

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)
Information for individuals and families

NCMH
National Centre for Mental Health
Canolfan Iechyd Meddwl Genedlaethol

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)

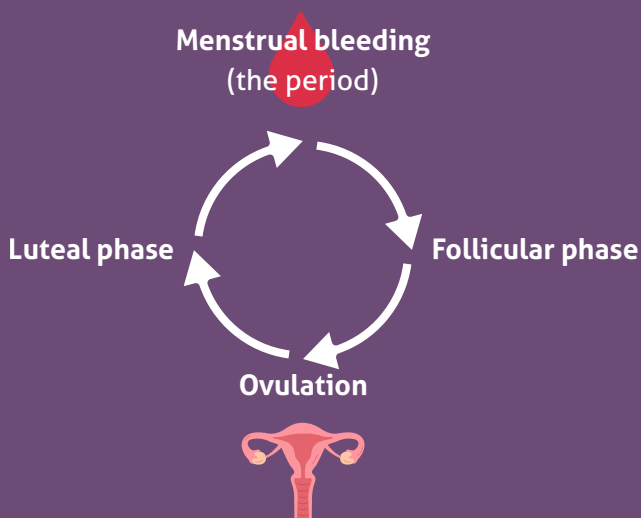


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For women and people who have periods, the monthly menstrual cycle can bring a range of physical and emotional symptoms.

Although there is much more we need to find out about the causes, it's likely the menstrual cycle causes changes in hormones leading up to and during a period.



The days between ovulation and the onset of menstrual bleeding (the period) are referred to as the luteal phase.

The luteal phase is characterised by the rise and fall of the hormones oestrogen and progesterone.

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is a mood disorder with symptoms starting during the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle and ending within a few days after the start of the period.

Symptoms of PMDD

Every person's premenstrual symptoms differ, and every experience is valid.

However, to be diagnosed with PMDD, these symptoms need to be associated with extreme distress and interfere with 'everyday' functioning.

These symptoms typically start seven to ten days before menstruation and improve or subside within a few days of the period starting.

Psychological symptoms can include:

- feeling depressed or severe low mood
- anxiety and/or feelings of being 'keyed up' or 'on edge'
- rapid and exaggerated changes in mood
- irritability or anger
- decreased interest in usual activities e.g. work, school, friends, hobbies

- difficulty in concentration
- becoming easily fatigued, or lacking in energy
- change in appetite and sleep
- feeling overwhelmed or out of control

Physical symptoms can include:

- breast tenderness or swelling
- joint or muscle pain
- bloating
- weight gain



Experiences of PMDD

PME or PMDD?

If you've already been diagnosed with a condition like depression, panic disorder, or persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia) and your symptoms get worse during the luteal phase of your menstrual cycle, this is called premenstrual exacerbation (PME), not PMDD.

Recording your mood

Whilst there are no physical tests to diagnose PMDD, the diagnosis is made by tracking symptom severity alongside your menstrual cycle for at least two months.

80,000 people in the UK

Recent research has shown that 80% of people who have periods report experiencing mild mood or physical changes during the luteal phase (i.e. premenstrual symptoms).

However, it is estimated that only 1% to 5% of women and people with periods experience PMDD. That is around 80,000 people in the UK.

Transgender and non-binary people with PMDD

Anyone who has periods can have PMDD. It is important that everyone can receive the support they need with their mental health.

The impact of hormone replacement therapy can have effects on symptoms.

The International Association for Premenstrual Disorders provide information and links to support groups - you can find their details, along with other organisations, at the end of this leaflet.



Treating PMDD

More research is needed to improve the treatments currently available for those living with PMDD. If you think you're experiencing PMDD symptoms, speak to a GP or other health professional.

Lifestyle changes

Lifestyle changes are usually the first step to try to help minimise the symptoms of PMDD.

Getting plenty of sleep and exercise whilst eating a healthy diet that is rich in protein, complex carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables.

This may be especially challenging while experiencing these symptoms but reducing stress and getting enough sleep can help improve your wellbeing in the long-term.

Medication

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are a type of antidepressant that are typically the first treatments that doctors recommend.

They can sometimes be taken daily throughout the whole month or just during your luteal phase. They are used to help reduce the mood symptoms associated with PMDD.

There are several different types of SSRIs so it's important to work with your doctor to find the one best suited to you.

Contraceptives

Combined oral contraceptives (often referred to as the pill) can sometimes be helpful with managing symptoms of PMDD by controlling or stopping ovulation. However, the evidence for this as a treatment is mixed.

Talking therapies

Talking therapy and counselling can be useful in helping to manage the psychological symptoms of PMDD. Some research does support cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) being effective for managing symptoms for some people with PMDD.

Last line treatments

Chemical (temporary) menopause with Gonadotropin releasing hormone (GnRH) analogue injections can be helpful in reducing symptoms of PMDD for some people.

The treatment is often limited to few months and should be combined with hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to relieve menopause symptoms and reduce bone density loss, which is some of the side effects associated with the treatment.

Surgical menopause is only recommended in very severe cases and carries a risk of complications and cannot be reversed.

It involves a bilateral oophorectomy (an operation to remove your ovaries and fallopian tubes), sometimes together with a total hysterectomy (an operation to remove your uterus), and requires follow-up treatment with HRT.

Tips for people with PMDD

- talk to your GP about PMDD - the IAPMD website has some guidance on advocating for yourself
- find peer support through forums and support groups like the [PMDD Project](#) where you can find a supportive community of people with PMDD
- talk about PMDD with the people in your life

Tips for partners, family and friends

- ask the person with PMDD what they find helpful
- educate yourself by reading about PMDD
- look after yourself while you support them
- join a support group



Useful websites



National Centre for Mental Health (NCMH)

Our PreDDICT study aims to understand PMDD and how individuals at risk of psychiatric disorders are impacted by reproductive events, such as the menstrual cycle.

ncmh.info/help-with-research/preddict/

International Association for Premenstrual Disorders

The IAMPD is charity that offers support, information, and resources for individuals with premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and premenstrual exacerbation (PME).

iapmd.org | info@iapmd.org

The PMDD Project

A charity dedicated to supporting individuals with PMDD. The charity strives to raise awareness, provide support, and fund research into PMDD, with the goal of improving the lives of individuals affected by this debilitating condition.

thepmddproject.org

Samaritans

For free emotional support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

samaritans.org

SANeline

For emotional support from 4.30pm-10.30pm, 365 days a year.
0300 304 7000 (calls are charged at local rates)

C.A.L.L - Community Advice and Listening Line Mental Health Helpline for Wales

For free emotional support and information if you live in Wales 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

0800 132737 or text 'help' followed by a question to 81066

Join our NCMH research community

Join our research community today and help us better understand conditions like premenstrual dysphoric disorder. The aim of our research is to improve diagnosis, treatment, and support for people in the future.

Joining our community is easy - it involves completing an online sign-up form which takes about 15 minutes and will ask you about:

- personal information, like date of birth and ethnicity
- mental and physical health
- lifestyle

To join, visit: ncmh.info/join

Or scan:



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www.ncmh.info

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Mae'r wybodaeth hon hefyd ar gael drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. I ofyn am gopi, cysylltwch â ni.

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