

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) is the term used to describe a group of physical and behavioral changes that some women go through the 1-2 weeks before their menstrual period begins each month. It is estimated that anywhere from 10-60% of all women suffer from moderate to severe PMS. What causes PMS is unclear. If the following symptoms persist after the women's period, then this is probably not PMS. Some of the major symptoms include:

1. Wide mood swings
2. Depression
3. Anxiety
4. Abdominal pain or bloated feelings
5. Breast pain
6. Back pain
7. Feeling tired, listless, fatigued
8. Increased appetite or cravings
9. Headaches

Experts do not agree on how to treat PMS. Some simple steps that might make a big difference include:

Decreasing

1. Salt intake
2. Caffeine (coffee, tea, soda pop, chocolate)
3. Sugar
4. Tobacco
5. Alcohol

Increasing

1. Exercise (at least 30 minutes 3 times per week)
2. Calcium
3. Whole grains in diet
4. Fresh fruits and vegetables

If your symptoms persist consult your health care provider regarding the different treatment options, including Ibuprofen, progesterone therapy, oral contraceptive therapy, vitamin therapy and diuretics and antidepressants.