

For cravings, often accompanied by headaches, shakiness & most often for sweet things like chocolate, try

- Chromium, Zinc, Magnesium, Calcium, vitamins B1, B3 & B6 (usually in a good multivitamin)
- Eat 5-6 small 'meals' daily & make sure all meals/snacks contain complex carbohydrates with protein - eg. carrot sticks with hummus; a salad with lots of veges & chickpeas or salmon
- **Headaches** may also be a sign of sluggish bowels, food intolerance or poor liver function - seek help if you're not sure
- Herb teas like Dandelion root to help with liver function, Licorice root (but not if you have high blood pressure)

For fluid retention, including sore breasts, bloating, swollen ankles try

- vit B6, vit E, Selenium, Potassium & the Essential Fatty Acids; sometimes the B6 in a B complex or multivitamin is enough, but some women may need to take up to 200mg B6 for relief (always do this supervised by a Nutritionist or Naturopath)
- reduce salt because it encourages fluid retention; this includes added salt & salty foods like soy sauce
- Herb teas like Celery, Yarrow, Dandelion leaf



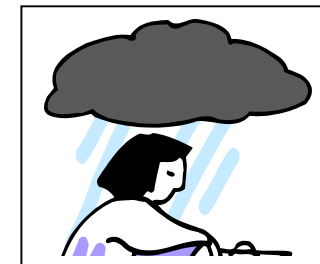
REMEMBER, always seek professional advice before taking supplements or herbal medicines. It is usually best to take any single nutrient at the same time as a good multivitamin AND never take doses higher than the recommended unless you're doing it under professional supervision.

P.M.S. & natural remedies

P.M.S or Pre-Menstrual Syndrome is a group of physical & psychological symptoms that can last from 2-14 days before a period. If PMS symptoms continue throughout the cycle, this is not simply PMS & needs full attention from a trained professional. Up to 90% of women experience some PMS symptoms during their life, 35-40% experience significant symptoms, while 10% experience severe and debilitating symptoms.

PMS is a sign of hormonal imbalance, and many things can upset that balance:

- Stress (some women may actually stop having periods while stressed!)
- poor liver function
- poor/irregular bowel function
- too much caffeine & other stimulants
- too much chicken (unless it's chemical free)
- nutritional deficiencies
- travel (even if it's a 'happy stress!')
- ill health
- medication or drugs (eg. the contraceptive pill, HRT, anti-depressants etc.)
- smoking (depletes a whole lot of important nutrients, upsets oestrogen balance)
- weight, either too much or too little
- exercise - overdoing it can cause your periods to stop (it's a physical stress!); not doing enough can contribute to a worsening of symptoms like pain



- too many of the wrong foods (eg. too many sweet foods can contribute to pre-menstrual cravings for stuff like chocolate; too many saturated fats in the diet can make period pain worse)
- dieting & eating disorders

Common Symptoms of PMS & Sample Remedies:

Because there are so many things that can affect our hormonal balance & general wellbeing, you may notice that your PMS has a dominant pattern, or that it changes. Either way, the best thing you can do is get to know your own pattern by charting your cycle. Do this for at least 6 months & include both physical & emotional changes you experience. This will help you to find the best treatment for any PMS, as well as getting to know what's "normal" for you.

Following are some basic suggestions to help you have naturally healthy hormones. Some specific suggestions are made for certain PMS symptoms, but the best thing you can do is talk to a trained professional before taking any vitamins or herbs.

Basic suggestions for happy hormones:

- whole grains, soy products, beans & other legumes, sprouts (called phytoestrogens) help to promote good hormonal balance generally
- make sure your diet is rich in lots of liver friendly foods like 'healthy' fats (olive oil, raw nuts/seeds, fish, avocado), fresh veges & whole grains (packed with B vitamins and minerals like calcium, magnesium & zinc)

- reduce 'unhealthy' fats & excess sugar (from fried foods, cakes, chips etc) - supplementing with **Essential Fatty Acids** may help (eg. Evening Primrose Oil & Fish or Flaxseed oils)
- make sure your bowels are regular by drinking plenty of plain water & eating lots of fibre-rich foods
- limit caffeine drinks which can worsen stress & upset fluid balance
- exercise to manage your stress; also helps improve circulation & keep healthy bowel habits

For nervous system problems like mood swings, irritability, crying for "no reason", anxiety, mild depression, clumsiness & lethargy try

- vitamin B6 & Magnesium
- Feeling sad or down (mild depression) particularly may be helped with Calcium & Zinc. If depression becomes more than mild, it is important to consult your doctor or a psychologist before self treatment.
- Herb teas like Lemonbalm, Chamomile, St John's Wort

For skin problems such as pimples or worsening of acne try

- Calendula & St John's Wort herbal tinctures/creams & tea tree oil applied to spots
- Supplement with fish or flaxseed oils
- Drink lots of plain water instead of sweet or caffeine drinks

For cramps try

- Tissue Salt **Mag phos** is great for spasmodic period pain
- spices like chilli, ginger and cinnamon, ginger and turmeric