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## WHAT IS PMS?

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**PMS** stands for **premenstrual syndrome**, which refers to a variety of symptoms that women can experience 1-10 days before their period begins. This is thought to be related to the hormone shift your body goes through before you start your period. 80% of women have experienced at least one symptom.

Most common symptoms include:

|                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| irritability                      | headache                   |
| anxiety                           | craving for sweets         |
| mood swings                       | increased appetite         |
| nervous tension                   | pounding/racing heart rate |
| weight gain                       | fatigue                    |
| swelling of extremities           | dizziness/fainting         |
| joint pain                        | cold sweats/hot flashes    |
| breast swelling and/or tenderness | depression                 |
| abdominal bloating                | forgetfulness              |
| nausea                            | crying                     |
| insomnia (difficulty sleeping)    | constipation               |
| acne                              | confusion                  |

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## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Educate yourself about PMS. Acknowledge to yourself that PMS is a physical and emotional condition.
- Educate your family and friends. Ask for support.
- Minimize stress in your life, especially during the premenstrual time.

- Watch your diet. Studies have shown that symptoms appear to improve with diets that are low in fat, caffeine, sugar, and salt. Increase intake of green leafy vegetables and protein.
- Some researchers have found that vitamin B complex, calcium and magnesium have helped decrease symptoms.
- Develop a plan for regular exercise. Starting with 30 minutes, twice a week, of walking, jogging, swimming, bicycling, etc.
- Limit use of alcohol and tobacco.
- Keep track of symptoms. If you are not seeing improvement with the above life-style changes, consult your medical provider.