

Premenstrual Syndrome/ Tension

What is the Premenstrual Syndrome?

The premenstrual syndrome is a complex of symptoms, both physical and emotional, which occurs a few days before the onset of menstruation.

Signs and Symptoms

The most common ones are:

Physical symptoms: Headache, feeling bloated, swollen ankles, weight gain, and fatigue.

Emotional symptoms: Irritability, insomnia, decreased sex drive, tearfulness, poor concentration, irrational food cravings, mood swings, depressed feelings.

PMS where symptoms are particularly severe is called Premenstrual Dysmorphic Disorder.

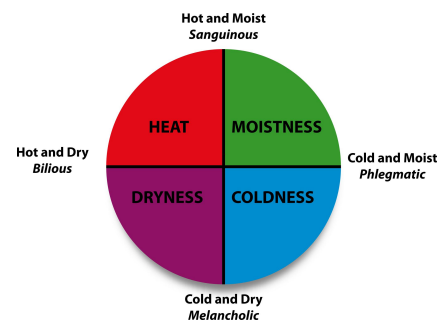
What Causes PMS?

The exact cause of premenstrual syndrome is unknown, but several factors may contribute to it. Internal disharmony brought about by changes in the balance of the woman's hormones lead to a number of the symptoms. There is a rise in the female hormone estrogen, and a fall in progesterone levels. The result is a build-up of salt and water in the body, which leads to several other symptoms.

Risk factors include an improper diet, over-rich in foods which are hot and moist or cold and moist foods, such as salty and sweet foods.

The Tibb View of PMS

As many symptoms such as water retention, tissue swelling, mood swings, and cravings may have several causes, the qualities associated with PMS should be assessed for each woman and can affect all temperaments.



Management of PMS

Management is aimed at **reducing the qualities associated with the person's dominant temperament**, with the appropriate Tibb Lifestyle Factors. Special attention should be given to foods with high nutritious value. This assists Physis in addressing both the symptoms and the causes of PMS.

Tibb Lifestyle Factors

Food and Drink

- **Phlegmatic temperament** - eat mostly **Hot & Dry foods** - such as garlic, onion, fenugreek and mustard, **followed by Hot & Moist foods** - like mutton, ginger, turmeric and black pepper, and **Cold & Dry foods** - such as citrus fruit, basil, yogurt and mealie meal and the **least amount of Cold & Moist foods** - like milk, rice, cucumber and watermelon.
- **Sanguinous Temperament** - eat mostly **Cold & Dry foods** - such as yogurt, citrus fruit, beef and basil **followed by Cold & Moist foods** - like coriander, rice, beetroot and broccoli, and **Hot & Dry foods** - such as garlic, onion, chicken and eggs, and the **least amount of Hot & Moist foods** - like white flour products, sugar, cheese and bananas.

- **Melancholic Temperament** - eat mostly **Hot & Moist foods** - such as ginger, olive oil, turmeric and honey, **followed by Hot & Dry foods** - like garlic, onion, chicken and eggs, and **Cold & Moist Foods** - such as coriander, rice, beetroot and broccoli and the **least amount of Cold & Dry foods** - like yogurt, citrus fruit, legumes and tomatoes.
- **Bilious Temperament** - eat mostly **Cold & Moist foods** - such as rice, coriander, cucumber and beetroot, **followed by Cold & Dry foods** - like citrus fruit, basil, yogurt and mealie meal, and **Hot & Moist foods** - such as ginger, olive oil, turmeric and honey, and the **least amount of Hot & Dry foods** - like onion, eggs, alcohol and garlic.

Dietary advice to be followed by all temperamental types

- Consume more fresh vegetables, fruit, and yogurt. Consume foods that are rich in calcium such as sesame seeds, celery and oranges.
- Avoid red meats; eat fish and chicken instead.
- Cut down on white flour products (like bread and pasta) and sugar.
- Avoid adding salt to meals, and drinking caffeine and alcoholic beverages a week before a menstrual period is expected.

Other Lifestyle Advice

- **Breathing exercises:** Tibb deep breathing exercises lowers irritability and anxiety, and dampen mood swings.
- **Physical exercise:** Any form will do, lasting 30 minutes/day at least 3 days/week. This boosts mood and reduces emotional stress. It also helps control appetite and regulates blood sugar levels.
- **Sleep:** Increasing sleep time for a few days before expected premenstrual symptoms helps to reduce the intensity of symptoms.
- **Relaxation:** Taking a hot bath with salt added (1 cup each of baking soda and sea salt per bath) helps. Regular massage reduces stress and anxiety.
- **Meditation:** Tibb meditation exercises 15min early morning and at bedtime is recommended.

Herbal Remedies

- Rosemary tea: Before a period, steep dried leaves (1tsp) in a cup of boiling water. Drink warm.
- Evening primrose oil: Helps reduce cramping and dampen mood swings.
- Poppy seeds (2tsp), almonds (10), liquidised in milk (1 glass), sweetened with honey to taste, drink at breakfast.
- Fennel seed (1tsp), cumin (½tsp), cardamom (2 crushed) in skim milk or water (1cup), boil down to 100ml. Strain and drink 3-4 times daily.

Hot & Dry Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes		
all small bird meat	bitter melon	avocado	cashews	celery seeds	eggs	mustard oil	aniseed	alcohol	pungent and bitter flavourants	chilli sauce			spicy dishes		
	celery	grapes		hazelnuts			chickpeas	cinnamon		grape juice				mustard sauce	
	green pepper			pecan nuts			fenureek seeds	cloves, garlic		herbal teas				peri-peri sauce	
	leek			walnuts			gram flour	green/red chilli		(see herbs)					
	onion						mustard seeds	fenureek							
	red pepper						papad	lavender							
	yellow pepper							nutmeg							
										oregano					
										paprika					
					parsley										
				rocket, rosemary											
				saffron											
				tarragon											

Hot & Moist Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes	
buck	artichokes	bananas	almonds	bread	clarified butter	castor oil	bay leaves	green tea	honey	mayonnaise	biscuits	all bran flakes	sweet dishes	
goat	asparagus	dates	brazil nuts	bulgar wheat	condensed milk	olive oil	black pepper	hot water	molasses		cakes	bran		
goose	olives	guavas	pistachios	flour	cheese	sunflower oil	cayenne pepper	juices	salt		chocolate	honey smaks		
lamb	spinach	mangoes	apricot kernels	pasta	cream cheese		chives	(see fruits)	sugar		liquorice	muesli		
liver	spring onion	peaches		rye bread	mother's milk		ginger, fennel	herbal teas				vermicelli		nutri-k
mutton	sweet potato	papaya		sunflower seeds	(for babies)		green masala	(see herbs)						
turkey	turnips			wheat	fresh cream		marjoram							
				macaroni				mint, sage						
				dill seeds				soya sauce						
							thyme, turmeric							
					watercress									
					white pepper									