

# ARC Mental Health Information Series

*This document is intended to be information only and does not replace the opinion of a health provider.*

## PMDD- Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder

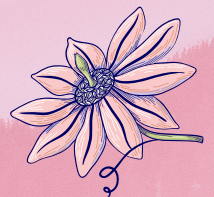
PMDD affects up to 5% of women of childbearing age. It causes severe irritability, depression or anxiety in the week or two before your period starts. Symptoms usually go away two to three days after your period starts. Researchers think it is an abnormal response to the changing hormone levels that occur during your cycle.



### Symptoms

- Lasting irritability or anger that may affect other people
- Feelings of sadness or despair or even thoughts of suicide
- Feelings of tension or anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Mood swings or crying often
- Lack of interest in daily activities and relationships
- Trouble thinking or focusing
- Tiredness or low energy
- Food cravings or binge eating
- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling out of control
- Physical symptoms, such as cramps, bloating, breast tenderness, headaches and joint or muscle pain

Symptoms of PMDD are so severe that it affects your ability to function at home, work and in relationships.



## Diagnosis

Aside from a complete medical history and physical and pelvic exam, there are very few tests to diagnose the condition.

Over the course of a year, during most menstrual cycles, 5 or more of the following symptoms must be present:

- Depressed mood
- Anger or irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Lack of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Moodiness
- Increased appetite
- Insomnia or feeling very sleepy
- Feeling overwhelmed or out of control

## Treatment and lifestyle changes

- Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)
- Birth control pills
- Anti-inflammatory medicines
- Cognitive-behavioural therapy
- Changes in diet to increase protein and carbohydrates and decrease sugar, salt, caffeine and alcohol
- Regular exercise
- Stress management
- Vitamin supplements (such as vitamin B6, calcium and magnesium)

## Resources available

The International Association of Premenstrual Disorders offers a range of resources such as symptom tracking sheets, informational pamphlets you can share with loved ones, online support group listings and more. [www.iapmd.org](http://www.iapmd.org)

Me v PMDD is a free app that lets you track both your symptoms and treatments. The company also has a blog that frequently shares stories from real people living with PMDD.

Psychosocial support available at CLSC and through your primary care physician

CLSC St-Hubert - (450) 443-7400

CLSC Richelieu - (450) 658-7561

CLSC Brossard - (450) 445-4452

811 Info-Sante, press 9 for English

CLSC St-Jean-sur-Richelieu - (450) 358-2572



*Financial contribution from*

Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

