

THE ABC'S OF PMS

What is PMS?

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) is a group of symptoms related to the menstrual cycle most likely caused by a hormonal imbalance. Symptoms such as anxiety, bloating, acne, mood swings, breast tenderness headaches and cravings, can occur a few days or a couple of weeks before your expected period. In most cases, these symptoms will resolve after your period starts. When seeking treatment for PMS, it's important to determine which subgroup most accurately fits your symptom picture.

The Different Types of PMS

	Likely Cause	Symptoms
Type A (Anxiety)	High Estrogen/Low Progesterone	Nervous tension, weepiness, anxiety, mood swings, and irritability
Type B (Bloating)	Increased fluid retention due to elevated progesterone levels.	Stress is a big factor in this type and the mood changes and irritability will lean more towards aggression than depression.
Type C (Craving)	The correlation between imbalanced blood sugar levels and symptoms	Increased appetite, craving for sweets, headache, fatigue, fainting spells, and heart palpitations.
Type D (Depression)	Low Estrogen/High Progesterone	Emotional changes like depression, forgetfulness, insomnia, confusion, and weepiness.
Type H (Hyperhydration)	Excess Aldosterone resulting in fluid retention.	Weight gain (greater than three pounds), abdominal bloating and discomfort, breast tenderness, and the occasional swelling of the face, hands and ankles.

PMS Diagnosis and Treatment

As no two women are the same, neither are their PMS symptoms. It is possible to have a combination of any of the above and through a PMS health history questionnaire and laboratory testing, a diagnosis can be made. Adhering to naturopathic principles and identifying the cause of the PMS is key. Possible causes include nutritional problems and digestive disorders, exposure to hormone altering chemicals in the environment, and inadequate liver detoxification. Naturopathic physicians are trained to support the body and aim to return the body's hormone levels to a balanced state. Using botanical remedies, homeopathy, nutrition, and acupuncture, future occurrences of PMS symptoms can be prevented naturally and with few to no side effects.