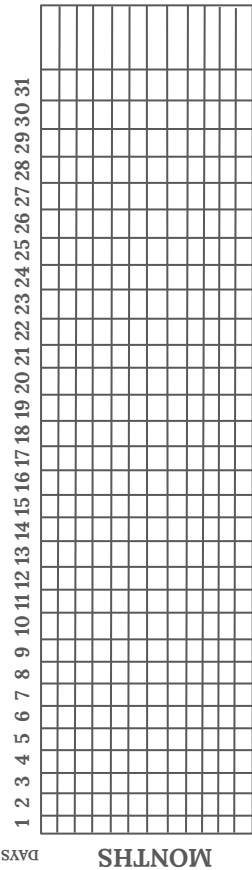


Menstrual Cycle Calendar



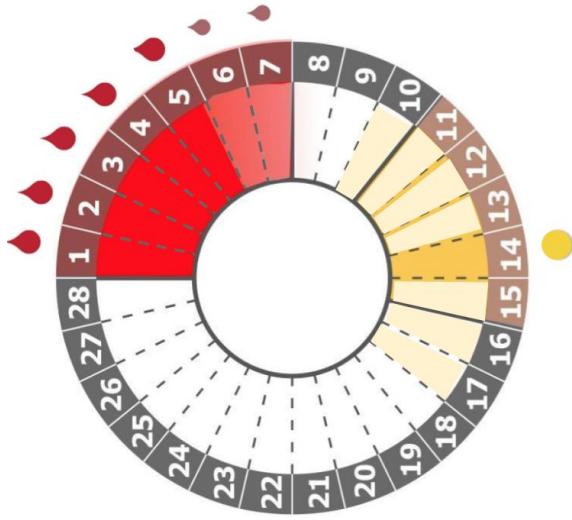
X =  -- = 

Example of Charting Cycle Days:



 X = Menstrual bleeding Dashes = no period

You can chart your menstrual cycle. Gently mark an X in the first box on the first day of your next period. Add an X for each day of flow. Mark a — (dash) for each day without flow. Move to the first box of the next line when your period starts again. Repeat. Soon you can see the pattern of your cycle.



Questions & Answers

Q: What does menstrual flow mean, and how often does a period happen?

A: Menstruation, or a period, is the time when it looks like blood is coming from your vagina. This "bleeding" is menstrual flow from your uterine lining. Menstrual flow may not always be the same color. The color of your menstrual flow can help you understand where you are in your menstrual period.

- **Pink** -- your flow may be light and you are at the beginning or end of your period
- **Bright Red** -- new menstrual blood, usually for the majority of your period
- **Dark Red** -- your flow is slowing down and the blood is older
- **Brown** -- you are at the end of your period

When you first start menstruating, your period may not be regular. It may come one month and then not return for another 6-11 months--this is normal. Eventually, your period will fall into a regular pattern. A typical cycle is 21-35 days, but it is different for all of us. If you reach 16 years old and have not had a period, you may want to see a medical professional.

Q: My cramps are uncomfortable and sometimes painful. What can I do to help ease the discomfort?

A: Cramps are caused by the uterus muscle contracting to help release the menstrual lining. Some people with periods have a lot of pain from cramps, while some do not have any pain. You may feel aches in your abdomen or lower back. Here are some tools that may help you if your cramps are painful:

- Do light exercise such as walking or stretching. Exercise helps to stretch and relax your muscles.
- Use heat to help relax your muscles. Drink hot tea, sit in a tub of warm water, or put a hot towel or a warm water bottle against the painful area.
- Massage the painful area, especially the lower back, to help relax your muscles.
- Drink enough water every day. Dehydration can increase the pain of cramps.
- Take over the counter pain medicine under the direction of your health care providers.

If the pain is excessive, atypical, or you can't do your usual activities, see a medical professional. If you suddenly have cramps that are very severe; that make you dizzy, faint, or vomit; or if you have a heavier flow than usual, see a medical professional.

Q: What is menopause?

A: Menstruation usually stops between ages 45-55. This is called Menopause. At the beginning of menopause, when menstruation may start to become irregular, some people can have flashes of feeling intensely hot, which can last 1-20 minutes and happen at any time. Some people also sweat heavily at night. If you have been in menopause for one year or more and start any kind of bleeding go to the doctor.

Q: How else can I track my menstrual cycle?

A: How you track your menstrual cycle can vary depending on your personal preference and what tools you have available. The most important thing is that you remember to consistently chart your menstruation. Other than the cycle tracking calendar provided here, you may choose to use a cycle tracking app on your mobile device. Some popular apps include Clue, Euki, Drip, Periodical or Orchyd. Before using an app, be sure to review the user privacy statements.

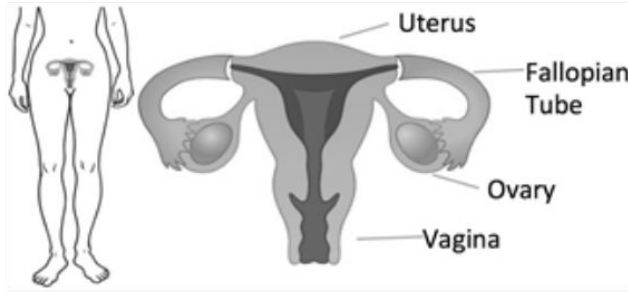


Period Primer: Quick Guide to Menstruation & Period Care



daysforgirls.org

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

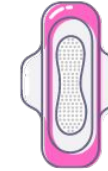
- Disposable Product: 7+ per day
- Washable Pad: Need to change every 1-2 hours
- Menstrual Cup: 30+ mL per day
- Bleeding that soaks through one disposable product every hour or bleeding that lasts more than 7 days

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.