

PMS 101

Your beginner's guide to understanding and managing premenstrual symptoms naturally

5 What's Happening in Your Body

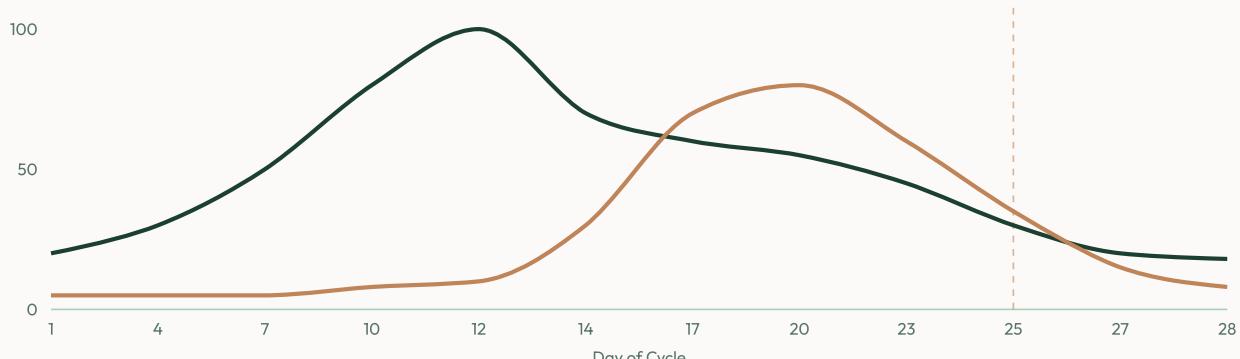
In the **7 days leading up to your period**, two key hormones—estrogen and progesterone—take a significant dip. This hormonal shift is what's behind so many of those frustrating symptoms you might be feeling.

Here's the thing: for some women, this drop feels pretty mild—maybe a little extra tiredness or a craving here and there. But for others? They're *way* more sensitive to these hormonal changes. The symptoms can feel unbearable. You might feel like a completely different person—irritable, exhausted, bloated, struggling to sleep, dealing with constipation, breaking out, and for some women, even feelings of hopelessness or depression can creep in.

If you're not tracking your cycle, this can be really confusing. You might wonder "what's wrong with me?" when really, it's just your hormones doing their thing.

The good news? The more in tune you get with your body and your hormonal cycle, the more you can stay on top of these dips, make simple lifestyle changes, and feel *immense* relief from your PMS symptoms. You don't have to white-knuckle through it every month.

Your Hormone Cycle



— Estrogen — Progesterone - - PMS Zone (Day 25-28)

Notice how both hormones drop sharply in the PMS zone—this is when symptoms peak

Common PMS Symptoms



Cravings

Intense urges for carbs and sweets



Low Energy

Fatigue and sluggishness



Mood Changes

Irritability and emotional shifts



Bloating

Water retention and puffiness



Insomnia

Difficulty falling or staying asleep



Breakouts

Hormonal acne flare-ups

You may also experience: constipation, headaches, breast tenderness, and difficulty concentrating

Movement: Work With Your Cycle

Your body is already working harder during this phase—it doesn't need you pushing it to the limit at the gym too. When you try to keep up with your regular intense workouts during PMS week, you'll often feel *more* fatigued, more hungry, and more stressed. High-intensity exercise spikes cortisol, which can actually make your symptoms worse. Instead, this is your permission slip to slow down. Gentle movement supports your body without adding extra stress.

AVOID BEFORE & DURING PERIOD

- ✗ High-intensity workouts (HIIT, heavy lifting)
- ✗ Long, strenuous cardio sessions
- ✗ Pushing through fatigue

High-intensity exercise can increase cortisol and worsen PMS symptoms

EMBRACE INSTEAD

- ✓ Gentle walking (20-30 min)
- ✓ Restorative yoga or stretching
- ✓ Light pilates or swimming

Low-intensity movement reduces stress and supports natural hormone balance

Nutrition: Fuel for This Phase

Here's something most women don't know: during the week before your period, your body burns **an extra 100-300 calories per day**. That's why you feel hungrier! That's why you're craving sugar, carbs, and fried food. Your body is literally asking for more fuel. If you try to ignore these signals or restrict your eating, you'll just end up feeling more ravenous and more likely to binge. But if you stay on top of these changes—eating every few hours, choosing nutrient-dense foods, and honoring your hunger—you can alleviate most of these cravings before they take over.

Increase Healthy Fats Before Your Period

Healthy fats support hormone production and can reduce symptom severity.

Avocado Nut butters Olive oil Salmon Chia seeds

Choose High-Fiber Complex Carbs

Satisfy carb cravings while keeping blood sugar stable and supporting digestion.

Sweet potatoes Brown rice Oats Sourdough bread Quinoa

Limit Processed Sugar

While it's tempting to reach for sweets, processed sugar can actually **worsen PMS symptoms** by causing blood sugar spikes and crashes, increasing inflammation, and intensifying mood swings and fatigue.

Stress Reduction: Protect Your Energy

During PMS week, your nervous system is already on edge. The hormonal shifts make you more reactive to stress—things that normally wouldn't bother you can feel overwhelming. This isn't you being "dramatic," it's biology. Your body is more sensitive right now, and that means protecting your peace becomes even more important. This is the week to say no to extra commitments, create space for quiet time, and lean into activities that calm your nervous system.

Deep breathing

Warm baths

Journaling

Time in nature

Limiting social media

Saying no to extras

Sleep: Your Secret Weapon

Progesterone is actually a calming hormone that helps you sleep—so when it drops before your period, falling and staying asleep can become a real struggle. You might find yourself lying awake, waking up in the middle of the night, or feeling unrested even after a full night's sleep. Poor sleep makes *everything* worse: your mood, your cravings, your energy. Prioritizing sleep hygiene during PMS week can be a game-changer for how you feel.

No screens 1hr before bed

Keep room cool & dark

Magnesium supplement

Consistent bedtime

Limit caffeine after noon

Calming bedtime routine

Struggling With Sugar Cravings?

Learn how to manage your sweet tooth—especially around your period—with the upcoming **Sweet Relief Guide**, coming soon to the course library.

Visit verduramethod.com to learn more

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