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**We have decided to focus this issue on Women's Health Concerns**

**Don't feel left out Men, our next issue will be focused on you.**



**Common Menstrual Issues**

From puberty to menopause and years in between, most women deal with menstrual issues that they may think are "normal". However, contrary to this common misconception, premenstrual syndrome, short or long cycles, irregular cycles, painful periods, and blood clots are not normal. Women are expected to live with these various symptoms and if they become unbearable, then they go on birth control pills or other medications prescribed by their family doctors.

Naturopathic doctors, on the other hand, don't believe these are "normal variations" and can help modify your menstrual cycle with nutritional changes, oils and seeds, herbs and acupuncture.

**Premenstrual syndrome**

This can be classified into 4 different categories according to the predominant symptoms experienced by a woman during her menses (period).

- PMS-A experiences anxiety
- PMS-C craves carbohydrates
- PMS-D experiences depression
- PMS-H has water retention

Using a simple questionnaire, your ND can determine what category or categories you fall under to better direct your treatment.

**What type of PMS sufferer are you?**

**PMS-A, PMS-C, PMS-D or PMS-H?**

**Long or Short Menstrual Cycle**

Menstrual cycles do vary a little; however, if they are consistently short (i.e. 24 days) or long (i.e. 34 days) or not regular at all, your ND can help. Herbs and homeopathics can be especially beneficial (please see reverse for more details about some herbs).

Native American's have traditionally referred to the menstrual cycle as the *moon cycle*, waxing and waning with the cycling of the new moon and full moon. It is time of female celebration. Your ND may have already prescribed "seeds and oils" according to your menstrual cycle or the moon's cycle to help regulate your hormones.

**Blood clots**

Blood clots in the menstrual blood can be associated with especially

heavy flow or indicate the presence of uterine fibroids. Twenty percent of women over 30-40 years of age suffer from uterine fibroids. These masses grow in various locations in the uterus and can range in size from microscopic to 20 pounds. Fibroids are huge reservoirs of blood that can impose surgical risks. Naturopathic doctors can use a variety of treatment modalities such as herbs, acupuncture, and homeopathics to help shrink fibroids, decreasing the need for surgery.

**Get to know your menstrual cycle:  
Chart your premenstrual and menstrual symptoms**

**Fibroid symptoms**

- Sensation of lower abdominal mass or abdominal enlargement
- Pelvic pressure, congestion, bloating, feeling of heaviness in lower abdomen
- Constipation
- Lumps in abdomen
- Passage of large clots during menses
- Painful intercourse
- Painful menses, newly occurring (not since puberty)
- Backache, lower abdominal pain
- Infertility, miscarriages
- Anemia, weakness, dizziness, shortness of breath, congestive heart failure due to long term blood loss

**Naturopathic Perspectives**

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## Our first ever Alternative Flu Clinic – October 27th

So you'd like to protect yourself as best you can from the flu, but you are not very interested in getting the flu shot? There are several reasons people avoid the flu shot:

- They've have had the flu shot before but came down with the flu anyway
- They don't like needles
- They are allergic to eggs (one of the ingredients in vaccinations)

If you have any of these concerns you may want to consider coming to our alternative flu clinic.

### Benefits of our alternative flu clinic:

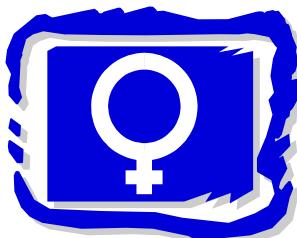
- No preservatives
- No eggs
- No injection

At the alternative flu clinic we will be using oral homeopathic remedies to boost the immune system.

Homeopathy, a therapy out of Germany, is a treatment is based on the principle of like treats like. Remedies are made from minute doses of substances to help nudge the body in the direction of healing. It is a form of energetic medicine (similar to how acupuncture is an energetic therapy). Homeopathic remedies are non-toxic and are safe for use in infants and children, adults and even in household pets.

**We will be holding our Alternative Flu Clinic on Friday October 27<sup>th</sup>. Call the office now to schedule an appointment. Please feel free to refer a friend or relative, even if they are not a patient.**

## Women's Herbs



### Vitex agnus castus

*Vitex agnus castus*, commonly known as Chaste tree, is a herb known for its menstrual regulating effects. *Vitex* is best taken in liquid or tincture form, versus capsule, for an optimal effect.

Traditionally *Vitex* was used to promote mother's milk flow, for menstrual irregularities and to decrease libido. Animal studies found *Vitex* has an effect on the pituitary gland, decreasing estrogen effects and promoting progesterone. *Vitex* is effective for PMS, insufficient milk production, acne, infertility due to decreased progesterone levels, and numerous menstrual disorders. Please note this herb is contraindicated in conjunction with progesterone medications, birth control pill or hormone replacement therapy.

### Cimicifuga racemosa

*Cimicifuga racemosa* or Black cohosh is another female herb that has hormonal activity. It can be combined with other herbs by your Naturopathic doctor in a unique formula made specifically by you.

*Cimicifuga racemosa* was traditionally used for muscle and nerve pains, menstrual disorders (amenorrhea, ovarian pain, and painful menses), and PMS. The mechanism of action is still undetermined, although it is known to have estrogenic, antispasmodic and uterine tonifying actions.

Studies have shown that *Cimicifuga* adjusts luteinizing hormone levels (another female hormone) and is beneficial for miscarriages, ovarian tumours, infertility and cyst production.

### Menstrual Terminology

*Menses* = duration of blood flow, i.e. period

*Cycle* = the number of days from the first day of bleeding to the next first day of bleeding.

*PMS* = premenstrual syndrome

### Ricinus communis

*Ricinus communis* (castor oil) can be applied topically over the liver to assist in estrogen detoxification, especially for women suffering from fibroids, cysts, or painful menses. Please ask your Naturopathic Doctor for instructions and do not do this during your menstrual period.

### Sweet Potato & Black Bean Burritos

2 cups sweet potatoes, peeled & diced

1 onion, chopped

1 Tb olive oil

Sauté in large fry pan in oil until just tender. Add water or apple juice as needed to prevent sticking.

2 cups cooked Black beans

1 tsp ground cumin

¾ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp sea salt

Add to sweet potato mixture and cook until heated through.

8 flour or corn tortillas

1 cup cheddar cheese

Divide bean mixture and cheese up among the tortillas and roll up.

Place in 9x13" baking dish, cover, and bake at 350°F for 20 minutes.

Garnish with plain yoghurt, salsa and fresh cilantro.

Makes 8 burritos.