

### ➤ **PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS)**

- 70-90% of women experience PMS at sometime during the reproductive life
- PMS is more a group of syndromes than a specific condition
- Symptoms are severe in about 5% of women
  
- Symptoms usually being about 3 – 10 days before menstruation including any combination of: cramps, backache, nausea, dizziness, breast tenderness, tingling in the hands or feet, increased urination and body weight due to water retention, acne, and/or migraine headaches.
- Emotional symptoms include: fatigue, tension, irritability, depression, anxiety, food cravings, and loss of concentration
  
- At ovulation, women tend to have higher self-esteem, higher self-confidence and are generally more alert on average
- During the luteal phase, on average, women tend toward passiveness
- PMS symptoms most common 4 days before menstruation
  
- **CAUSES** (we really don't know – much debate in the literature):
  1. Ovarian hormone changes = decreasing estrogen and progesterone cause water retention which can lead to headache, edema and breast tenderness
  2. Adrenal hormone changes = increased aldosterone secretion during the luteal phase causes water retention
  3. Dietary deficiencies = decreased vitamin B<sub>6</sub> or low zinc? Which can have psychological effects on the central nervous system
  4. Psychological and/or emotional factors in the woman's life
  
- **POSSIBLE TREATMENTS** (not all treatments work in all women with PMS):
  1. Progesterone therapy to relieve water retention
  2. Aldosterone antagonists or diuretics to relieve water retention
  3. Restricted salt intake
  4. Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> supplement
  5. Not a good idea to take too much zinc as it is dangerous at somewhat high levels
  6. Exercise
  7. Antidepressants such as Prozac which elevate mood by raising serotonin levels in the brain
  8. Life changes to reduce stress in the woman's environment
  
- The degree of emotional maturity and a woman's life situation can dramatically influence PMS symptoms and they are not necessarily entirely dependent on the woman's physiology.