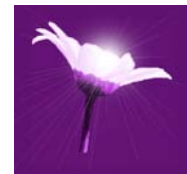


The Nutritional Management of Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS)



It is estimated that Pre-Menstrual Syndrome (PMS) occurs in 30-40% of menstruating women. The incidence of PMS increases in the 30 – 40 year old age group. 10% of PMS sufferers experience symptoms that are severe enough to cause absence from work on a regular monthly basis.

What Causes PMS

PMS is often the result of a combination of diet and lifestyle factors which negatively influence hormone balance. Research indicates that many women with PMS have the following hormonal / biochemical imbalances:

- Elevated Oestrogen Levels
- Decreased / Relative Decrease in Progesterone Levels
- Elevated Prolactin Levels
- Elevated Aldosterone Levels
- Decreased Tri-iodothyronine (T3) & Thyroxine (T4) Level
- Excessive Insulin Production
- Reduced Essential Fatty Acid Levels
- Reduced Prostaglandin Production
- Reduced Neurotransmitter production
- Reduced Magnesium, Zinc, & vitamins B6 & E levels
- Occasionally low oestrogen levels are found

Factors which influence the above imbalances are many & include: Xenoestrogens (environmental estrogens) present in the water supply, animal food products, plastics & pesticide residues (halogenated hydrocarbons) which remain in the food chain. The liver cannot detoxify these chemicals so they are stored in our fat & mimic oestrogen.

For More Information or to Book a Nutrition Consultation call

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What Are the Symptoms?

The symptoms associated with PMS arise from these biochemical changes. For example **FATIGUE** occurs because raised oestrogen & low progesterone levels result in impaired thyroid function.

BREAST TENDERNESS results from raised Prolactin & low vitamin E levels.

FLUID RETENTION is caused by elevated Aldosterone which results in increased potassium excretion & retention of sodium.

MOOD SWINGS & IRRITABILITY result from both fluid retention & reduced levels of vitamin B6, zinc & magnesium (which worsen fluid retention). Zinc, Magnesium & B6 are also required for the synthesis of prostaglandins which help to balance hormones and control **MENSTRUAL PAIN**.

Excessive insulin production indicates that a degree of insulin resistance and poor blood sugar regulation is associated with PMS causing **SUGAR & CARBOHYDRATE CRAVING, WEIGHT GAIN & MOOD SWINGS**.

Weight gain in turn results in an increased number & fat cells which manufacture oestrogen and contribute further to oestrogen dominance. Low serotonin levels also result in a **DEPRESSED MOOD, INSOMNIA, & CARBOHYDRATE CRAVINGS**.

Such cravings arise from the need to increase tryptophan intake from which serotonin & melatonin are made. Low levels of zinc, magnesium & B6 also result in reduced serotonin & melatonin production, and **INSOMNIA**.

MANY OF THESE BIOCHEMICAL IMBALANCES & THE SYMPTOMS THEY CAUSE CAN BE DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED WITH CHANGES TO DIET & LIFESTYLE. PROSTAGLANDIN PRODUCTION FOR EXAMPLE CAN BE MANIPULATED WITH DIET & DIETARY PHYTOESTROGENS CAN FURTHER HELP IMPROVE THE OESTROGEN-PROGESTERONE RATIO.

Do's & Don'ts

DON'T EAT TOO MUCH SATURATED FAT OR DAMAGED FATS: Limit red meat and dairy products. Avoid fried foods, including stir-fry's. Replace dairy products with soya, rice or oat milk, soya spreads & cheeses. Soya products supply **phytoestrogens** to help balance hormone levels.

Replace red meat with fish such as trout, salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines since these provide **Essential Fatty Acids (EFA's)** to help make Prostaglandins and balance hormones.

Include a tablespoon of seeds (pumpkin, linseed, sesame, sunflower) on wholegrain breakfast cereal or salad every day since these also contain **EFA's**.

DO LIMIT SOURCES OF CAFFEINE: Such as coffee, tea, chocolate, cola, and replace with herb teas, fruit teas, Rooibosch tea, dandelion coffee and bottled/filtered water. Caffeine is associated with PMS.

DO AVOID PROCESSED/FAST FOODS: Since these contain additives and are low in the nutrients required for good hormonal balance. Eat instead a fresh Organic whole-food diet to **avoid pesticide residues which mimic oestrogen**.

DO AVOID TAP WATER & increase your intake of bottled/filtered water to 8 glasses/2litres daily. This will help the liver to **detoxify used oestrogen & xenoestrogens**.

AVOID REFINED CARBOHYDRATES & SUGAR: Avoid white bread, pasta and rice and replace with brown wholegrain bread, pasta & rice to help **regulate blood sugar levels**. Include a serving of beans or lentils daily. The wholegrains, beans & lentils will also raise your fibre intake which has been shown to **remove used oestrogen** from the digestive tract so that it cannot be recycled. Increased fibre intake also helps to reduce the levels of unhealthy bacteria in the digestive tract **preventing the re-conjugation & recycling of old oestrogen**. The complex carbohydrates described above as well as lean chicken & turkey will also help to **raise tryptophan intake, & serotonin & melatonin levels**.

INCREASE YOUR INTAKE OF FRUIT & VEG to 6 portions daily & include salad to raise your level of raw, enzyme-rich non-animal food. **DON'T' ADD SALT TO FOOD**

