

physical examination may include a gynecologic examination.

If a gynecologic examination is necessary, the nurse can play a supportive role for the adolescent girl. Whether it is her first experience or not, she is often filled with apprehension. Almost all adolescents are extremely self-conscious about their bodies and the changes taking place. They need continuing support in the form of anticipatory guidance regarding what to expect and suggestions of what to do to relax during the procedure. Most girls favor a semi-sitting position, which has the additional advantage of allowing eye contact during the procedure. Sometimes a pillow helps the patient feel more comfortable and less vulnerable. The provision of a mirror for the girl to see what is taking place if she so desires helps the examiner explain various aspects of anatomy. When possible, it is important to respect the adolescent's request for a female provider and to have her mother or other supportive person present if she desires.

Premenstrual Syndrome

Approximately 30% to 80% of women experience mood and/or somatic symptoms that occur with their menstrual cycles ([Lentz, 2012](#)). Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a poorly understood condition that includes one or more of a large number of physical and psychological symptoms beginning in the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle that occurs to such a degree that lifestyle or work is affected. Symptoms include fluid retention, behavioral or emotional changes, premenstrual cravings, headache, fatigue, and backache. All age groups are affected.

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is a more severe variant of PMS. Approximately 3% to 8% of women are affected and experience marked irritability, dysphoria, mood lability, anxiety, fatigue, appetite changes, and a sense of feeling overwhelmed ([Lentz, 2012](#)).

Therapeutic Management

There is little agreement on management. A careful, detailed history and daily log of symptoms and mood fluctuations spanning several cycles may give direction to a plan of management. Education is an important component of the management. Nurses advise women that self-help modalities often result in significant