

Menstrual Disorders in Adolescent Girls

Adolescence is the time when there is sudden transformation in the body and many questions arise in the minds of the adolescents. Firstly they are not able to cope with the changes and secondly the changes bring along problems with them. The most challenging problems are related to menses, in girls. Menstrual conditions are many that may require physician's attention or any other healthcare professional's attention. The most common of the menstrual disorders are premenstrual syndrome, dysmenorrhea and amenorrhea.

Before the onset of the menses, females face many uncomfortable symptoms which last for a short period, stretching from few hours to few days. But some of them can be very intense and can disturb the normal functioning of the person. These symptoms are grouped as premenstrual syndrome. In usual cases, the symptoms come to a halt when the menses begin, but for some they may last even after the menstrual periods are over. Eighty five percent of the females experience some of the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome at one time or the other. Nearly forty percent experience the symptoms so intensely that their daily chores are affected by it and ten percent are disabled by it.

There are many premenstrual syndrome symptoms which can be broadly classified as neurologic & vascular symptoms, psychological symptoms, gastrointestinal symptoms, fluid retention, eye problems and respiratory problems. The cause of premenstrual syndrome are fluctuations in the levels of progesterone & estrogen, hypoglycemia, hyperprolactinemia, psychogenic factors, changes in carbohydrate metabolism, excessive aldosterone, progesterone allergy and water retention by kidneys. The good thing is that premenstrual syndrome can be prevented by exercising regularly, eating balanced diet and sleeping adequately.

Dysmenorrhea is feeling intense menstrual pain and cramps. Depending on the severity, dysmenorrhea is stated as primary dysmenorrhea or secondary dysmenorrhea. Primary dysmenorrhea symptoms are felt from the onset of the menstrual periods and are felt life-long. Because of abnormal uterine contractions due to chemical imbalance, severe menstrual cramping is experienced. Secondary dysmenorrhea starts in the later stages. The causes are different for primary and secondary dysmenorrhea. Secondary dysmenorrhea can be blamed on medical conditions such as endometriosis, uterine fibroids, pelvic inflammatory disease, tumors, infections, and abnormal pregnancy.

Dysmenorrhea symptoms are lower abdomen cramping & pain, lower back pain, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, fatigue, fainting, weakness and headaches. Females who are overweight, smoke, and have started to menstruate before turning eleven are at a higher risk of developing dysmenorrhea. Females who drink alcohol

during menstrual period experience prolonged pain. After studying the health conditions, age, cause of dysmenorrhea, and extent of condition of the individual, corresponding treatment will be recommended. Regular exercise, abdominal massage, hot bath, vitamin supplements, and dietary modifications can help overcome dysmenorrhea.

Amenorrhea is the condition in which the female skips her menses for more than three consecutive menstrual cycles. Amenorrhea is also classified as primary amenorrhea and secondary amenorrhea. Primary amenorrhea develops from the onset of menstrual periods. In this condition, the adolescent might not get periods when she enters puberty. Secondary amenorrhea is a condition where periods become irregular after a period of time and not from the start.

There are many causes of amenorrhea such as ovulation abnormality, eating disorders, birth defects, anatomical abnormalities, malnourishment, anorexia, bulimia, pregnancy, over exercising, thyroid disorder, obesity and other medical conditions. Out of these ovulation abnormalities are a common cause for absent or irregular periods. It is a must that an adolescent start getting menses at least by the age of sixteen. If not, anatomical abnormality, birth defect and other medical conditions are the cause. Adolescents who participate in sports actively and are athletic have a lower body fat content because of which they have absent menses. Even because of malnourishment, the body is incapable of sustaining pregnancy. So in turn the body itself shuts down the reproductive system and menses. Extra fat cells in the body interfere with ovulation and that is the reason why obese female have irregular menses. Amenorrhea is treated by dietary modifications, ovulation inhibitors and hormone treatment.

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