



How to get a PMDD Diagnosis

Clinical Review Statement

This resource has been developed by The PMDD Project and reviewed by our Clinical Advisory Board for clinical accuracy and alignment with current evidence and guidelines.

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Reviewed by:

The PMDD Project Clinical Advisory Board

Receiving a PMDD diagnosis can be a long and challenging journey, often taking an average of 12 years⁽¹⁾.

Many individuals face struggles in articulating their symptoms and advocating for their needs, leading to feelings of frustration and vulnerability. It's crucial to persist through this process, even when faced with misdiagnoses or a lack of understanding from healthcare providers.

Here are our key tips to help you navigate the path to obtaining a PMDD diagnosis.

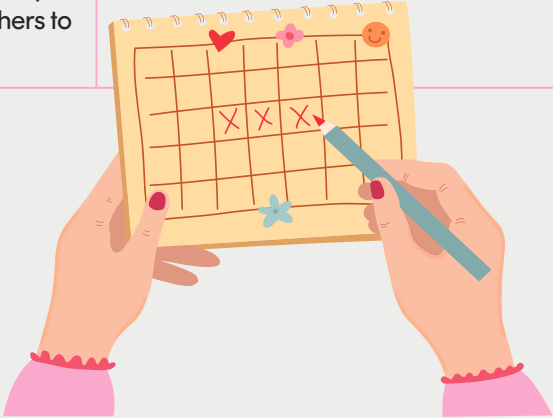
Track your symptoms

Start by tracking your symptoms daily for at least two menstrual cycles.

You can use a symptom tracker app, a diary, or the Daily Record of Severity of Problems (DRSP) - a validated, clinical symptom tracking tool used by healthcare providers and researchers to help diagnose PMD.

Record when your symptoms start, their severity, and when they stop.

PMDD symptoms typically appear in the two weeks before your period and fade shortly after it starts.



Ruling out other conditions

PMDD can be confused with conditions like anxiety, depression, bipolar, or thyroid disorders, so your GP may explore these options.

However, the key to diagnosing PMDD is the cyclical nature of your symptoms, which should improve within a few days of starting your period and disappear until the next cycle.

Consult your GP

Book an appointment with your GP or healthcare provider, preferably one who specialises in women's health, gynaecology, or endocrinology.

When booking your appointment, be sure to note that you suspect you have PMDD. This allows the healthcare provider to review your concerns before your visit and prepares them to look into it effectively.

Take your symptom diary with you, as it's crucial for identifying the pattern of PMDD. Your GP will ask about your medical history, do a physical exam, and possibly run some tests to rule out other conditions like thyroid issues or mental health disorders.

Sometimes, receiving a diagnosis may require speaking to a psychiatrist or psychologist, who can provide further assessment and refer you accordingly.

Be as honest and detailed as you can about symptoms impact your ability to function and manage daily tasks - this can significantly speed up diagnosis.

Prepare key phrases such as:
"This affects my ability to work",
"This impacts my relationships",
or "I feel unsafe".

Consider a referral to a specialist

If your GP isn't familiar with PMDD, or if your symptoms are complex, they might refer you to a specialist like a gynaecologist or psychiatrist.

Specialists with experience in hormone-related mood disorders can offer further insight and support.

Meet diagnostic criteria:

To receive a diagnosis of PMDD, you must have at least five symptoms, which one being mood-related⁽²⁾. These symptoms should occur during the majority of your menstrual cycles over the past year and significantly disrupt your daily life, including work, relationships, or general wellbeing.

PMDD is a distinct diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5).

The DSM-5 provides clear criteria, demanding **at least five severe symptoms** for diagnosis, including:

Mood	Anxiety
Irritability	Concentration Issues
Energy Loss	Appetite Changes
Sleep Problems	Feeling Overwhelmed

Be prepared for the journey

It's important to note that, on average, it can take up to 12 years to receive a PMDD diagnosis⁽¹⁾.

This lengthy process can be tough, as it requires you to be vulnerable with healthcare providers about your thoughts and symptoms, which can feel very personal and invasive. It can be disheartening when you continue to be misdiagnosed or ignored, but it's vital to keep advocating for yourself.

Don't hesitate to seek out a new GP or specialist until you find one who recognises PMDD, and take as much information as possible to your appointments.

Persistence is key, and finding a supportive healthcare provider can make a significant difference in your journey towards diagnosis and treatment.

Get your diagnosis:

Once your doctor confirms your symptoms match PMDD and occur in a cyclical pattern, you should be able to receive a diagnosis.

This can be a huge step in understanding your health and exploring treatment options to manage your symptoms.

Top tips to take control in the doctor's room

Come prepared

Bring credible resources about PMDD to help educate your doctor quickly if they are not familiar with the condition.

Describe your symptoms clearly

Take a symptom tracker and be really specific with what you're saying.

Use the right terminology

Mention that PMDD is a severe, hormone-based disorder and not just bad PMS.

Be clear with what you need

Don't be afraid to seek a second opinion

Bring a support person if possible

Ask about next steps and follow ups

Ensure you leave with a plan.

Need urgent support?

We know that managing PMDD can be incredibly difficult, and at times, the emotional weight can feel overwhelming. If you are experiencing severe distress, suicidal thoughts, or feel you are in crisis, please know that you are not alone and that support is available. You deserve to be heard and kept safe.

If you are in immediate danger:

Please call 999 or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department immediately.

Samaritans: Call 116 123 for free, 24/7 confidential support, or visit www.samaritans.org.

Shout: Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 for free, confidential, 24/7 text support.

Please note: This resource is intended for information and peer support; it is not a substitute for professional mental health care or crisis intervention. Please reach out to your GP, local mental health services, or the resources above if you need urgent help.

