

# PREMENSTRUAL DYSPHORIC DISORDER (PMDD)



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is a severe form of premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Symptoms of PMDD interfere with daily activities, and can cause problems with personal relationships. PMDD is also called late-luteal dysphoric disorder.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- The symptoms occur 5 to 14 days before, and go away a few days after, the start of menstruation.
- Symptoms vary for every woman, and vary at times in the same woman. Most of the symptoms involve emotional or behavioral factors. Symptoms may include:
  - Being irritable or angry.
  - Feeling depressed, sad, and hopeless.
  - Feelings of tension or anxiety.
  - Mood swings marked by periods of crying.
  - Lack of interest in daily activities and relationships.
  - Trouble paying attention and unable to concentrate.
  - Fatigue or lack of energy.
  - Food cravings or overeating.
  - Trouble sleeping.
  - Feeling out of control.
- Physical symptoms, such as bloating, breast tenderness, headaches, and joint or muscle pain.

### CAUSES

No single cause has been found. It may be a response to hormone changes related to the menstrual cycle or low levels of serotonin, a chemical in the brain. Research into the cause is ongoing.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Women with a personal or family history of mood disorders, such as depression or postpartum depression.
- Stressful life events.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

None known.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

Treatment can help reduce some PMDD symptoms. Treatment may be needed for at least a year. There are a variety of treatment options. It is important to find what works for you.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

The symptoms may get worse over time and last until menopause (when menses ceases).



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam (including a pelvic exam). Questions will be asked about your symptoms and lifestyle. To aid in the diagnosis, you may be asked to keep a symptom diary for two or more months. List the dates of your period and which symptoms you have (and their severity) on the days before and after your period.
- Treatment options for PMDD include lifestyle changes, counseling, drugs, and use of alternative therapies. No single treatment works for every woman.
- Lifestyle changes include diet changes, stopping smoking, aerobic exercise, and steps to reduce stress.
- Counseling may help a woman find ways to cope with the PMDD symptoms.
- Biofeedback, acupuncture, and massage may help some women. Relaxation techniques may be used as treatment for stress. Phototherapy (treatment with light) may help in some cases.
- Join a support group. Talking about your PMDD symptoms with others can help.
- To learn more, do an Internet search or visit a library.

### MEDICATION

- Antidepressant drugs may be prescribed. These help the symptoms of PMDD.
- Other drugs may be prescribed for specific symptoms such as headaches, anxiety, pain, and bloating.
- Vitamins and supplements may be recommended.

### ACTIVITY

Do aerobic exercise (20 to 30 minutes) daily, or at least three times per week.

### DIET

- Eat a healthy diet. Try eating frequent, small meals.
- Reduce or eliminate salt, caffeine, sugar, and alcohol.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of PMDD.
- Symptoms get worse or new ones develop despite treatment.

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Special notes:

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