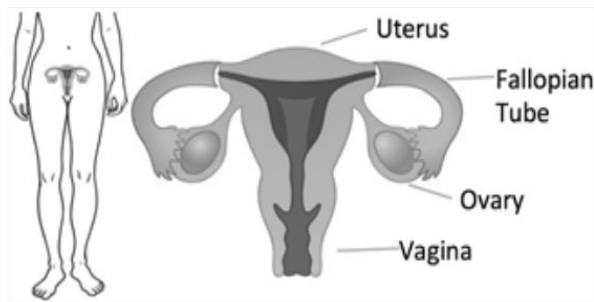


What is Menstruation?



Each month, an egg is released from one of your ovaries (ovulation). It travels through your fallopian tubes and then to your uterus. Your uterus grows a new lining each month— where an embryo can start growing if an egg is fertilized by a sperm. If the egg is not fertilized, your body releases the lining (menstruation), which comes out through the vagina as blood and tissue, making way for the cycle to start again. Your period, or menstruation, has arrived. It's a natural, important process.

Without periods, there would be no people.

Your Cycle

A female's menstrual cycle starts between ages 8 - 16 and continues until ages 45 - 55. The average cycle is 28 days, but it is different for all of us and can be 21 - 35 days. Your period itself may last anywhere between 2 - 7 days. The average is 3 - 5 days. It may be slightly different each month. Chart your cycle to know when to expect your period and to learn if there is a change.

It is hard to know when you ovulate. Some people with very regular cycles can figure out when they ovulate, but many can't, especially when they are just starting their cycle. To find when you ovulate, start tracking your menstruation. Ovulation occurs 14 days prior to when menstruation starts. If you have regular periods, you can figure out when you ovulate. For example: If you have a 26 day cycle and subtract 14 days, then you ovulate on day 12 (26 - 14 = 12). The fertile window is approximately 4 days prior, the day of and 3 days after ovulation (days 10-17 of a 28 day cycle). That is when you are most likely to become pregnant.

Your health and future matter, because you matter.

Things to Remember About Your Period

Understanding more about your period can help you learn how your body works. You do not need to feel shame or fear about your period; almost a quarter of the world's population experiences menstruation. Learning ways to manage your period will empower you today and for your future.

Puberty

Puberty happens between the ages of 8 and 16 and can last up to four years. As your hormones change, you may notice body odor, your breasts and pubic hair growing, your body shape changing, and your period starting. You may start puberty earlier or later than your friends, and these changes may happen slow or fast. Either way, your body is changing at the right speed for you.

PMS Symptoms

Premenstrual syndrome (or PMS) are symptoms you may feel 1-2 weeks before your period. It is caused by hormone changes. When you have PMS, you might feel mood swings, feel tired, feel irritable, have sore breasts, get more pimples, or you may feel your stomach swelling. You may also have certain food cravings, constipation, and other physical and emotional symptoms. PMS is a sign that your period is coming soon.

Normal Period Flow

Menstrual flow comes out of the vagina during menstruation. It consists of mostly uterine tissue, vaginal secretions, and blood. During your period you can expect a steady release of menstrual blood over about 2-7 days. The amount of flow is different for everyone.

Light



Disposable Product: 3-4 per day
Washable Pad: Need to change every 8+ hours
Menstrual Cup: 5-10 mL per day

Medium



Disposable Product: 4-6 per day
Washable Pad: Need to change every 4-8 hours
Menstrual Cup: 15-25 mL per day

Heavy



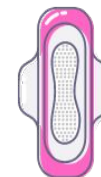
Disposable Product: 7+ per day
Washable Pad: Need to change every 1-2 hours
Menstrual Cup: 30+ mL per day
Bleeding that soaks through one disposable product every hour or bleeding that lasts more than 7 days

The information above is to be used as a general guideline. You are the only one that can understand what is normal for your body. A big change from your normal flow pattern may require medical attention. Talk to a healthcare professional if you have any concerns.

Period Product Choices

There are many products available to help you manage your period. All options can be effective when used safely and hygienically. Choose the product/s that are right for you and your body. Below are some options that may be available to you when you are on your period. Please remember to wash your hands before and after changing your period products.

Disposable Pads



Disposable pads are used externally to absorb menses and are intended for single-use only. Remove from the wrapper, remove any backing and put the sticky adhesive part downwards in the center of your underwear. They come in different shapes and sizes for heavier or lighter menstrual flow. Be sure to change your pad every 4 to 6 hours. Please do not flush pads down the toilet.

Disposable Tampons



Disposable tampons are single-use devices that are inserted into the vagina to absorb menstrual flow with a string to help remove. They come in different sizes for heavier or lighter flow. Make sure you relax when inserting your tampon. Once your tampon has been inserted correctly, you shouldn't feel any discomfort. If there is still pain, the tampon may be inserted incorrectly. Tampons need to be changed every 4 to 6 hours. Leaving a tampon in for longer than six hours can be dangerous to your health. Do not flush tampons down the toilet.

Washable Pads



Washable pads are used externally to absorb menstrual flow and can last for many years if taken care of. Washable pads can be worn like you wear a disposable pad. Secure the pad to your underwear. Change your pad every 4 to 8 hours, or as needed depending on how heavy your flow is. They come in different sizes, shapes, and materials. If you are changing your pad in a public bathroom or area, gently wrap up your used pad and put it in a bag. Take it home to clean in a washing machine or by hand.

Menstrual Cups



Menstrual cups are bell-shaped silicone devices inserted into the vagina to collect menstrual flow. They can last up to 10 years and come in different sizes, shapes, and degrees of firmness. It can take some practice to insert the cup properly. You can wear a cup for 6 to 12 hours before removal depending on your flow. Menstrual cups should be emptied into the toilet or pit latrine and washed with gentle, unscented soap before re-insertion. In between menstrual cycles, boil or steam your cup to sanitize it. This can be done in a pot on a stovetop (making sure your cup does not touch the edges of the pot) or by placing your menstrual cup in a temperature-safe cup and pouring hot water over it. Read the instructions for your cup for more wear & care information.