

## Premenstrual Syndrome

### ***What is Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)?***

Premenstrual Syndrome, or PMS, is a combination of physical and emotional symptoms that many women have between 2 and 14 days before their monthly period begins.

### ***What are the symptoms?***

Some women have few or no symptoms of PMS, and some have many. You may have PMS if you have at least 5 of these symptoms before your period starts:

- ▶ Get upset easily over little things.
- ▶ Feel tired because you don't sleep well or don't sleep long enough.
- ▶ Want to eat sweets, like ice cream and candy.
- ▶ Feel clumsy or prone to accidents.
- ▶ Feel depressed.
- ▶ Have swollen or tender breasts.
- ▶ Feel bloated or gain a few pounds.
- ▶ Feel less productive.

### ***What can I do about PMS?***

- ▶ Cut down on salt and sugar in your diet, and avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- ▶ Exercise.
- ▶ Get enough sleep. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same times each day. Talk to your family so they can help you by being quiet when you are resting.
- ▶ Recognize that your symptoms are real.

### ***Should I see a doctor?***

If proper diet and exercise do not help relieve your symptoms, you should talk to your doctor. There are some medications that may help your symptoms. Keep a diary of your symptoms for a few months that you can show your doctor. Each day write down what symptoms you have, when you have them, how intense they are, and how long they last.

### ***What is Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)?***

PMDD is a depressive disorder that is related to PMS. It affects 4% to 7% of women. PMDD shares many symptoms with PMS, but it has more severe psychiatric symptoms. Symptoms of PMDD are depression, severe mood swings, sleep problems, irritability, fatigue (feeling tired), headaches, and joint or muscle pain. Like PMS, PMDD only affects a woman for a certain part of her menstrual cycle. Eating right, exercising, and getting enough rest can help relieve symptoms of PMDD. Some prescription medicines may also help.

***This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her instructions.***

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