

# Lighten Up On PMS

Oh, no, you think, here we go again. The mood swings. The cravings. Bloating. Breast tenderness. Cramps. Exhaustion. And guys wonder why it's hard to be a member of the female species. If you suffer from PMS, you may find it hard to believe but you can make your symptoms disappear—naturally, healthfully and deliciously. In other words, menstruation may be a part of life, but suffering doesn't have to be. Here are some guidelines that can help you overcome even the worst cases of PMS.

Missing nutrients, low blood sugar, yeast overgrowth or sub-optimal liver function (as the liver metabolizes estrogen) can all contribute to a bumpy ride and make life miserable. PMS is a warning sign that you are missing vital nutrients in your diet and you are not balancing blood sugar or metabolizing your hormones well—think of it as your body's way of asking for a healthier diet and way of life.

Exercise can help you increase your energy level by improving your circulation and keeping stress at bay. Exercise also improves your body's ability to digest food properly and minimizes the pain associated with menstrual cramps. However, never force yourself to exercise when you're very tired, and do not exercise after a large meal or a meal that is high in fat. Exercise should make you feel energized, not exhausted.

**Smoking  
and  
drinking  
alcohol  
are  
NEVER  
good  
for  
you,  
and  
can  
make  
PMS  
feel  
even  
worse!**



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## Nutritional Strategies

☺ Eat adequate amounts of protein throughout the day, such as lean meats, poultry and fish. At least two out of three meals should contain three or more ounces of protein to balance blood sugar and prevent mood swings during times of stress.

☺ Skip caffeinated and chemical-laden beverages such as diet sodas, coffee and black tea, and flush out your body with bottled water and herbal teas instead.

☺ Cut sugar, white flour, artificial sweeteners, margarine and fried or processed foods from your diet.

☺ If you are prone to yeast infections, have plain yogurt every day and consider acidophilus and bifidobacterium supplements.

☺ The key to eliminating PMS is to enhance liver function and give your body the vitamins and minerals it needs to prevent prostaglandin production (prostaglandins are short-lived hormones that can create the cramping associated with PMS).

### B Complex Vitamins

B vitamins are found in a wide array of foods; to get the biggest bang for your buck, eat whole grains, nuts and seeds, meat, seafood and chicken on a regular basis.

### Magnesium

A super mineral for energy

and fighting sugar cravings, magnesium can also have a very calming effect. Snack on raw nuts stock up on leafy greens and seafood to build up your reserves.

### Zinc

Up your intake with oysters, shellfish, red meat and pumpkin seeds to help meet your needs.

### Vitamin C

The best food sources are fresh vegetables and fruits, especially lemon juice, red peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli, citrus fruits, strawberries and cantaloupes.

### GLA

Also known as borage oil, GLA is an essential fatty acid that prevents premenstrual symptoms such as cramping and depression. To optimize your intake, add spirulina, available at health food stores, to your juices; one tablespoon contains 100 mg of GLA. Avoid foods that interfere with GLA production, such as margarine or fried foods.

PMS has a complicated array of symptoms that are due to many causes. Optimal nutrition, moderate exercise and stress management are critical factors in eliminating hormonal imbalances. A little time now in re-thinking your personal habits can help you achieve a lifetime without PMS!