

Fertility Care for Young Women

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO HELPING WOMEN APPRECIATE THEIR FERTILITY



PMS: A Closer Look

By : Teresa Kenney, APRN, CFCP

For years women have talked about premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and how it can make the days before the menstrual period miserable. PMS has a wide degree of variation in the symptoms and in the degree of severity. Let's take a closer look at what those symptoms are and how to decide if your symptoms are serious enough to warrant some lifestyle changes or a visit to the doctor.

The most important thing to understand when trying to figure out if you suffer from PMS is that these symptoms are time oriented. This means that you experience them in a certain phase of the menstrual cycle. To be specific, premenstrual symptoms begin in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle,

which is after ovulation. Most women will report experiencing them at least four days before the period, but symptoms can start as early as seven to ten days before the menstrual period. Also, symptoms go away soon after the menses begins.

A list of symptoms that helps a doctor diagnose premenstrual syndrome includes irritability, breast tenderness, bloating, weight gain, carbohydrate craving, crying easily, depression, headaches, fatigue, and insomnia. The best way to find out which symptoms affect a woman and for how long is to have her chart her cycles. By charting the cycle, not only will you be able to determine the time of ovulation and when the luteal phase begins, but you can keep a diary of the PMS symptoms and the specific days on which they occur. Also, by charting your cycle, a doctor trained in NaProTechnology can draw hormone levels, specifically progesterone and estrogen levels, that can help to determine the cause of the PMS.

Deciding whether or not a woman needs medical treatment for PMS is determined by how the symptoms affect the function and quality of her life. If a woman reports that her behavioral and somatic (physical) symptoms are moderate to severe than medical treated may be warranted.

There are many lifestyle/nutritional therapies that may be helpful in decreasing the symptoms of PMS. First of all, sleep is incredibly important for the body to feel *Continued on page 3*

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FERTILITY FACTS

Prevalence statistics about premenstrual syndrome

The following statistics relate to the prevalence of premenstrual syndrome (PMS):

- 30% – 40% of women suffer some impairment of daily activity (NWHIC)
- 75% of women have severe PMS (NWHIC)
- approximately 1 in 6 or 15.00% or 40.8 million women in the United States have PMS – prevalence rate

From: www.cureresearch.com

A newsletter dedicated to helping young women

Language of a Woman's Body

By: Victoria Sage, BSc

Man is made in the image of God. And, man—a body-soul unity—was created good. In Genesis, we read that “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gn 1:31). This original plan of the Creator—that man was created good—corresponds with a need to respect the human body. We also see a Biblical basis for this in the first Letter to the Corinthians when St. Paul writes, “...God arranged the organs in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ...On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honourable we invest with the greater honour, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior parts, that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another” (1 Cor 12: 18, 22-25).

The human body was created with an “objective harmony” and a “harmony of the heart” (or “purity of heart”), pointed out the Pope John Paul II in the Theology of the Body. In our fallen state, there is a discord in the body. The victory over this discord, according to the Theology of the Body, “can and must take place in man’s heart. This is the way to purity, that is ‘to control one’s own body in holiness and honour’ (cf 1 Th 4:3-5)”.

FertilityCare Practitioners can sometimes share anecdotes about young unmarried women who come to learn the Creighton Model FertilityCare System in order to continue engaging in promiscuous activities while avoiding pregnancy. These women, when they learn to chart their cycles with the Creighton Model, go through a conversion and adopt a new chaste lifestyle. Why does this happen?

Young women who use the Creighton Model System for health monitoring and maintenance increase their respect for their bodies by using the system. The Creighton Model System teaches a woman to chart her menstrual and fertility cycles. By recording the “language” of her health and fertility on a Creighton Model chart, a woman sees unfolding before her the intricate design of God within her body. What was once considered “the curse” now becomes a part of the labyrinthine rise and fall of hormones and their effects on the body. A woman’s Creighton Model chart is the language of her body!

Moreover, a woman who respects her own body in this way will demand that others respect her too. She will expect men to respect her body. She will want medical care that respects her body and will challenge the medical community to provide her with high-quality health care.

Interestingly, in the Theology of the Body, Pope John Paul II made frequent connections between respecting and honoring the body, the functions of abstinence and control, and the virtues of temperance and purity. In one place, he wrote about the power that such honor and control of one’s body can have on others: “The tasks of purity...is not only (and not so much) abstinence from unchastity and from what leads to it, and so abstinence from the passion of lust, at the same time, the control of one’s own body and, indirectly also that of others, in holiness and honor.”

The body is to be revered and respected. In a cultural milieu that has no regard for purity and temperance and self-control, the Creighton Model FertilityCare System is a tool for young women to foster such reverence and respect within themselves and others and an instrument for growth in purity and self-control.

“This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity, that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathens who do not know God.” (1 Th 4:3-5)

Victoria Sage is a scientific & technical communications assistant at the Pope Paul VI Institute.

Chastity is a difficult, long-term matter, one must wait patiently for it to bear fruit, for the happiness of loving kindness which it must bring. But, at the same time, chastity is the sure way to happiness.

— Venerable John Paul II

Human Love as Self-Giving

From: The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality (Pontifical Council for the Family)

May you
acquire
the custom
of concerning
yourself
every day
about others,
and give
yourself
to the task
so much that
you forget
you even exist.

— St. Josemaria Escriva

The person is thus capable of a higher kind of love than concupiscence, which only sees objects as a means to satisfy one's appetites; the person is capable rather of friendship and self-giving, with the capacity to recognize and love persons for themselves. Like the love of God, this is a love capable of generosity. One desires the good of the other because he or she is recognized as worthy of being loved. This is a love which generates communion between persons, because each considers the good of the other as his or her own good. This is a self-giving made to one who loves us, a self-giving whose inherent goodness is discovered and activated in the communion of persons and where one learns the value of loving and of being loved.

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healthy day in a day out. So, if a person is sleep deprived, this will aggravate her symptoms. Also, physical activity or exercise can help reduce the symptoms of PMS. Exercise helps the body to not only decrease stress but also release more endorphins, which are the "feel good" hormones that our bodies naturally make. Women with PMS can also benefit from relaxation therapy such as listening to a relaxation tape or music or just doing deep breathing.

There are also some nutritional deficiencies that may contribute to PMS. For example, low magnesium, low vitamin B levels, and low iron may influence PMS. It has also been shown through research that increasing your calcium and vitamin D can decrease PMS.

Remember that nutritional supplements do not work overnight. It takes weeks

and sometimes months to notice the benefit. Some supplements that may improve PMS include a good multivitamin, calcium, vitamin D with magnesium, plus an added B-complex and omega 3 fatty acids such as fish oil or flaxseed oil. Ask your doctor whether or not nutritional supplements are right for you.

When a NaProTechnology medical consultant is able to draw hormone levels of a patient with PMS, many times deficiencies in progesterone and estrogen are found. There are specific bioidentical hormone treatments that can benefit these women. They are easy to take, safe, and do not have side effects. To find a naprotechnology certified medical consultant near you go to our website fertilitycare.org and click on the "Find a Medical Consultant" link in the left-hand column. Or for more information about how naprotechnology can help premenstrual syndrome and many other women's health problems go to popepaulvi.com or call us at (402) 390-6600.

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"Purity prepares a soul for love,
and love confirms the soul
in purity."

— Ven. John Henry Cardinal Newman



RESOURCES

*www.popepaulvi.com

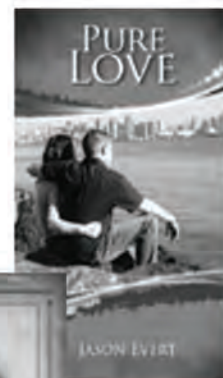
*www.fertilitycare.org

*<http://www.chastity.com>

*<http://vocation-network.org>

*www.onemoresoul.com

*www.ewtn.com



Chiara Badano

(By Carmen Elena Villa; published on Zenit News Agency—www.zenit.org—March 22, 2010. Chiara Badano, who died just 20 years ago while still a teenager, was beatified on September 25th. The last words she spoke to her mother were “Be happy. I am happy!” Badano died on October 7, 1990. Some 2,000 people attended her funeral.)

Excerpted and reprinted from Zenit.org – ROME - Chiara Badano was born Oct. 29, 1971, to parents who had been awaiting a child for 11 years.

She first came in contact with the Focolare movement when she was nine. She and her parents attended a Focolare family festival in Rome, and the event made a decisive impact on all three. Badano became extremely active in the Focolares’ Gen Movement (New Generation). She liked sports, dancing and singing. At age 16, she decided to consecrate herself to God.

Just a year later, while playing tennis, Badano experienced sharp pain. Doctors soon discovered bone cancer. As the disease progressed, Badano faced repeated hospitalizations and increasing pain. She often repeated, “For you, Jesus. If you wish it, so do I!” Soon Badano had to endure one of her harshest trials: She lost the use of her legs. However, she confided to one of her friends: “If I had to choose between walking and going to Paradise, I’d have no doubt, I would choose Paradise. Now I’m only interested in that.”

Chiara “Light”

Badano formed a close relationship with the founder of the Focolare movement, Chiara Lubich. Badano wrote her founder on July 19, 1990, to tell her that doctors had decided to halt treatments, since the cancer could not be reversed.

“Medicine has laid down its weapons,” she wrote. “With interrupting the treatments, the pains in my back have increased. I can scarcely move. I feel so small and the road ahead is so hard. ... I often feel that the pain is suffocating me. It is the Bridegroom who is coming out to meet me, no? If I also repeat with you: ‘if you wish it, I also wish it’ ... with you I am sure that together with him we will conquer the world!”



Bl. Chiara Badano

Lubich wrote back to answer her: “Don’t be afraid, Chiara, to say ‘yes’ to him, moment after moment. He will give you the strength, be certain of this. I also pray for this and I am always with you. God loves you intensely and wants to penetrate the depth of your soul and make you feel drops of heaven. ‘Chiara Light’ is the name I have thought of for you. Do you like it? It is the light of the Ideal that conquers the world. I send it to you with all my affection ...”

During her illness, Badano wanted to prepare her funeral: the songs, the flowers, the hairdo, the dress, which would be white, a wedding dress for her “wedding feast.”

Her father asked her if she wished to donate the corneas of her eyes, and she answered with an approving smile.

The last words she spoke to her mother were: “Be happy, I am happy!” Badano died Oct. 7, 1990. Some 2,000 people attended her funeral. Her process of beatification began in 1999. A miracle was approved for her beatification last Dec. 19: It was the cure of an Italian boy from Trieste who had meningitis and had been given only 48 hours to live.

Bishop Micchiardi spoke of Badano’s witness as “significant in particular for young people. ...Holiness is needed also today, it is necessary to help young people to find direction, a goal, to overcome their insecurities and loneliness, the enigmas in face of failures, pain, death and all anxieties.”

“This witness of faith is amazing – the fortitude of a young girl of today,” he continued. “It overwhelms a person, impels many to change their lives.”

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