

## FACT SHEET:

# PREMENSTRUAL DYSPHORIC DISORDER (PMDD)



## What Is It?

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is different to PMS as it is a brain hypersensitivity to hormones fluctuations that significantly impacts mood, emotions, and physical well-being. It affects approximately **5–8% of women of reproductive age** and can impact mental health. PMDD can interfere with daily life, relationships, and work.



## Possible Symptoms

PMDD symptoms typically occur in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle (the week or two before menstruation) and subside after the period starts.

- ✦ **Emotional:** Severe mood swings, irritability, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts
- ✦ **Cognitive:** Difficulty concentrating, memory issues, brain fog
- ✦ **Physical:** Extreme fatigue, bloating, headaches, joint/muscle pain, sleep disturbances
- ✦ **Behavioural:** Loss of interest in daily activities, withdrawal from social interactions



## Impact on Work & Daily Life

PMDD can severely **impact concentration, emotional regulation, and energy levels** at work. Employees may struggle with productivity, experience difficulty in social interactions, or need occasional sick leave. Increased awareness and accommodations can help maintain performance and well-being.



## Diagnosis

PMDD is diagnosed through symptom tracking over at least two menstrual cycles.

- ✦ **Keeping a Symptom Diary:** Tracking mood and physical symptoms daily
- ✦ **Medical Evaluation:** Consultation with a doctor, gynaecologist, or endocrinologist
- ✦ **Exclusion of Other Conditions:** Ruling out thyroid disorders, depression, or anxiety



## Triggers & Risk Factors

PMDD is linked to hormonal fluctuations, particularly serotonin sensitivity to oestrogen and progesterone changes.

- ✦ **Genetics:** A family history of PMDD or mood disorders
- ✦ **Hormonal Sensitivity:** Increased sensitivity to hormonal shifts
- ✦ **Stress:** Chronic stress can exacerbate symptoms
- ✦ **Pre-existing Mental Health Conditions:** Depression, anxiety, or trauma history can heighten PMDD symptoms

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## Treatment & Management

PMDD treatment involves a combination of medical and lifestyle interventions.

### ✦ Medical Treatments

- **Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors** (SSRIs, e.g., fluoxetine, sertraline)
- **Hormonal contraceptives** (birth control pills, GnRH analogs)
- **Nutritional supplements** (calcium, magnesium, vitamin B6)

### ✦ Lifestyle Adjustments

- **Regular exercise to improve mood and reduce stress**
- **Dietary changes** (reducing caffeine, alcohol, and sugar intake)
- **Mindfulness practices** such as meditation and yoga
- **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)** for emotional regulation



## Support in the Workplace

- ✦ Allowing flexible working arrangements (e.g., remote work, adjusted hours)
- ✦ Providing mental health support via Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- ✦ Encouraging an open and stigma-free conversation about PMDD
- ✦ Offering quiet spaces for rest or meditation
- ✦ Ensuring access to reasonable sick leave when symptoms are severe

## RESOURCES

### ✦ Websites

- International Association for Premenstrual Disorders  
[www.iapmd.org](http://www.iapmd.org)
- National Women's Health Network  
[www.nwhn.org](http://www.nwhn.org)
- Mind UK  
[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### ✦ Apps

- **Me V PMDD**  
Symptom tracking and management
- **Clue**  
Menstrual cycle tracking
- **Flo**  
Hormonal health insights

### ✦ Books

- **The PMDD Solution**  
by Dr. L.J. Duffy
- **Hope: A guide to PMDD for Partners and Caregivers**  
by A C Kinghorn
- **Period Power**  
by Maisie Hill

### ✦ Online Support Groups & Forums

- **Facebook PMDD Support Groups** such as  
[iapmdglobal](https://www.facebook.com/iapmdglobal)
- **Instagram pages** such as  
[@PMDDwarriors](https://www.instagram.com/PMDDwarriors)  
[@the.pmdd.collective](https://www.instagram.com/the.pmdd.collective)  
[@thepmddchick](https://www.instagram.com/thepmddchick)

