



Fact Sheet

Student Health Services, Texas A&M University

PMS: The College Woman's Survival Guide

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a condition that affects many women. Some women may find that experiencing PMS is not only physically uncomfortable, but also emotionally draining. Symptoms can range from barely noticeable to very severe.

Physical symptoms may include:

- Headaches
- Weight gain
- Muscle spasms
- Breast pain & tenderness
- Water retention
- Backaches
- Bloating
- Cramps

Emotional/behavioral symptoms may include:

- Anger
- Irritability
- Depression
- Tension
- Forgetfulness
- Food cravings
- Mood swings
- Uncontrolled crying
- Temper outbursts
- Difficulty in concentrating

HELPFUL COPING TECHNIQUES

Unfortunately, PMS has no “cure”, and no one remedy works for all women. Remember: Try to intervene with medication as little as possible.

Education

1. **Learn about PMS.** It is easier to cope with symptoms when you know what causes them.
2. **Keep a diary of your symptoms.** Identify how and when PMS affects you to help you figure out what treatments are working.
3. **See a physician.** A thorough exam will rule out physical causes.
4. **Involve friends and significant others.** Discussing your symptoms and feelings will help them to understand why you are acting the way you are.

Lifestyle

- Relaxation techniques can cause physiological and psychological changes such as decreased breathing rate and increased calmness.
- Exercise may stimulate the release of pain-relieving hormones and helps fight mild depression. It is also an excellent source of stress relief.
- Ibuprofen or other pain reliever taken in over-the-counter form helps relieve cramping.

Diet

Some PMS sufferers who adjust their diets notice a significant improvement.

- **Lowering salt intake** - may help reduce water retention.
- **Reduce caffeine intake** – can reduce breast tenderness.
- **Beware of sweets** - Many women crave simple carbohydrates and chocolate during PMS. Try small portions of sweets to curb your cravings.

PMS IS A REAL CONDITION!

If you experience symptoms that severely interfere with your everyday activities, please see a healthcare provider.