



What are Menstrual Cramps?

Menstrual cramps are also known by its medical term as dysmenorrhea. These cramps are characterized by either dull, **throbbing pains in the lower abdomen** or shooting, intense pains that may last for a few minutes. Every woman's experience with menstrual cramps is different. Menstrual cramps can range from mild, moderate to severe pain.

Some women only experience mild menstrual cramps with a slight twinge of pain while for others, the **pain can be incapacitating and disrupt their lives**. Often when the pain is so severe, it is quite common to find young girls or women not being able to go to school or work.

There are two types of menstrual cramps – primary dysmenorrhea or secondary dysmenorrhea. Primary dysmenorrhea typically begins six months to a year following the beginning of menstruation and there is no underlying gynecological problem contributing to the pain. Cramps and **the degree of pain tend to lessen as you become older** and often disappear completely after giving birth.

Secondary dysmenorrhea involves an underlying abnormal condition such as endometriosis or uterine fibroids that causes the menstrual cramps. This condition usually develops later, after you have begun menstruating.

The common symptoms and signs of dysmenorrhea include:

- Dull, throbbing pain in the lower abdomen
- Pain that extends to lower back and thighs
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Sweating

What Causes Menstrual Cramps?

During the menstrual cycle, the uterus contracts when the blood leaves your uterus and sheds its lining. The lining of the uterus produces a hormone or special substances called prostaglandins which **trigger the cramping and pain**. Some women produce higher levels of prostaglandins and experience more severe cramps.

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

Several conditions can cause secondary dysmenorrhea and these include:

- Endometriosis
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Adenomyosis
- Uterine fibroids and uterine polyps
- Use of an intrauterine (IUD) device

Diagnosing Menstrual Cramps

If you are experiencing **severe menstrual cramps** that are disrupting your life, consult your health practitioner. The diagnosis of secondary dysmenorrhea involves a thorough physical examination including a pelvic exam as well as a review of your medical history.

A pelvic exam will also be performed to check for any abnormalities and signs of infection. Additional tests such as imaging tests (ultrasound, CT or MRI scan), a laparoscopy or hysteroscopy may be performed to determine the **underlying cause of secondary dysmenorrhea**.

Help for Menstrual Cramps

Various treatment options are available to relieve the pain and discomfort of dysmenorrhea. Self-care strategies such as applying a **heating pad on your abdomen or lower back**, exercising regularly, keeping warm and getting plenty of rest can make a significant difference to the way you feel. Over-the-counter medications such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin or ibuprofen can relieve discomfort.

If cramping is severe, low dosage oral contraceptives may be prescribed to prevent ovulation which thereby **reduces the production of prostaglandins**. If you suffer from secondary dysmenorrhea, treatment will depend on the underlying cause. Treatment may include antibiotics for the infection, polyps to treat endometriosis or surgery to remove fibroids. Alternative treatment options such as massage, acupuncture, yoga or meditation can also provide pain relief.

Natural remedies

Natural and holistic treatments are a gentler and safer alternative to **alleviate the pain and discomfort of menstrual cramps**. Using herbal remedies helps to support the female reproductive system and promotes overall health and wellbeing.

Herbs such as Foeniculum vulgare (Sweet Fennel) acts as a liver tonic and helps to **promote water balance** while Pulsatilla vulgaris (Pasque Flower) is a soothing and supportive herb for the female reproductive system. In addition, Dong Quai (Angelica Sinesis) helps to promote hormonal harmony throughout the **menstrual cycle** and Melissa officinale (Lemon Balm) soothes and promotes stable mood and feelings.

Coping with Menstrual Cramps



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

There are several ways to cope with and alleviate the pain and [discomfort of menstrual cramps](#). Follow these helpful guidelines:

- Exercise regularly by walking, cycling, stretching or doing pilates
- Soak in a warm bath to relieve pain
- Use a heating pad on your lower back or abdomen
- Try drinking ginger tea to reduce nausea and chamomile tea to soothe cramps
- Make yourself as comfortable as possible – wear track pants, socks and curl up with your blanket
- Massage the affected area with arnica or aromatherapy oil
- Increase your intake of vitamin supplements such as zinc and calcium
- Reduce your intake of salt to help reduce bloating
- Get plenty of rest

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "...

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more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While ‘standardized’ extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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Dong Quai: Promotes a healthy reproductive system, premenstrual, menstrual and menopausal health

Dong Quai, one of the most important of the Chinese tonic herbs, is used as a **nourishing blood tonic and to support the menstrual cycle**. Dong Quai has been used for centuries by Asian healers to support **balance of female hormones** and to promote hormonal health during the menopause and perimenopause. More recently, clinical research has confirmed the effectiveness of this tonic herb.

[Learn more about Dong Quai](#)

Femalite: Maintain normal emotional and [hormonal balance](#) during PMS

Femalite is formulated by our Clinical Psychologist to help **maintain stable mood and hormonal balance** before menstruation, as well as provide a soothing effect for those common monthly ‘aches and pains’ during menstruation itself. It contains three well known, **soothing and effective herbal** ingredients - Fennel, Pulsatilla and Melissa.

Formulated in convenient drop form, Femalite may be taken when needed for **support during the premenstrual and menstrual** period. Simply added to juice or water and sipped, Femalite is pleasant tasting and can make all the difference.

The formula remains true to the **whole spectrum method** of herbal extraction, ensuring the bio-availability and balance of all the active ingredients contained in the remedy. This method of manufacture also significantly reduces the likelihood of side effects and maintains all active ingredients in perfect balance – exactly as nature intended!

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1) All Native Remedies products are manufactured according to the highest pharmaceutical standards - using only the best quality raw ingredients from nature's medicine chest.

2) Native Remedies and our suppliers are registered with the FDA as accredited suppliers and manufacturers of health supplements. Our products are sold all over the world and are manufactured to strict international standards in a GMP accredited manufacturing plant.

3) All our remedies are manufactured in an FDA registered pharmaceutical facility under close supervision.

This includes formulation, acquiring and testing of raw ingredients as well as final manufacturing. This gives us the confidence to say that when you are buying a Native Remedies product, you are buying the safest and the best! We know what goes into our remedies - which is why we know what you will get out of them!

4) Manufacturing is done strictly according to the principles of GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) and all raw ingredients undergo stringent testing before being approved by our registered manufacturing pharmacists.

5) We offer a free email [Ask Our Experts](#) service run by trained consultants ready to advise you on the best choice for your health.

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