



# Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

## What is it?

Premenstrual syndrome, also known as PMS, is the physical and emotional changes some girls and women feel before their period.

Some common signs of PMS may be:

- Cramps
- Feeling low or irritable
- Bloating (a swollen tummy)
- Back or breast pain
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Weight gain and temporary swelling due to fluid build-up

A stronger form of PMS is called PMDD premenstrual dysphoric disorder, which can cause more intense symptoms of PMS.

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP will talk to you about how you feel and how PMS is affecting your life. If your symptoms are strong, they will look for what might be causing them. They will talk to you about ways to help you feel better. They might give you treatments to help your PMS. Treatment might be antidepressants, hormone medicine like “the pill” with a combination of lifestyle changes that reduce stress. Your doctor will ask about your periods and your health.

## What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may want to see you again to check how the treatment plan has helped your PMS symptoms.

If your symptoms have not improved, your GP may suggest some other treatment options such as:

- Hormone patches
- Counselling or mental health support

If your symptoms affect daily function, or do not respond to treatment, your GP can refer you to a specialist for further check ups and treatment options.

## What can I do?

Follow the treatment plan and advice of your GP. Your GP may suggest lifestyle changes to help ease your symptoms. Regular exercise can help improve your mood or pain. Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and veg.

Try to have less sugar and caffeine. Drink water. Avoid excess alcohol. Try some techniques to help you relax, such as deep breathing, yoga, walking, listening to music and/or meditation.

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## What supports are available?

You can also ask your GP to refer you to a private specialist or a family planning service for more information:

Family Planning Australia Reproductive and Sexual Health Talkline: <https://www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline>

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

*Why are my symptoms affecting my mood?*

*Will medication help my symptoms?*

*How can I ease my symptoms naturally?*

*Do I need to see a specialist?*

*How do I know if my mood is normal or not?*

*What should I avoid?*

## Where can I learn more?

- **Jean Hailes** – Management and treatment of PMS symptoms: [jeanhailes.org.au](http://jeanhailes.org.au)
- **Jean Hales** – Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD): [jeanhailes.org.au/periods/pmdd](http://jeanhailes.org.au/periods/pmdd)
- **Patient.info** – Premenstrual syndrome: PMS, PMT: [patient.info](http://patient.info)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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