

What Causes Menstrual Cramps

With all the painful symptoms we women suffer from during our menstrual cycle, who has the time to think what causes menstrual cramps? But to understand why you must be put through this pain month after month, you must understand what causes it. Take a look at the information on this subject, presented here.



All you women out there are probably well aware of the pain and the agony of menstrual cramps that accompany our monthly menstrual cycle. For some it is an accepted reality, while for others, it just seems to get worse every time. And then there is another lot that simply wonders just why we must go through these few days of torture every month. To understand why, you must understand what causes menstrual cramps, and how, with a little effort on your part, the pain can be reduced and relieved.

Causes of Menstrual Cramps

Every month, the uterus prepares itself for a possible pregnancy, as the inner lining or the endometrium of the uterus begins to build up. This is the period of ovulation. After this period, if the egg fails to get fertilized by a sperm, a case of [pregnancy](#) becomes impossible, which leaves no purpose for the inner uterine lining. As the body becomes aware of this, the production of two hormones, estrogen and progesterone begins to decline, causing the endometrium to swell up. Eventually, it breaks and is eliminated from the body as menstrual flow. Once this cycle is completed, a new cycle begins for the next month, and the whole process continues till a pregnancy occurs.

As the inner uterine lining begins to break down, it results in the release of molecular compounds or hormones - like substances called prostaglandins, that are involved in pain and inflammation. These molecular compounds cause the contraction of the uterus, thereby constricting the supply of blood to the endometrium. This stops the flow of oxygen to the inner lining tissue, causing it to break down. As it breaks down, and eventually dies, the uterine contractions attempt to eliminate this tissue by squeezing it out of the body in the form of menstrual flow, which is ultimately what causes menstrual cramps.

While this is the basic cause of [cramps during period](#), there are other situations that may trigger menstrual cramps too. These causes are mentioned here.

- During the period of menstruation, your body may develop a condition called endometriosis, which is sometimes what causes severe menstrual cramps. In such a condition, the tissue that forms the uterine lining is embedded outside the uterus on the fallopian tube or the ovaries. This may cause severe pain and cramping.

- Another cause for [severe menstrual cramps](#) is a condition called cervical stenosis, that implies the restriction of menstrual flow because the size of the cervix is too small. In such a case, intense cramping may be experienced as bloody tissue from the uterus attempts to pass through the cervix.
- In some cases, the female reproductive organs may be infected with bacteria that has been transmitted sexually. This condition is known as the Pelvic Inflammatory Disease that along with other symptoms, may cause severe menstrual cramping.
- In a condition called adenomyosis, the tissue of the uterine lining grows into the muscles of the uterus, triggering pain.
- Some studies have proven that not getting enough exercise and activity on a regular basis, along with the heightened emotional state during the menstrual cycle, are causes that further contribute to cramping.

The intensity of cramping also depends on the levels of prostaglandin that is released during the time of [menstruation](#). Those who experience cramps that are sometimes very severe, regularly, may have higher levels of prostaglandins in the uterus.

Menstrual cramps are usually accompanied by bouts of nausea, dizziness, and headaches, that may lead to vomiting in some cases. Other symptoms that accompany them include constipation, as well as diarrhea. This is again due to the elevated prostaglandin levels in the body.

Treating Menstrual Cramps

There are certain simple remedies that help to [relieve menstrual cramps](#). The first step is to get enough rest, but also a small amount of exercise in the form of a walk, during the menstrual cycle. Some women find relief by placing a hot pad on the stomach, a stomach massage, and yoga. Some of you may also wish to take a painkiller to get rid of the irritating aches caused by cramping, but don't make it a regular habit, as it can prove harmful in the long run. Lastly, if the pain becomes way too unbearable, you must visit your doctor immediately to narrow down the root cause of the problem.

Even though you are now aware about what causes menstrual cramps, for most women, it is an inevitable part of the monthly menstrual cycle that we have been 'blessed' with. However, getting good rest and exercise can make a difference in the intensity of the cramps at this time.

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Published: 7/3/2010

Main source .buzzle