

# Wellness

## REVIEW

### Does Your Menstrual Cycle Rule Your Life?

For many women, premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a burden that can greatly affect their quality of life, impacting their ability to perform regular daily activities, affecting their workplace performance and often making it difficult for them to cope with the demands of everyday life. Unfortunately PMS is often viewed as an unpleasant, but unavoidable, consequence of being a woman. It does not have to be so! Women do not have to live with the monthly annoyance and inconvenience of PMS. If you, or someone you know, is affected by PMS, the good news is that Natural Medicines can help!

#### What is PMS?

PMS is the name given to a collection of physical and emotional symptoms related to a woman's menstrual cycle. The symptoms of PMS occur in the days or weeks before a period and usually resolve once the period has started. Some women experience mild symptoms for just a day or two before their periods, whereas others can feel physically uncomfortable and emotionally strung out for up to two weeks every month! The most common symptoms of PMS include:

Emotional	Physical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mood swings</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• Unexplained anger</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Teariness and weepiness</li><li>• Poor concentration</li><li>• Low libido</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abdominal bloating</li><li>• Digestive upsets – i.e. constipation, diarrhoea</li><li>• Breast tenderness and swelling</li><li>• Headaches</li><li>• Back pain</li><li>• Fluid retention</li><li>• Acne</li><li>• Clumsiness</li><li>• Food cravings – especially for carbohydrates and sweet foods (e.g. chocolate)</li></ul>

***Is all this just part of being a woman, something you have to accept and learn to live with? The answer is no! Ask us today about how to take control of your PMS symptoms.***

#### What Causes PMS?

While the exact cause of PMS is unknown, there are many factors that have been found to contribute to this pattern of dysfunction. Imbalances in the female reproductive hormones, oestrogen and progesterone, in the two weeks before a period are the most likely cause, however, other hormones can also play a part. Nutritional deficiencies in vitamin B6, magnesium, calcium and essential fatty acids are also known to increase the severity of PMS symptoms.

#### What Can I Take to Help Reduce PMS Symptoms?

Listed below are some of the natural solutions available to restore hormonal balance and correct nutritional deficiencies to reduce the symptoms of PMS:

- **Chaste Tree (*Vitex agnus castus*)** – This herb has been extensively researched for its ability to reduce premenstrual breast pain and swelling, regulate the menstrual cycle, reduce period pain, irritability, mood swings and abdominal bloating. Chaste tree works by helping to rebalance oestrogen and progesterone levels.
- **Dong Quai (*Angelica polymorpha*)** – This herb has been used for centuries in traditional Chinese herbal medicine to help to regulate the menstrual cycle and reduce period pain.
- **Vitamin B6** – This important nutrient may assist in the treatment of PMS by reducing anxiety, moodiness, irritability, sugar cravings, breast tenderness and abdominal bloating.
- **Magnesium** – This vital mineral is required for stress management, energy production and maintenance of healthy moods. Magnesium deficiency is associated with PMS symptoms, particularly irritability, depression, confusion, headaches and muscle aches.
- **Calcium** – Research shows that women with low calcium levels have higher rates of PMS. Calcium is the most abundant mineral in the body and if levels are inadequate, this can cause PMS symptoms of water retention, food cravings, muscle aches and moodiness.
- **Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids** – Omega-3 essential fatty acids are the healthy fats that come from food sources such as fish oil. These healthy fats can help manage pain, inflammation and PMS mood symptoms.

***Ask us today about which of these Natural Medicines are best for helping you manage your PMS symptoms.***

Finally, stress, poor food choices and lack of exercise can also contribute to the emotional and physical symptoms of PMS. By helping to rebalance your hormones, address nutritional deficiencies and address factors such as stress and diet, we can help PMS become a thing of the past!

