



Beating PMS.

**Your guide to guide to eat
your way out of your
monthly miseries.**

**I can show you how you
can significantly REDUCE
your PMS in just three
months.**

By Melody Mackeown Dip.ION (Distinction)

Urbalance

Welcome to Natural Nutrition	2
Foods and drinks that alleviate PMS	5
Foods and drinks that aggravate PMS.....	10
What PMS Symptoms can the Natural Nutrition programme help with?	13
Following the Natural Nutrition programme, a day's meals might look like this:	14

Urbalance

Welcome to Natural Nutrition

Few women are lucky enough to go through life without experiencing the problems of Pre-menstrual Syndrome (PMS). In fact, it is estimated that up to 90% of women of childbearing age may suffer from PMS every month, and that there could be as many as 150 symptoms.

As you probably know only too well, the miseries associated with PMS broadly fall into two categories – physical problems (such as bloating, painful breasts and/or painful cramps) and psychological (e.g. low energy, tearful, aggressive) – with many women suffering from both.

What's more, the symptoms can be very hard to treat. This is because the underlying causes of PMS are multi-faceted and complex and the distressing results can arise from many different factors. Often conventional remedies can only address the symptoms themselves rather than the root cause of the matter, as you may well have discovered yourself.

Urbalance

Normally, the symptoms are resolved with the onset of menstruation, but that is of little comfort if they have started a week or even a fortnight earlier. Even a few days of PMS are enough for most women.

So what can you do? Read on for the good news!

THE GOOD NEWS...

The good news is that you really can eat your way out of PMS. As well as first hand evidence I get back from my clients, more and more studies are showing that changes to your diet can lessen, and in some cases completely eradicate PMS. And that is what this guide is all about.

It tells you what to include in your diet, and what you should ideally try and avoid. Did you know that there are certain foods which are thought to aggravate PMS? This e-book points out the likely culprits. Plus there is a day's meal plan to help you put the guidelines into practise.

The main aim is to help you follow basic and healthy eating principles to provide you with the optimum nutrition – the building blocks to enable you to take control and manage your PMS and its symptoms. The second aim is enjoyment. There's no need for a dull and dreary diet to beat the problems of PMS. In fact, the very opposite is true!

Urbalance

However, be patient! It can take up to 3 months for your altered diet to have a noticeable effect on your symptoms, because the body takes some time to adjust and respond – although you may well notice a difference much sooner.

Urbalance

Foods and drinks that alleviate PMS

Balancing your blood sugar: complex carbohydrates

It is thought that a diet rich in certain slowly broken down starches - which are also called 'unrefined' or 'complex' carbohydrates - may help reduce PMS symptoms by maintaining an even blood sugar level.

For most of us, blood sugar levels are maintained within normal levels. However, under certain circumstances, or with certain foods, blood sugar levels rise quickly, but are then followed by a sharp drop. This drop is called 'hypoglycaemia' or low blood sugar and the condition is associated with the following symptoms... ANXIETY...IRRITABILITY... AGGRESSIVE OUTBURSTS... FORGETFULNESS... CONFUSION... INABILITY TO CONCENTRATE... PALPITATIONS...CRAVINGS

How many of them do you recognise from PMS?

Following the Nutritional Guides below will help you balance your blood sugar levels.

Increase your fibre

Increasing fibre can also help alleviate the common problem of pre-menstrual constipation. It may also help to bring down levels of the hormone oestrogen in the body by preventing re-absorption of oestrogen from the gut. What's more fibre also helps improves blood sugar control.

Foods that are good sources of complex carbohydrates are also good sources of fibre and the following foods are good sources of both:

Urbalance

- ❖ **Grains** like brown rice, oats, wheat, barley, rye, couscous, millet
- ❖ **Pastas** including wholewheat, durum wheat, buckwheat, millet, brown rice pastas
- ❖ **Legumes** like lentils, chickpeas, aduki beans, kidney beans, flageolet beans
- ❖ **Vegetables** like peas, broccoli, corn, cabbage, green beans, sweet potatoes

Including phytoestrogens

Phytoestrogens are naturally occurring substances in food that have a hormone-like action and have a very interesting effect on the body as they have a balancing effect on oestrogen.

If levels are too high, phytoestrogens can block oestrogen receptors thereby sending out weaker signals, however, if oestrogen levels are too low, they will latch on to oestrogen receptors and send out stronger signals.

This is particularly important in PMS as there is conflicting evidence regarding whether too much or too little oestrogen may cause PMS. In addition to the food sources below, phytoestrogens are found to a lesser extent in most fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Urbalance

The following foods are good sources of phytoestrogens

- ❖ **Soya** , including naturally fermented miso, tofu, tempeh
- ❖ **Grains** like brown rice, oats, wheat, barley, rye
- ❖ **Legumes** like lentils, chickpeas, aduki beans, kidney beans
- ❖ **Vegetables** like peas, broccoli, carrots, celery, garlic
- ❖ **Seeds** including flaxseeds (also know as linseeds), sesame, pumpkin, poppy, caraway, sunflower
- ❖ **Fruits** like apples, plums, cherries, cranberries, citrus fruits
- ❖ Some **herbs** and **spices** such as cinnamon, sage, fennel, parsley

Increase essential fatty acids

Increasing essential fatty acids (EFAs) has been found to be helpful in reducing PMS symptoms. Deficiency signs include IRRITABILITY...DEPRESSION...FATIGUE...FORGETFULNESS... FLUID RETENTION...BREAST TENDERNESS

Once again, how many of them do you recognise from PMS?

There are two main EFAs implicated in alleviating PMS symptoms; the omega-3 and the omega- 6 family, and these are found in the following foods:

Urbalance

Omega 3– family

- ❖ Salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, sardines, fresh tuna and flaxseeds (also know as linseeds), pumpkin seeds, walnuts; and their oils and organic omega-3 rich eggs

Omega 6 – family

- ❖ Sunflower, sesame and pumpkin seeds and their oils

Eat more fruit and vegetables

Increasing your fruit and vegetable intake may help to increase essential minerals (Zinc and Magnesium) and vitamins (Vitamin C, B3 and B6) which are important for your body to process these fats. Some examples of fruits and vegetables rich in these mineral and vitamin groups are set out below:

- ❖ **Vitamin C:** All citrus fruits, berries e.g. strawberries, apples, papaya, mangoes, parsley, onions, garlic, broccoli, tomatoes, red and green peppers
- ❖ **Vitamin B3:** Green leafy vegetables e.g. kale, spinach, broccoli leaves, mushrooms, potatoes
- ❖ **Vitamin B6:** Sweet potatoes, Green leafy vegetables e.g. kale, spinach, broccoli leaves, seaweeds, carrots, peas
- ❖ **Magnesium** Green leafy vegetables e.g. kale, spinach, broccoli leaves, avocados, pears, dried fruit e.g. dates, apricots, raisins,
- ❖ **Zinc:** Bananas, seaweeds, mushrooms, potatoes, asparagus, parsnips

Cruciferous vegetables are rich in a family of nutrients called glucosinolates, which help the liver in the detoxification process. This is

Urbalance

particularly important in PMS, as one of the liver's primary functions is to control the level of hormones, such as oestrogen circulating in the blood.

Cruciferous vegetables include:

- ❖ Broccoli
- ❖ Cauliflower
- ❖ Kale
- ❖ Cabbage
- ❖ Brussels sprouts.

Urbalance

Foods and drinks that aggravate PMS

Saturated and trans Fats

A diet high in saturated fats which is largely found in meat and dairy products and trans (or hydrogenated) fats which are made from hydrogenating vegetable oils are particularly implicated in making PMS worse as they compete with and block the body from using EFAs effectively.

Trans fats are particularly bad as they are polyunsaturated fats that have been processed (hydrogenated) or fried. Frying polyunsaturated oils can result in oxidising the oil, which means that they can also damage body cells. Cooking in extra virgin olive oil is a good alternative as it is not as vulnerable to oxidation.

Saturated fats to minimise and avoid where possible include:

- ❖ Dairy products including butter, cream, ice cream, full fat milk, cheese, suet, lard and ghee

Trans fats are to be completely avoided include:

- ❖ Sweets and cheap chocolate bars (with a low cocoa content and vegetable fats instead of cocoa butter)
- ❖ Potato crisps and corn chips
- ❖ Biscuits
- ❖ Doughnuts
- ❖ Margarines and mayonnaise (although some are now trans free – please check the label)

Urbalance

Avoid refined sugar

Processed foods which contain starches and sugars that are quickly broken down by the body can cause rapid fluctuations in blood sugar levels which can make PMS worse.

Processed foods to avoid include:

- ❖ White bread, pasta and rice
- ❖ Certain breakfast cereals (e.g. cornflakes, puffed rice)
- ❖ Chocolate and confectionary
- ❖ Sweets
- ❖ Cakes
- ❖ Ice cream
- ❖ Sugary drinks (e.g. Lemonade, Coca Cola, Fanta, Squash)
- ❖ White refined sugar

Cut down on alcohol

Alcohol can aggravate PMS symptoms for a number of reasons:

- ❖ it can cause fluctuating blood sugar levels, which are thought to impact on PMS symptoms,
- ❖ alcohol can disrupt sleep patterns and cause tension, which may be a symptom of your PMS; and
- ❖ alcohol can lower stores of essential nutrients such as zinc which is necessary for the processing of EFAs which have been helpful in reducing PMS symptoms.

Urbalance

Unfortunately if you enjoy a tippie or two, there are no known substitutes for alcohol! Therefore you should try and reduce your intake – you may need to stop drinking alcohol completely to see a reduction in your PMS symptoms.

Cut down on caffeinated drinks

Decreasing the consumption of caffeinated beverages may help to alleviate breast tenderness. Caffeine is also a known aggravator of sleep and can cause tension, which may already be upset by PMS. Also, drunk in large quantities (e.g. 5+ cups of tea/coffee or caffeinated soft drinks) can also lower the level of some important minerals in the body. The tannin in tea also hinders the absorption of certain minerals such as iron and calcium.

Caffeine can be found in:

- ❖ Tea
- ❖ Coffee
- ❖ Fizzy drinks, such as Coca Cola, Fanta, Doctor Pepper etc

Good alternatives, include:

- ❖ Herbal teas, including green tea
- ❖ Dandelion coffee
- ❖ Hot water with lemon
- ❖ 100% Fruit juices (with no added sugar)
- ❖ Water

Urbalance

What PMS Symptoms can the Natural Nutrition programme help with?

As you probably know only too well, the miseries associated with PMS broadly fall into two categories – physical and psychological – with many women suffering from both and they often fall into the following four groupings (known as the ABCD of symptoms):

Anxiety: Irritability, mood swings, nervous tension

Bloating: Weight gain, breast tenderness, water retention, cramps

Cravings: (especially carbohydrates: sugars and starches), appetite increase, fatigue, palpitations, headaches

Depression: Lethargy, forgetfulness, confusion, insomnia

How many of them do you recognise from your monthly PMS miseries?

Urbalance

Following the Natural Nutrition programme, a day's meals might look like this:

Breakfast:

Wholemeal/rye or granary toast – with sugar free jam, marmalade, peanut butter or poached / scrambled eggs. Smoked salmon goes very well with scrambled eggs and parsley and other herbs can be added to the eggs while cooking. Wilted spinach is also an excellent accompaniment to scrambled eggs.

Lunch:

A mixed bean salad with celery and spring onion, with olive oil and lemon juice *or* a big brown rice salad with many types of fresh vegetables, cottage cheese, pumpkin seeds, olive oil, lemon juice and freshly ground black pepper.

Dinner:

Pasta with tomato, vegetable or lentils based sauce or baked or casseroled vegetable dishes with beans and/or lentils or plain grilled or steamed chicken, game or fish with lots of green vegetables

Snacks:

Hummous/Guacomole/black or green olive tapenade - this can be eaten with wholemeal pitta bread, ryvita, crisp bread, celery or carrot sticks. Fruit (e.g. apples, pears, bananas, citrus fruits such as oranges, clementines). Live yoghurt e.g. Rachel's organic yoghurt. Rice cakes, crisp breads, oatcakes

Drinks:

At least six glasses of water, herbal and fruit teas (beware of artificially flavoured or sweetened ones), fresh fruit and vegetable juices, occasional 'smoothies' — freshly made with fruits/fruit juices and yoghurt or soy milk.