



Premenstrual symptoms

○ Premenstrual symptoms

- The term premenstrual syndrome (PMS) describes a collection of symptoms, both physical and mental (psychological), whose incidence is related to the menstrual cycle.
- Symptoms are experienced cyclically, started around time of ovulation and are apparent a week or more before menstruation begins, (usually from 2 to 14 days before the start of menstruation). Relief from symptoms generally occurs once menstrual bleeding begins.
- The cyclical nature, timing and reduction in symptoms are all important in identifying PMS.

Symptoms range from mild to very severe. The clinical features are:

- irritability**
- moodiness,**
- tension**
- Depression**
- difficulty in concentrating and tiredness**
- agitation**
- nervousness**
- Anxiety**
- breast tenderness**
- bloating abdomen**
- abdominal pain**
- water retention**
- increase in weight**
- swelling of ankles and fingers**
- headache.**

○ OTC drug treatment:

- There is some evidence that Vitamin B6 (*pyridoxine*) may reduce symptoms but the quality was poor. The mechanism of action of *pyridoxine* in PMS is unknown. It can be used in patient with minor symptoms but patient with moderate to severe PMS a referral is necessary.
- Women should be advised to stick to the recommended dose; higher doses of *pyridoxine* led to neuropathy.
- The *BNF* states that 'prolonged use of pyridoxine in a dose of 10 mg daily is considered safe but the long-term use of pyridoxine in a dose of 200 mg or more daily associated with neuropathy.
-
- There is a theory that is dietary vitamin E, Magnesium and Calcium can help to relieve the symptom.
- *Evening primrose oil* has been used to treat breast tenderness associated with PMS. The mechanism of action of *evening primrose oil* in such cases is thought to be linked to effects on prostaglandins, particularly in increasing the level of prostaglandin E, which appears to be depleted in some women with PMS.
- The active component of *evening primrose oil* is *gamma-linolenic (gamolenic) acid*, which is thought to reduce the ratio of saturated to unsaturated fatty acids. The response to hormones and prolactin appears to be reduced by *gamma-linolenic acid*.