

PMS

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is the cyclic recurrence of a group of symptoms that peak 7 to 10 days before menstruation and disappear a few hours after the onset of the menstrual flow. This condition is characterized by multiple and diverse symptoms including, but not limited to: breast tenderness, transient weight gain, bloating, constipation, insomnia, acne, headache, pelvic pain, irritability, depression, mood swings, poor concentration, confusion, social withdrawal, impulsiveness and appetite changes. While many women experience mild symptoms of short duration, other women have more severe symptoms that last for many days and temporarily disturb their normal functioning.

PMS is due to unbalanced hormonal fluctuations. A mixture of correct diet, adequate exercise, and emotional clarity, along with acupuncture and Chinese medicinal herbs can correct imbalances and bring long-term relief.

Balanced nutrition is crucial for overcoming PMS. Certain foods such as alcohol, caffeine, cold temperature foods, sugar, salt, and animal fats exacerbate symptoms of PMS and should be avoided. In addition, commercial red meats and poultry, which have a residue of steroids composed of female animal sex hormones, should be eliminated from the diet.

Food necessary for a harmonious menstrual cycle include:
plenty of organic vegetables, small amounts of fruit, whole grains, legumes (especially soy), seaweed, small amounts of

lean hormone-free meats, and fish (especially salmon, tuna, trout, and mackerel).

Exercise plays an important role in the treatment of PMS. Thirty to forty-five minutes of cardiovascular exercise at least three times per week improves blood circulation and significantly helps reduce symptoms.

In addition to diet and exercise, some form of meditation can be very helpful. Our emotions and hormones influence each other, since they are registered in the same part of our brain. Stress can cause hormonal imbalances and therefore worsen the symptoms of PMS. Some quiet time everyday helps bring emotional and physical equilibrium.

Chinese medicine offers even more tools to address premenstrual syndrome. Acupuncture removes energy blockages and in turn stabilizes hormonal fluctuations. It also provides deep relaxation that helps to calm the mind. Chinese herbs work together with acupuncture to regulate the flow of energy and substances in the body. Together they stimulate that body's natural functions and encourage it to establish optimum balance.

Women do not have to accept and live with premenstrual syndrome. When the symptoms of PMS are reduced or eliminated, women feel more energetic—physically, mentally, emotionally and creatively.