naturally

Premenstrual Syndrome affects 50 to 80% of all women. Many jokes have been made about PMS but for the women who experience it regularly it can be devastating. Women often feel as if they are crazy, going off the deep end or losing it. Others experience physical discomfort that temporarily decreases their quality of life. Fortunately there are often simple causes and simple cures for PMS. Natural medicine offers great healing options that can eliminate PMS completely

The list of PMS symptoms is too long to state here. Some common symptoms are depression, irritability, anxiety, fatigue, food cravings, headaches, acne, bloating, diarrhea, back pain, cramps, breast tenderness and water retention. Many women describe feeling out of control. It is very common for women to get emotionally sensitive and cry easily.

There is a broad range of the length of time that symptoms persist. PMS can last for several hours or as long as 2 weeks every cycle. Some women spend fully 1/2 of their reproductive years suffering from PMS.

PMS can be caused by many different factors. At the top of the list are hormone fluctuations. Hormonal factors such as birth control pills, hormone replacement therapy and some medications can increase the intensity of PMS symptoms.

The balance of estrogen to progesterone is key and seems to be more fragile in the premenstrual part of the cycle. Oral or topical progesterone will often decrease or eliminate symptoms which indicates that low progesterone levels, or conversely, high estrogen levels, can cause PMS.

Diet plays a big part in PMS. Food issues that aggravate PMS are refined sugar and bad fats, highly processed foods, caffeine, chocolate, dairy products, alcohol and foods high in salt. Decreasing these foods can often really help decrease symptoms. Eating a whole foods diet can set the stage for balancing your hormones.

Nutritional deficiencies are also a big cause of PMS. Many women's symptoms will disappear by simply taking vitamin B6 on a daily basis. Deficiencies of vitamins A, E, magnesium, calcium and zinc also can cause PMS so correcting these deficiencies will improve symptoms. Birth control pills, poor diet or poor absorption of nutrients can all cause nutritional deficiencies.

Emotional PMS symptoms can be caused by decreased levels of serotonin and high levels of unmanaged stress. Correcting low serotonin and using tools such as yoga, exercise and conscious breathing can offset the effects of stress. Progesterone, which may be low in some women premenstrually, acts as a natural calming agent. So if progesterone is low or overwhelmed by estrogen anxiety and irritation can occur.

Other treatments which can help PMS are acupuncture, individualized herbal formulas, evening primrose oil and bioflavonoids. Exercise can be a life saver in terms of decreasing PMS symptoms and reducing tension.

So ladies you don't just have to live with PMS. There are safe, natural ways to actually make it go away and get your life back. Discover and treat the cause of PMS and use all of that energy to create or do something positive and beautiful in your life!