

Identifying Premenstrual Syndrome

Premenstrual syndrome affects approximately 75% of menstruating women.

1 Introduction

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a combination of symptoms that appear in women typically a week or two before their menstrual cycle. These symptoms can be physical or emotional/behavioral and range in intensity. While the exact cause of PMS has not been determined, researchers suggest it can be attributed to the cyclical fluctuations in hormones that trigger chemical changes in the brain. PMS does not look the same for every individual and often evolves throughout a woman's life.

2 Symptoms

PMS can cause a diverse array of symptoms, both physical and emotional, including:

- Joint or muscle pain
- Headache and fatigue
- Abdominal bloating
- Breast tenderness
- Mood swings
- Appetite changes and food cravings
- Depressed mood

3 Severity Factors

Although there are not necessarily risk factors for developing PMS, its severity can be influenced by certain lifestyle habits, such as:

- Smoking
- Eating foods high in fat, salt and sugar
- Lack of physical activity
- Sleep deprivation

In addition, women who live with a mental health condition may find that their typical symptoms intensify due to PMS.

5 Treatments

There is no cure for PMS; however, many options can help reduce discomfort. Lifestyle changes such as increased exercise and sleep as well as a healthy diet have been shown to improve PMS symptoms. Additionally, over-the-counter pain relievers and heat wraps can help alleviate muscle aches and cramping. In cases where the symptoms of PMS become too intense for the patient to resume day-to-day activities, doctors may suggest that they take hormone-regulating pills.

Did you know?

20% of women with PMS have symptoms severe enough to disrupt their daily activities.

For more information on premenstrual syndrome and supportive resources, please visit www.womenshealth.gov.

References:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/premenstrual-syndrome>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/premenstrual-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20376780>

<https://www.webmd.com/women/pms/what-is-pms>