

As the leaves turn color and the air grows crisp...

Behind the scenes, our team continues to analyze your contributions with care and dedication. We're working to better understand how pelvic pain affects women's lives, uncover meaningful opportunities for change, and share insights that can lead to greater awareness, education, and support.

This past May, Lauren Gullett, presented some of our W.O.R.K. Study findings at the 16th World Congress on Endometriosis in Sydney Australia. (photo below).



For this presentation, we wanted to understand social and financial drivers of healthcare visits for period pain (health insurance status, education level, household income, race/ethnicity, and typical access to care).

Descriptive analyses revealed that seeing a doctor for pain was more common among those with middle or high socioeconomic status (SES) and the average length of time between start of pelvic pain to seeing a doctor for that pain was shortest among those with high SES.

W.O.R.K. participants with lower incomes were 25% less likely to see a provider for pelvic pain than those with higher incomes. Further, participants who usually had inconsistent or no access to healthcare had much lower engagement with care (26% and 44% lower, respectively) when compared to those with consistent care access. Finally, compared to White participants, Asian and Black participants were much less likely (65% and 37% less likely, respectively) to see a provider for pain.

We are currently drafting a manuscript for a peer-review publication. The manuscript will include a more detailed analysis and interpretation of these findings and will provide key takeaways for healthcare providers and propose future directions for researchers. Please stay tuned!

We are also proud to note that this was Lauren's research project for her master's degree, and she is continuing to improve health for women as a doctoral candidate in health policy at Harvard University, with a focus on social policy, politics, and reproductive health.

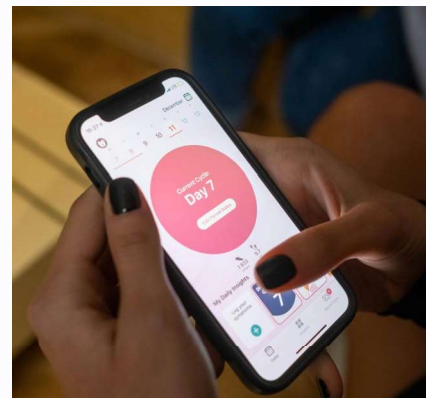
PMS and You: Navigating the Monthly Shift

What is PMS?

- PMS stands for Premenstrual Syndrome and symptoms often show up 5-7 days before your period.
- Not all girls and women experience PMS.
- Lifestyle changes (e.g., exercise, relaxation) and over-the-counter medicine often help.

How do I know if I have PMS symptoms?

- There are over 150 known symptoms and common ones include:
 - Mood swings, breast soreness, bloating, acne
 - Food cravings, increased hunger/thirst, fatigue
 - Constipation or diarrhea, irritability, feeling down
- If these symptoms appear before your period and ease once it starts, you may have PMS.
- If low mood lasts beyond your period, it may not be PMS so you may want to talk with a healthcare provider, counselor, or therapist.



How can I keep track of PMS symptoms?

- Use a period and symptom tracker for 2-3 months and then bring it to your next healthcare appointment. This record can help your healthcare provider figure out the best treatment choices for you.
- Remember to note if the symptoms are **mild** (e.g., slight mood changes, light cramps, feeling a little tired or bloated), **moderate** (e.g., feeling irritable, stronger cramps, tender breasts, headaches, food cravings), or **severe** (e.g., intense pain, heavy bleeding, extreme fatigue, emotional distress that affects daily life).

What are some nutrition changes that I can make to help my symptoms?

- **Choose whole grains** like whole wheat bread, pasta, and high-fiber cereal to help stabilize blood sugar and reduce mood swings.
- **Limit sugar and fat.** They may worsen bloating and other PMS symptoms.
- **Cut back on salty foods** (e.g., canned soup, chips, pizza) a few days before your period to help reduce water retention.
- **Reduce caffeine** (coffee, soda, chocolate) to ease tension, irritability, and breast soreness.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drinking water helps with digestion and bloating.
- **Eat small, balanced meals** (lean protein, whole grains, fruits/veggies, healthy fats) to maintain energy and blood sugar.
- **Get enough calcium.** Aim for 1300 mg daily through dairy, fortified juice, or supplements to help relieve PMS symptoms.

What are some other lifestyle changes I can make to help my symptoms?

- **Fit in exercise.** Do aerobic exercise (such as brisk walking, running, jump roping or dancing) for 30-60 minutes a day, 4 to 6 times a week.
- **Catch your ZZZ's.** Aim for at least 7 hours per night. If you're a teen, you need about 9 hours of sleep each night.
- **Try to maintain a regular schedule.** This includes meals, exercise, and bedtime.
- **Keep stress to a minimum.** If possible, try to schedule events that you think could be stressful during the week *after* your period.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Drinking alcohol before your period can make you feel more depressed.



For more information on this and other health guides, visit the Center for Young Women's Health:

<https://youngwomenshealth.org/health-guides-index/>

We've moved!

Visit our new website at:

<https://obgyn.msu.edu/research/the-work-study>

Beating the Holiday Blues

As the holiday season draws near, this can be a bittersweet time for some of us. While festive lights and cheerful music fill the air, many people quietly struggle with feelings of loneliness, grief, or anxiety. Whether it's missing loved ones, facing health challenges, or simply feeling disconnected from the hustle and bustle, the "holiday blues" are real, but they're also manageable.

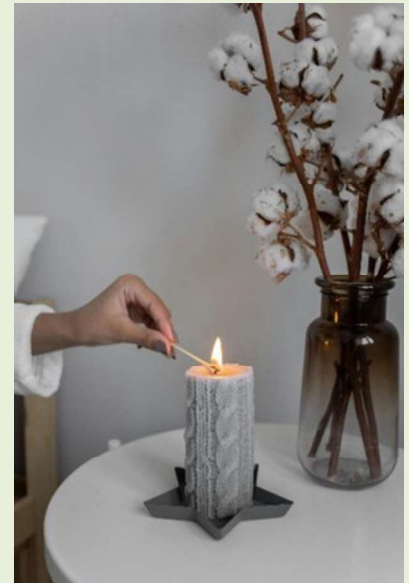
Acknowledge Your Feelings. It's okay not to feel merry all the time. Recognizing and accepting emotions like sadness or nostalgia is a healthy first step. Bottling them up only makes things harder.

Reach Out and Reconnect. Isolation is one of the biggest contributors to holiday sadness. A phone call, video chat, or visit from a friend can make a world of difference.

Create New Traditions. If old traditions feel painful or no longer fit your lifestyle, start new ones. Host a small cookie exchange, write holiday memories in a journal, or volunteer for a cause you care about. Fresh traditions can bring renewed joy.

Take Care of Yourself. Rest, eat well, and move gently. Whether it's a walk around the block or a quiet moment with a cup of tea, self-care helps restore balance and calm.

Honor the Past. Are you missing someone this holiday season? Light a candle, share stories, or play their favorite holiday song. These rituals can turn grief into connection and keep memories alive.



The holiday season doesn't have to be perfect—it just needs to be meaningful. With compassion, connection, and a little creativity, may you find warmth and joy even in the quietest moments this holiday season.

Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, MI Health Link October 2025 Bulletin



Please Stay Connected

Email: letswork@msu.edu

Website: [The WORK Study | OBGYN | Michigan State University](https://obgyn.msu.edu/research/the-work-study)