

## PATIENT INFORMATION



FROM  
YOUR DOCTOR

# Self-help for PMS

Many women with premenstrual syndrome (PMS) find they can control their symptoms by making changes in diet, exercise habits, and lifestyle. These changes may also help you to feel better overall. If they don't help within a couple of months, your doctor may prescribe medication.

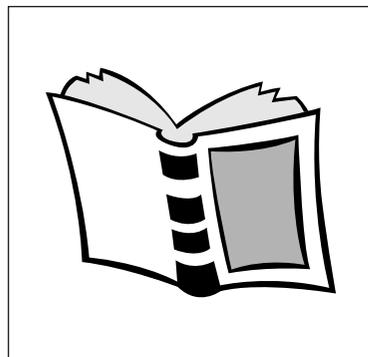
Discuss the suggestions listed here with your doctor, who may have extra hints designed for you.

## DIET

- If you can, eat 4-6 small meals each day. If you eat fewer larger meals, have frequent snacks. Never skip meals. Eating regularly will ease food cravings and may help with mood swings.
- Choose foods that are high in complex carbohydrates. Some good choices are breads, rice, pasta, vegetables, and fruits.
- Limit the amount of fat you eat to no more than 20% of your daily calories.
- Try to avoid sugar, even if you crave sweets. Eat foods high in complex carbohydrates instead.
- Avoid salt if you feel bloated, you gain weight before your period, or you have premenstrual headaches or breast pain.
- Avoid caffeine if you feel irritable or anxious. Giving up caffeinated coffee, tea, and cola drinks may also help with breast pain.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink. It may aggravate some symptoms of PMS.



## EDUCATION



- Learn as much as you can about PMS. Understanding helps many women gain control over their symptoms.
- Encourage your family and friends to learn about PMS.
- Ask your doctor about joining a PMS self-help group. Support from other women with the same problem may help you to feel better.

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**patient  
care**

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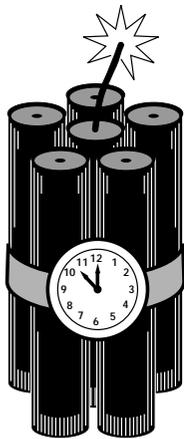
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## EXERCISE

- Moderate aerobic exercise may help ease PMS symptoms. It also helps with weight control.
- If you want to start an exercise program, ask your doctor to help you choose one that fits your lifestyle.



## STRESS



- PMS symptoms get worse when you are under stress. Talk with your doctor about sources of stress in your life and how you can relieve them.
- Try to plan stressful events for the week after your period. When you can, avoid stress when your symptoms are worst.
- Continue keeping track of your symptoms to remind yourself when PMS may be making you feel worse.
- Get some exercise every day. It relieves tension and may help with other symptoms of PMS.
- Ask your doctor if relaxation exercises might help.

## DRUGS

- Discuss all drugs you are taking or want to take with your doctor. Even vitamins can be toxic or have side effects.
- If you are interested in herbal and other "natural" treatments for PMS, show any you're thinking of taking to your doctor and pharmacist. They will tell you if the product is safe. Remember too that none of these products has been proven effective for PMS. Don't rely on these treatments if you have severe symptoms: You are better off taking a prescription drug from your doctor. □

