

[IMAGE]

Tobacco Withdrawal Influenced by Menstrual Cycle

The variety of physiological and emotional changes associated with the female menstrual cycle can contribute to a number of distressing symptoms: anxiety, depression, abdominal bloating, backache, headache, irritability, and mood swings. It's estimated that 70-75% of all women experience premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms at one time or another, with up to 40% reporting symptoms severe enough to affect their day-to-day lives.

The profound dangers of smoking include chronic emphysema, lung cancer, and various other cancers of the mouth, nose and throat. If you're trying to quit, you know that withdrawal symptoms can be distressing - and in many ways similar to the symptoms associated with PMS.

The similarities between the two may be even more profound, according to a recent study in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. Researchers found that tobacco withdrawal symptoms were significantly greater among women who quit smoking during the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle (day 15 or more) than among women who quit smoking during the follicular phase (days 1-14). These results were maintained even when considering use of oral contraceptives, which are known to alter menstrual cycling.

If you're a woman trying to quit smoking, you're on your way to protecting yourself against a number of life-threatening conditions associated with consistent tobacco use. If you haven't yet quit, these findings suggest that you may want to select a day to quit early in the menstrual cycle rather than later on, when the combination of PMS symptoms and withdrawal symptoms may prove more distressing than you can handle. Your doctor can provide you with more information on the dangers of smoking and how to quit (and stick with it).

Reference:

Perkins KA, Levine M, Marcus M. Tobacco withdrawal in women and menstrual cycle phase. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 2000: Vol. 68, No. 1, pp176-80.

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