

# PMT- Chinese Medicine's Solution

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Many women accept the monthly agony of pre-menstrual tension (PMT) as normal. Chinese Medicine has a different view.

Outbursts of anger directed at loved ones, grumpy or moody feelings and tears for no reason are some of the emotions commonly experienced. Then there is the breast tenderness, abdominal bloating, pain below the ribs, fluid retention, tiredness, headaches and insomnia that accompany the disturbed emotions.

These symptoms can start two weeks before the period and are only relieved once the period starts.

The menstrual cycle, according to Chinese Medicine, has four distinct phases. The post menstrual phase is when the body is depleted of Energy (Qi) and Blood (Xue). The mid-cycle phase when the body fills up with Blood (Xue). The pre-menstrual phase when the body's Qi moves in readiness for the period. And the menstrual phase when the Blood (Xue) is moving.

If the free flow of Qi and Blood (Xue) is not maintained in the pre-menstrual and menstrual phase, any of the PMT symptoms can occur.

The causative factors of these PMT symptoms, according to Chinese Medicine, are emotional, dietary and lifestyle.

Stress from family or work can lead to frustration and anger. These constrained emotions will affect how the body regulates the flow of energy (Qi) through the acupuncture channels and internal organs.

Free flow of Qi is essential to normal functioning of the body and Mind. As the flow of Qi becomes irregular or stagnant, due to the constrained emotions, physical and further mental and emotional symptoms appear.

Pain, bloating, fluid retention and headaches along with a grumpy disposition are typical of this stagnation in the flow of Qi.

Excessive amounts of fast foods containing lots of fat and oil can accumulate in the body to form Phlegm and Damp. These obstruct the digestive functioning and lead to weight gain or indigestion.

Again, the free flow of Qi is obstructed and PMT symptoms will appear.

Finally, lifestyle factors play a significant role in our wellbeing. Overwork and an irregular lifestyle with a lack of rest or exercise will lead to a decline in general wellbeing. This together with irregular eating patterns will eventually deplete the body's Qi.

A lack of Qi manifests as tiredness and poor concentration.

To alleviate the symptoms of PMT, the three causative factors of emotions, diet and lifestyle must be addressed.

For stubborn and long-term cases, Chinese Medicine has a long history of successfully treating these symptoms. Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine are used routinely throughout China in most hospitals for menstrual irregularities. In Australia, the benefits of these treatments are becoming more widely available from qualified practitioners and recognised by governments and health funds.

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