

# PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME (PMS) II

By Dr. Cindy Williams

PMS is so complex that it can be a difficult condition to manage. Some women may have only one symptom, but most experience several. The typical pattern is a recurring set of the same symptoms followed by a symptom-free period, possibly only one week out of a month. To assist with the management of PMS, it has been classified into four distinct groups: **PMS-A:** nervousness, tension, anxiety, irritability, mood swings; **PMS-C:** increased appetite, craving sweets, headache, dizziness, and heart pounding; **PMS-H:** weight gain, swelling of extremities, abdominal tenderness; **PMS-D:** depression, forgetfulness, crying easily, confusion and insomnia.

The first step in managing PMS is to determine which category(s) best describes your symptoms. This is most easily determined by recording your symptoms on the first day of your menstrual cycle (first day of menstruation). For example, if you suspect weight gain in one of your symptoms, weigh yourself and record your weight daily. If cravings are a symptom, record what you crave, and grade the severity of the symptom. 1 = mild (present but doesn't interfere with activities); 2 = moderate (interferes with activities but not disabling); 3 = severe and/or disabling. PMS III column will discuss treatment considerations.

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