



Diana Hoppe, M.D., INC.

PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS)

Nutritional Recommendations

- ❖ **Increase** intake of vegetables and fruits to 3-5 servings per day.
- ❖ **Decrease** refined sugar, starches (like cereals, pita bread, rice, corn, beans, and potatoes) salt, saturated fats, alcohol, dairy and caffeine. **Increase** omega- 3 fatty acids (examples: tuna, salmon, walnuts.)
- ❖ Eat three meals a day and three nutritious snacks (this alleviates glucose swings). A good example of a snack is sliced deli turkey, low fat cream cheese, and a third of an orange, a small apple or half a kiwi.
- ❖ Vitamin B-6: 100mg twice a day for anxiety, irritability, and depression.
- ❖ Tums Calcium for Life PMS (chew 2 tablets in the A.M. and 2 tablets in the P.M.) for mood swings, water retention, pain and cravings. At night, a glass of warm milk, if desired.
- ❖ Vitamin E 400 units a day for breast pain, headaches, and/ or sleep problems.

Exercise Recommendations

- ❖ Exercise! Exercise! Exercise!
- ❖ Exercise every day. Make a plan to take a walk, ride a bike, or swim.

Stress Management

- ❖ Recognize what sets you off (for example, your spouse and kids not helping you with the household chores)
- ❖ Be aware of when stress occurs in relation to your cycle.

Severe P.M.S. may require psychological evaluation and/or medications.

PMS and Calcium

Millions of women suffer from premenstrual syndrome, also known as PMS. Over the past few years, research studies have determined that calcium may play a role in the physical and emotional changes that occur during the days leading up to menstrual period.

In one study, 466 women who experienced PMS syndrome were divided into two groups. One group took calcium carbonate supplements and the other group took placebos. The women kept track of their PMS symptoms in a diary using a 4-point rating scale of absent (0) to severe (3). The symptoms rated appear in the box.

The study found that taking 1200 milligrams (mg) of supplemental calcium daily was effective in improving PMS. The calcium was taken as two Tums 300mg tablets twice each day.

After three menstrual cycles, overall PMS symptoms of the group taking calcium were reduced by nearly 50%. (*American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 199; 179:444-52 and *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*, 2000; 19:220-227)

Risk of Osteoporosis

A relationship between PMS and bone loss seems to exist. PMS may signal a state of calcium deficiency with greater likelihood of developing osteoporosis in the future. While premenopausal women may not take osteoporosis seriously, they do take PMS seriously.

If women get enough calcium daily, they may decrease the discomfort of PMS and at the same time build and maintain strong bones. (*Bone Miner*, 1994; 24:127-34)

Women who suffer from PMS should talk with their health care providers about increasing their calcium intake to help reduce PMS symptoms.

PMS SYMPTOMS
➤ Mood Swings
➤ Depression, sadness
➤ Tension, irritability
➤ Anxiety, nervousness, short temper
➤ Crying spells
➤ Arm and/or leg swelling
➤ Breast tenderness or fullness
➤ Abdominal bloating
➤ Lower abdominal cramping
➤ Generalized aches and pains
➤ Low back ache
➤ Headaches
➤ Fatigue
➤ Increased or decreased appetite
➤ Cravings for sweets or salts
➤ Difficulties sleeping

Calcium Requirements for Women*

Age	Calcium (<i>milligrams per day</i>)
9-18 years	1,300mg
19-50 years	1,000mg
51 and over	1,200mg

***National Academy of Sciences, 1997**

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