

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

Information for individuals, partners and families

NCMH

National Centre for Mental Health
Canolfan Iechyd Meddwl Genedlaethol

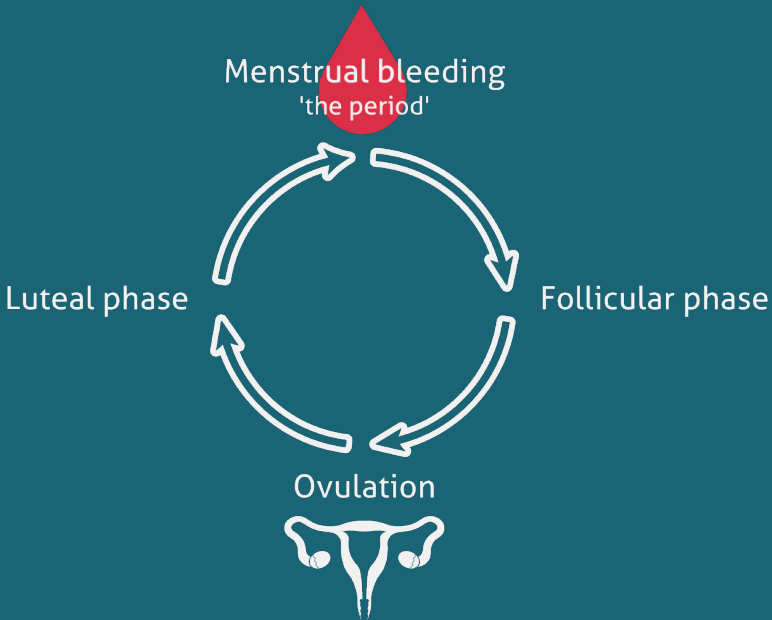
Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)



Ariennir gan
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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 estrogen 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.



PMDD Symptoms

Key psychological symptoms

- 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

Additional psychological symptoms may include

- Decreased interest in usual activities eg work, school, friends, hobbies
- Difficulty in concentration
- Becoming easily fatigued, or a lack of energy
- Change in appetite and sleep
- Feelings of being overwhelmed or out of control

Possible physical symptoms

- Breast tenderness or swelling
- Joint or muscle pain
- Bloating
- Weight gain

Every person's premenstrual symptoms differ, and every experience is valid. However, in order to be diagnosed with PMDD, these symptoms need to be associated with extreme distress and interfere with 'everyday' functioning.

People with PMDD don't experience any symptoms between their periods and ovulation.

If you already have a diagnosis of another disorder, such as major depressive disorder, panic disorder or persistent depressive disorder (dysthymia), and the symptoms associated with this disorder worsen during the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle, this is called Premenstrual Exacerbation (PME) rather than PMDD.

Whilst there are no physical tests to diagnose PMDD, the diagnosis is made by examining records of your mood kept daily for at least two menstrual cycles.

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

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

Transgender and non-binary people and PMDD

Anyone who has an ovary or ovaries can have PMDD and it's important that everyone can receive the support they need with their mental health.

As PMDD is a hormone-based mood disorder the effects of hormone replacement therapy can have effects on symptoms.

Charities such as the IAPMD have a lot of information and links to support groups.

Treatments for PMDD

More research is needed to improve the treatments currently available for those living with PMDD.

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.

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or 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 to 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.

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

If you think you're experiencing PMDD symptoms, then speak to a GP or other health professional.

Last line treatments

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

- If you are struggling to talk to your GP about PMDD, the IAPMD website has some guidance on advocating for yourself
- Try tracking your cycle and mood symptoms through apps like Me v PMDD
- Try peer support through IAPMD forums and video groups
- Have a look at some of the IAPMD guidance on how to 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 through IAPMD

Useful websites

Samaritans

Available 24 hours a day to provide confidential emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicidal thoughts.

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

International Association for Premenstrual Disorders (IAPMD)

IAPMD is a lifeline of support, information, and resources for people with PMDD and PME.

[iapmd.org](https://www.iapmd.org)

Mind

Information and support along with downloadable leaflets and real people's stories. Search 'PMDD' from the homepage.

[mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)

National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome (NAPS)

Information advice and support for people living with PMS and their families, with the express purpose of the condition being successfully managed.

[pms.org.uk](https://www.pms.org.uk)

Help with our PMDD research

Our long-term aim is to help improve the current approach to diagnosis, prevention, treatment and support for individuals who are experiencing or have experienced Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) or severe Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS).

But to do this we need your help whether you have:

- been diagnosed with PMDD
- experienced symptoms of severe PMS or PMDD
- been diagnosed or experienced these symptoms in the past

Helping with our research is easy - it involves completing an online survey which should take around 20 minutes to complete.



To take part, visit www.ncmh.info/preddict or scan the QR code:

Contact us:

 info@ncmh.info

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Produced by the National Centre for Mental Health.
The information in this leaflet is correct at the time of printing. Printed April 2023.

NCMH is funded by Welsh Government through Health and Care Research Wales.

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



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