

Pre Menstrual Syndrome/Tension

Contributed by Administrator
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80% of all women at sometime in their reproductive lives are affected by this condition. Symptoms can be many and very varied but usually stem from an imbalance of hormones that can very often be corrected by natural herbal medicine. PMS or PMT may be mild or severe and may last just one or two days or up to two weeks.

It is often divided into four different categories which often have different major symptoms for each category which are due to different types of hormonal disturbances.

The first type is usually due to high oestrogen and low progesterone levels. Seen in about 65% of all cases.

Major symptoms include Anxiety, Irritability, Mood swings and Nervous Tension.

The second type is usually due to low progesterone and seen in about 25% of all cases.

Major symptoms include Food Cravings, Headache, Fatigue, Dizziness, Palpitations and Increased Appetite.

The third type is usually due to low oestrogen, high progesterone, elevated aldosterone and low thyroid.

Major symptoms include Depression, Crying, Forgetfulness, Confusion and Insomnia.

This is usually seen in about 25% of cases.

The fourth type is usually due to elevated aldosterone.

Major symptoms include Fluid Retention, Weight Gain, Breast tenderness & Abdominal Distension, swollen hands and feet.

This is usually seen in about 65% of all cases.

Herbal treatment.

PMS is a very real problem to many women. Relief may be found however from a combination of the following herbs. Many of them can be extremely useful and by using a mixture of them and following the dietary advice given later in this leaflet may improve the condition no end. The greater the severity of the symptoms the more impressive will be the results. Herbal remedies work to rebalance the body and normalise the hormones which generally takes some time to be completely effective. Allow up to six months to give the remedies the opportunity to work successfully.

Herbs.

Hormonal balancers.

Chaemaelirium luteum (False Unicorn Root) and Anemone pulsatilla (Pasqueflower) are both ovarian tonics and regulators. Achillea millefolium (Yarrow) may also be used to normalise the cycles. Vitex agnus-castus, (Chaste berry)

works on the master gland of the body (the pituitary) to regulate hormone production.

Oestrogen Support.

Caulophyllum thalictroides (Blue Cohosh), *Cimicifuga racemosa* (Black Cohosh), *Salvia officinalis* (Sage) and *Trifolium pratense* (Red Clover), all contain chemical precursors of oestrogen which may be useful in supporting the natural hormone supply. The chinese herb Dang Gui (*Angelica sinensis*), is also used to support the natural hormone supply although it does not contain any oestrogen precursors.

Progesterone Support.

Dioscorea villosa (Wild Yam), is the only herb known to work in this way. A mexican plant originally used to manufacture the contraceptive pill. It apparently works by potentiating the action of the endogenous progesterone but does not actually increase the serum levels.

Uterine Tonics.

Supporting the general female reproductive system is necessary for optimum results. Strengthening and supporting the whole of this system is essential. The best known tonic herb for this entire system is probably *Rubus idaeus* (Red Raspberry), it is gentle but effective and imparts strength and regularity to the

whole of the reproductive system.

Further support can be supplied by

- *Leonurus cardiaca* (Motherwort)
- *Mitchella repens* (Squaw vine)
- *Lamium album* (White deadnettle).

Nervines and Anti-Depressants.

There are many herbs that have a place here, but *Hypericum perforatum* (St. John's Wort) is probably the best for the job. It works as well as any orthodox anti-depressant and can be backed up with herbs such as *Valeriana officinalis* (Valerian), *Verbena officinalis* (Blue vervain) and *Scutellaria laterifolia* (Skullcap) to name a few. These herbs can provide both relaxation and nervous energy so that fatigue and listlessness can be lifted and at the same time a calmness maintained.

It is important for Liver function to be maintained and for kidneys to eliminate unwanted hormones from the body.

Liver function can be enhanced by herbs such as

- *Carduus marianus* (Milkthistle)
- *Gentiana lutea* (Gentian)
- *Taraxacum officinale* (Dandelion root)
- *Verbena officinalis*(Blue Vervain)

Tonics such as

- *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow)
- *Leonurus cardiaca* can be important here.

Dietary Advice.

Vegetable protein intake should be raised as this stabilises blood sugar levels. Foods such as unrefined carbohydrates and legumes should be used.

Refined carbohydrates should be eaten in moderation.(e.g. sugars, honey, white flour products).

Concentrated carbohydrates should also be limited. (dried fruits, fruit juice etc)

Dairy products should be greatly reduced due to the increase of artificial hormones in the milk fats.

Increase polyunsaturated vegetable fats as these raise the intake of essential fatty acids.

Decrease animal fats as these upset prostaglandin formation.

Use hormone free meats and poultry,(free range/organic) and increase fish consumption.

Reduce salt as it enhances fluid retention.

Reduce alcohol, cocoa, coffee, chocolate and tea as they all stress the adrenal glands and impair energy production.

Raise fibre intake by increasing green leafy vegetables which also increases hormone clearance.

Supplements.

- Vitamin B Complex 50mg per day.
- Vitamin B6 100mg a day (up to 250mg/day in the week prior to the period)
- Evening primrose Oil. (3,000 mg daily) 6 x 500mg or 3 x 1000mg. (Helps prostaglandin formation)
- Magnesium 500mg twice daily

Lifestyle Advice.

Ensure you get plenty of rest and exercise.

Rest ensures that hormones do not accumulate in the body and cause imbalance.

Exercise helps reduce stress and weight control. Excess body fat can interfere with metabolism.

Exposing the body to sunlight helps regulate the pineal gland which controls cyclical processes in the body.