

PAPYRUS

PMDD 
and
SUICIDE 

Understand your cycle. Manage your symptoms. Find support.

HERE FOR LIFE

0300 102 2470
HopeLine24/7

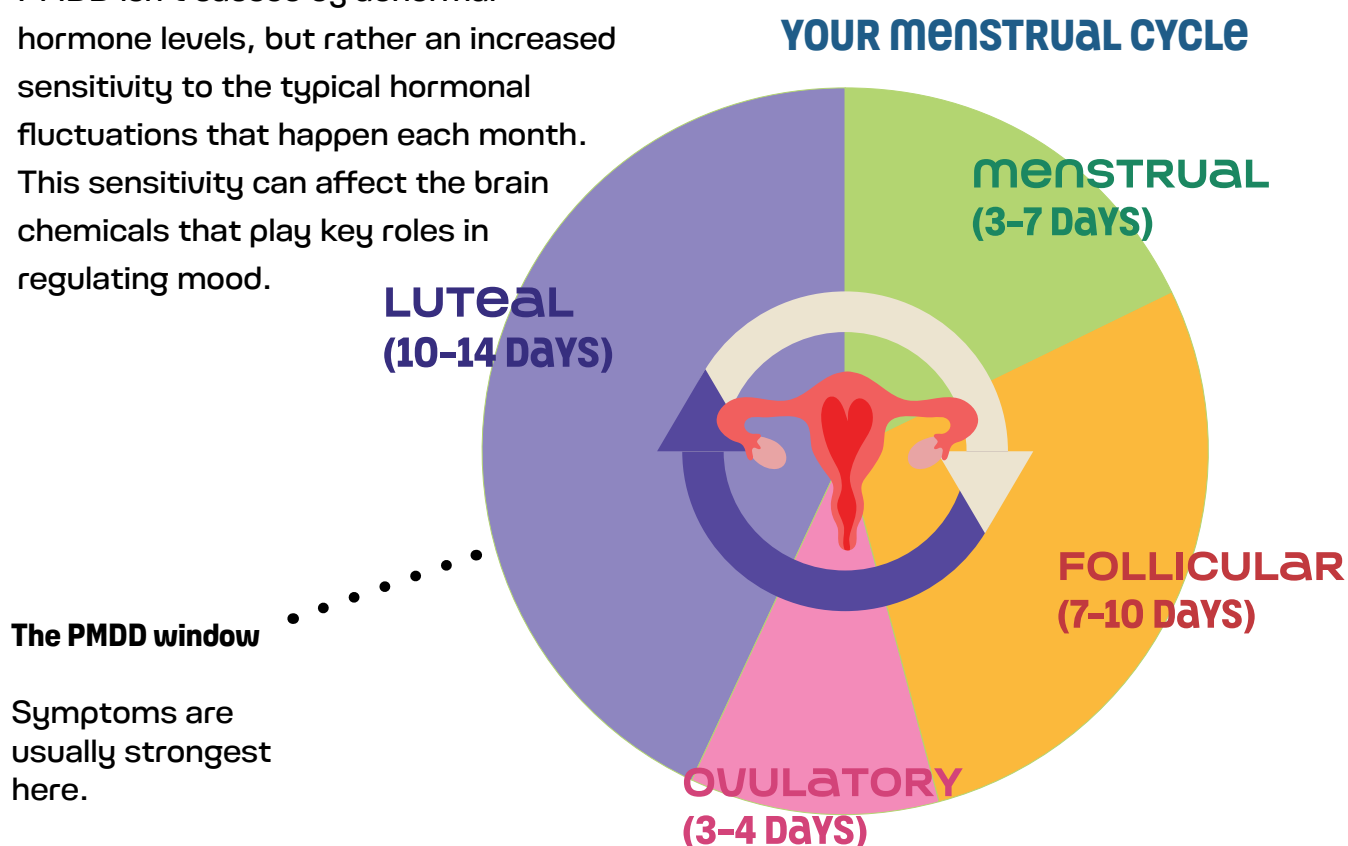
THE LINK BETWEEN PMDD AND SUICIDE

WHAT IS PMDD?

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) is a hormone-based condition that severely affects a person's emotional, mental and physical wellbeing each cycle.

PMDD isn't caused by abnormal hormone levels, but rather an increased sensitivity to the typical hormonal fluctuations that happen each month. This sensitivity can affect the brain chemicals that play key roles in regulating mood.

Although everyone living with PMDD experiences it differently, symptoms are most present in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle - roughly 7-14 days before menstruation. Many people find that when menstruation starts, their symptoms begin to ease.



*This graphic is a guide. Individual cycle stage lengths may vary.

824,000

People in the UK have PMDD
(PMDD Project)

593,000

Will experience suicidal ideation
(PMDD Project)

PMDD AND SUICIDE

For many people, living with PMDD can include experiencing thoughts of suicide, particularly in the luteal phase of their cycle. These thoughts can feel intense and overwhelming, but they're a recognised part of the condition for some and may ease as hormone levels change.

Experiencing these thoughts doesn't mean you have to cope alone. With PMDD, these thoughts may come and go with different stages of your menstrual cycle - but that doesn't make them any less important.

If you notice these feelings, reach out to someone you trust, speak to a GP or contact a support service such as HopeLine 24/7.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

For those living with PMDD, symptoms may differ from person to person and can present as physical or emotional. These may include:

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Abdomen discomfort including swelling
- Fatigue that feels persistent or low energy
- Breast tenderness, sensitivity or pain
- Sleep issues/ disruptions – including sleeping more or less than is normal for you
- Joint pain
- Changes in appetite – including eating more or less than is normal for you

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

- Noticeable shifts in mood, where emotions can change quickly and intensely
- Increased irritability or anger
- Persistent feelings of anxiety or being overwhelmed
- Deep feelings of sadness and low mood
- Low self-esteem, hopelessness or a loss of enjoyment in things
- Finding it difficult to concentrate on tasks or loss of interest in usual activities.
- Thoughts of suicide
- Brain fog (this also has physical symptoms including sluggishness, sensitivity to light and sound, and reduced coordination.)



GETTING HELP AND managing PMDD SYMPTOMS

There's no one-size-fits-all treatment, but PMDD can be managed with the right help and support. It often takes time to find the right combination of treatments that work to reduce how PMDD affects your life. Speaking to a healthcare provider, tracking your symptoms, and trying self-care or lifestyle changes are all part of managing your PMDD.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

- **Medication.** Often used to help manage PMDD symptoms, particularly when they are more severe, this could be in the form of antidepressants or hormonal treatments, or pain relief to help with the physical symptoms.
- **Therapy and counselling.** Therapeutic models like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or Rapid Transformational Therapy may be offered to help manage mental health symptoms and support coping strategies.
- **Vitamins and supplements.** Certain vitamins and minerals can help reduce the severity of PMDD symptoms. It is important to consult a health care professional first.
- **Surgical options.** May be considered when other forms of treatment have not been effective.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES AND SELF-CARE



Self-care for PMDD is about actively reducing the intensity and impact of symptoms, especially in the luteal phase (the 1-2 weeks before your period). The key is to match your self-care to what your body and mind are going through.

"After suffering terribly for over 15 years with PMDD. I found that specific vitamins, giving up caffeine and alcohol (for 10 days of the month), eating better and weight training completely changed everything for me.

I literally went from my life being turned upside down and feeling suicidal each month to no longer being affected by my cycle."



IDEAS TO TRY

- **Gentle physical care.** Exercise can help reduce mood swings, anxiety and fatigue, but try not to put too much pressure on yourself. When doing anything feels overwhelming, try some light movement like walking, stretching or yoga.
- **Maintain a balanced diet.** Help stabilise mood and energy with simple, nourishing meals.
- **Stay hydrated.** Dehydration can worsen fatigue and mood.
- **Prioritise rest.** Get consistent, restful sleep.
- **Cut down** on alcohol, smoking and caffeine.
- **Mindful activities** such as meditation and journaling can help manage stress.
- **Comfort routines.** Think: warm baths or showers, blankets, podcasts, a familiar show or film.
- **Reality-check your thoughts.** Ask: "Would I feel this way in a different menstrual phase?"
- **Journal.** Get thoughts out of your head instead of letting them spiral.
- **Recognise** when your symptoms are likely to flare. This helps you plan ahead and take some control by building in rest time and preparing coping tools.
- **Build a PMDD kit.** Have things ready for the harder days, such as easy meals, comfort items and distractions.



SUPPORTING SOMEONE WITH PMDD



Supporting someone with PMDD can make a huge difference to them. It helps to approach it with the right expectations. You're not there to "fix" it; you're there to support, reduce stress, increase safety, and stay steady when things feel intense for them.

LEARN HOW PMDD WORKS

Understanding the condition helps you not take symptoms personally. Mood changes are driven by hormonal sensitivity, not choice or attitude. The person may feel like a "different person" during this phase. The more you frame it as a health condition, the less conflict it creates.

COMMUNICATE OUTSIDE THE PMDD WINDOW

The best time to plan is when they're feeling well. Ask: "What does support look like for you during hard days?" Identify triggers, warning signs, and helpful responses. Agree on boundaries (e.g. when to give space vs. stay close). This creates a plan for when symptoms hit.



BE CALM NOT CORRECTIVE

Don't try to "fix" emotions. Instead say: "I'm here with you", "We'll get through this phase together" Validation reduces intensity, even if you don't fully understand how that person is feeling.



SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Support doesn't mean accepting harm. It's okay to say: "I want to support you, but I can't be spoken to like that." Take space if things escalate. Protect your own mental health too. Make sure you still have your own support system.

TAKE SAFETY SERIOUSLY

If someone expresses thoughts of self-harm or suicide, don't ignore it. Encourage immediate support or advice (GP, Hopeline 24/7, a trusted person) PMDD can include intense but temporary thoughts of suicide – but they still matter.



TRACK YOUR CYCLE

Tracking your cycle is one of the most useful tools for managing PMDD.

Tracking helps you:

- See the pattern clearly over time
- Distinguish PMDD from other concerns.
- Have clearer evidence if you're seeking diagnosis or treatment.



DATE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
SYMPTOMS													
Anxiety													
Depression													
Irritability													
Thoughts of suicide													
Mood swings													
Appetite change													
Fatigue													
Bloating													
Sleep changes													
Breast tenderness													
Disrupted sleep													
Loss of interest in usual activities													
Brain fog													
Joint pain													



*Tracker continues on the next page



FURTHER SUPPORT

PAPYRUS offers specialist suicide prevention support for young people, and anyone worried about a young person.

THE PMDD PROJECT Provides awareness, support and funds research into PMDD.

THE PMDD COLLECTIVE is a community space for anyone who is affected by PMDD, run by specialists in PMDD and those with lived experience.

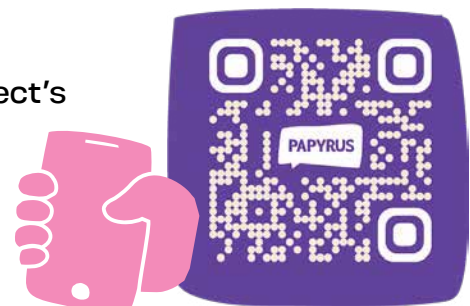
THE FEMININE RHYTHM provides a safe and nurturing space for anyone with PMDD, providing support services, coaching and courses.

MIND provides in depth support for understanding, and supporting someone with, PMDD.

IAMPD UK provides evidence-led education and research for PMDD and PME.

THE MONTHLY TRUTH PODCAST hosted by PMDD Project's Phoebe Williams.

**SCAN THE QR CODE
TO LEARN MORE**



REFERENCES



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HopeLine24/7

If you are thinking about suicide or are concerned about a young person who may be, you can contact HopeLine 24/7 for confidential support and practical advice.



CALL
0300 102 2470

TEXT HOPE to
88247



email
pat@papyrus-uk.org

papyrus-uk.org

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**NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
NETWORK**


**ROYAL
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OF WALES