



## Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

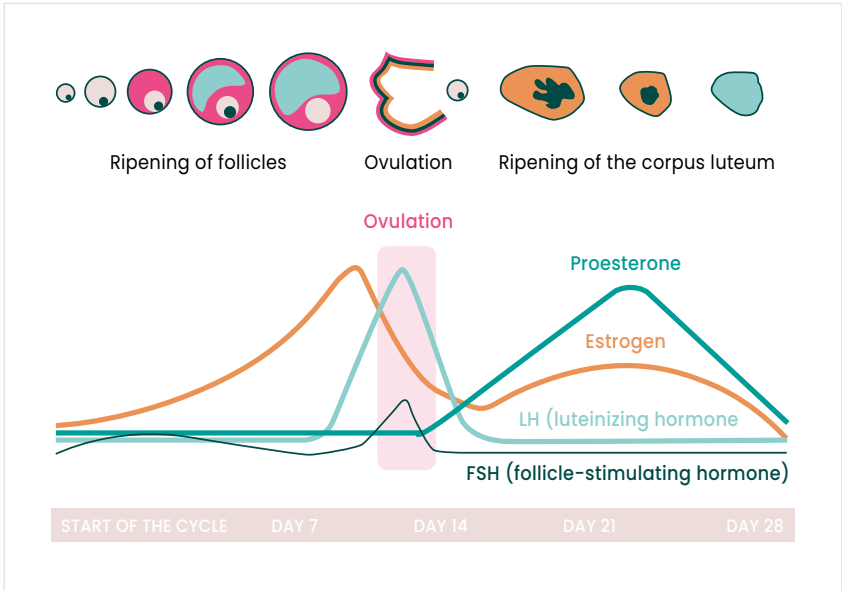
Premenstrual syndrome or PMS as it is commonly known, can affect women at any age and is experienced by most women at some stage in their reproductive lives. It is estimated that as many as three out of four menstruating women have experienced some form of premenstrual syndrome. So, you are not alone.

### Signs of PMS

These can include mood swings, tender breasts, food cravings, fatigue, irritability, and depression, but treatments and lifestyle changes can help to manage them.

### Why does it happen?

This diagram shows what happens to hormone levels during the menstrual cycle. PMS occurs in the luteal phase, which is seven to ten days before the period. It is caused by high levels of oestrogen and low levels of progesterone. Progesterone is the anti-anxiety and antidepressant hormone. It is good for sleep, and, because it is a diuretic, it prevents bloating, breast tenderness, and headaches.



## How hormones are given

Progesterone is the hormone that reverses all PMS symptoms. You will be given as much as you need to have minimal PMS or none at all and will get to know how to adjust your doses to prevent and treat your symptoms. You will be given progesterone as a capsule, lozenge, or slow-release melt, and told by your doctor how to use them.

## Things to be aware of

If you experience breast tenderness when you start taking your medication or feel your PMS is getting worse, then stop the progesterone for a few days until things have settled down, before resuming your treatment.

Occasionally, progesterone can cause your period to come a little early, or a little late, but this usually settles down.

If you experience irregular bleeding, please make your doctor aware so that they can adjust your medication. It can take a little while to get the correct dose in some women.

## Lifestyle adjustments

There are things you can do to help alleviate PMS, such as following a low sugar diet and taking 1000mg of evening primrose oil supplements daily. If you would like any help or advice on ways to improve PMS through nutrition, please contact our nutritionist, [Jackie Mcuster](#).

## Long-term?

PMS can worsen when a woman reaches her late forties and around perimenopause, but replacement progesterone should make symptoms much easier to manage. Women who are already on progesterone when they reach perimenopause usually experience very few, if any of the symptoms associated with it.

**No woman should suffer distressing symptoms of PMS, which can disrupt life and restrict work and leisure time. PMS is not something women should 'put up' with. Remember we are here to help if you need us.**

