



*All of the suggestions in this pamphlet should be use with discretion. Consult your dietitian or doctor for appropriate dose ranges and possible side effects.

Other alternatives...

Chasteberry

This supplement is thought to improve mood associated with PMS and menopause. It could also help to regulate menstrual cycles by normalizing the secretion of hormones.

Caution: Chasteberry can cause skin rash and should not be taken during pregnancy. Do not take chasteberry if you are taking antidepressants. Avoid if you or family members have a history of breast cancer.

Black Cohosh

Historically, black cohosh has been used to relieve cramping associated with PMS. However, studies show conflicting evidence on whether or not this supplement works.

Caution should be used if you have liver complications. Black cohosh should only be taken on a short term basis.

Progesterone Therapy

Progesterone levels fluctuate throughout the menstrual cycle and menopause. Some studies have shown improved symptoms with the use of progesterone creams. Consult your doctor for proper dosing and side effects.

Sources:

[Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine](#)

[Nutrition and Diagnosis-Related Care](#)

“Natural Health” September 2006

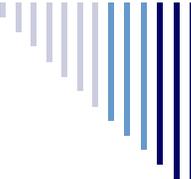
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GMHC

Nutrition, Supplements, Menopause, and PMS



**Making healthy choices
for you.**



Symptoms

Menopause and PMS can cause uncomfortable symptoms. In the HIV/AIDS population some women experience signs of early menopause. If these symptoms affect your quality of life there are things you can do. Here are some things to discuss with your health care provider.

Some typical symptoms are:

PMS : Swelling, hypoglycemia, migraines, hypothyroidism, irritability, anxiety, breast tenderness, bloating, diarrhea/ constipation, altered libido, cramping.

Menopause : insomnia, anxiety, irritability, mood swings, depression, decreased libido, difficulty concentrating, poor memory, and difficulty decision making.

Decreased estrogen levels leads to the cessation of menstrual periods and increased risk for osteoporosis.

Your Lifestyle

The first step in managing symptoms of menopause is achieving a healthy weight. People with a BMI over 30 are twice as likely to experience increased menopausal symptoms.

Smoking can increase the severity and frequency of hot flashes. The sooner you quit the better.

Your Diet

Nutrition plays a key role in symptom management. A low-fat, vegetarian diet 7-14 days before your cycle can help. Choose a variety of fresh vegetables, fruit, and vegetable proteins like tofu, beans, nuts, and nut butters.

A diet low sodium can help reduce bloating. Sodium is found in canned foods, condiments, processed meats and cheeses.

Avoid refined sugar, sweetened beverages, desserts, candies, white breads, and pastas. Include whole grains, brown rice, oats, beans, and legumes.

Eating a diet that is rich in variety can also help. Try to get your nutrition through food!

Exercise

Physical activity is one of the best ways to manage symptoms of PMS and menopause. Many studies show that exercise significantly effects mood, physical symptoms, and stress.

Exercise 5 days a week for *AT LEAST* 30 minutes. Get your heart rate up, feel a bit out of breath, and sweat when exercising!

Always consult your doctor before starting any exercise regimen.

Multivitamins: Women should take a multivitamin every day. This is to ensure you are getting enough micronutrients and vitamins.

Soy Foods: Isoflavones and phytosterols in soybeans provide a mild estrogen-like effect. Eating about 20-35g of soy a day may help manage hot flashes and vaginal dryness. Phytoestrogens help to balance estrogen levels. Should be avoided in excess with a history of breast cancer.

Calcium: 1000mg a day of calcium may help improve concentration and mood. It is also important in postmenopausal women to prevent further bone loss.

Magnesium: Some studies show a connection to low magnesium in people who suffer from PMS. Aim for about 360 mg a day. Magnesium is easily obtained through food sources. Ask your dietitian for a list of these foods.

Vitamin C: May be effective in relieving hot flashes. Make sure to take no more than 1000mg a day. This includes what you eat and what you get from you multivitamin.

Vitamin E: Hot flashes and blood flow to the vaginal area may be improved with additional vitamin E. It may also help to relieve nervous headache, fatigue, depression, and insomnia associated with PMS only.