

13 JANUARY 2008
THE SUNDAY MIRROR MAGAZINE

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**WHO IS
SIENNA'S
NEW STYLISH
BOYFRIEND?**

LINDA LUSARDI

**'MY TOYBOY
HUBBY KEEPS
ME YOUNG'**



**7 CELEB
MUST-HAVES
TO GLAM UP
YOUR WINTER
WARDROBE**



**'I LOST
13 STONE
BUT GAINED
A NEW LIFE**

**WIN!
A £3,000
MAGICAL
TRIP TO
ICELAND**

'PMS NEARLY WRECKED MY LIFE'

For 17 years, Claire Wainwright, 32, from London, struggled to cope with extreme mood swings that ruined her life – until she discovered a way to feel better...

I was 18 when I realised my periods were ruining my life. In the two weeks leading up to it, I'd get angry about the tiniest things. If someone brushed against me on the train I'd flip out. "Stupid bitch," I'd scream. Then I'd feel so embarrassed I'd burst into tears. I felt like two people: normal Claire for half the month – happy, relaxed and nice to be around – and PMS Claire for the other. Apart from my mood swings, life was good. I had a close circle of friends and got on well with my parents. Knowing there was no reason to get upset made me feel worse. I'd end up stuffing my face with chocolates and ice cream, as they were the only things that made me feel better.

My GP was no use. Out of desperation I contacted the National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome (NAPS), which emailed me with advice on coping with PMS. I then became interested in holistic wellbeing, took an aromatherapy



Claire meditates to keep PMS at bay

course and in 2000 set up as a massage therapist. Things were going really well. I met my partner, Chris, now 34, and loved my job, but found it stressful being my own boss. I was professional with clients, but by the end of the day I was ready to explode.

'I'd fling plates across the room, then burst into tears'

When I got home Chris would be sympathetic, but my moods were uncontrollable and I'd go mad if the flat was untidy. "Don't worry about it," he'd say, but that would infuriate me and I'd fling glasses and plates across the room, then burst into tears. "It's OK," he'd say. "I know this isn't the real you." Chris stuck by me and in September 2005 we got married. Things got worse over the next couple of years and I found myself in a cycle of losing my temper, screaming, then feeling weepy. I had to do something, so I trained to be a yoga teacher in my spare time. But working full time and studying was hard – I dropped from a size 8-10 to a gaunt size 6. One day I got an email from NAPS



Hubby Chris has been a tower of strength throughout Claire's PMS

asking for PMS sufferers to take part in a TV programme, *Spa Of Embarrassing Illnesses*, that aimed to cure sufferers. I volunteered. Four months later I arrived at the TV spa. I was weighed by a nutritionist and found I'd dropped from my usual 8 stone to 7 stone. She said the foods I ate, like red meat and non-organic dairy products, were causing my PMT. "You must eat every two hours and have protein with each meal," she said. Over the next two weeks I was put on a seven-day fast, had daily massage treatments to help me to relax, and had outdoor meditation sessions where we'd write our problems on paper. It was like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. By the end of the two weeks I felt like a different person. I was given a sheet listing foods I couldn't eat – Chris was amazed by how much I had to change my diet.

It hasn't been a miracle cure, but I now feel in control. These days the kitchen's well stocked with protein snacks and I'm back to 8 stone. I've also realised I have to work at being relaxed, so I meditate every day. I'm glad to say that PMS Claire has gone for good.

GOOD FOODS FOR PMS

- Oat cakes
- Organic fish and chicken
- Hummous ● Lentils and beans
- Nuts and seeds ● Organic fruit and vegetables

FOODS TO AVOID

- Ice cream ● Chocolate, sweets
- Bread ● Eggs, milk, cheese
- Non-organic meat

PMS SYMPTOMS

- Breast tenderness ● Migraine
- Bloating ● Depression
- Irritability ● Anger Panic attacks ● Alcohol abuse
- Sweet cravings, binge eating

For more info visit pms.org.uk



Claire with her fellow TV contestants at the spa

● *Spa Of Embarrassing Illnesses* starts tomorrow on UKTV Style at 10pm

* real life