Understanding your period

A friendly guide for your first few years

First things first

Your period is a normal part of growing up. You do not need to feel embarrassed or know everything right away. Everyone’s cycle is a little different.

What actually happens?

Your uterus (womb) grows a soft lining. If pregnancy does not happen, the lining leaves your body as blood and tissue through your vagina. This is your period.

What is a menstrual cycle?

A cycle starts on DAY 1 of your period and ends the day before your next period begins. Many teens have cycles around 21–45 days; periods often last 2–7 days.

Your first periods might surprise you

They may be light, brownish-red, early, late or different from month to month. Irregular periods are common in the first few years, but very long gaps or heavy bleeding should be checked.

REMEMBER

A 28-day cycle is an example, not a deadline your body must meet.

Meet your cycle

The stages can overlap, and timing varies.

01

YOUR PERIOD

Your uterus sheds its lining. You may notice bleeding, cramps, tiredness or no symptoms at all.

02

GETTING READY

After your period starts, hormones help an egg develop and your uterus builds a new lining.

03

OVULATION

An ovary may release an egg. Ovulation does not happen at a fixed day, especially when periods are new.

04

BEFORE THE NEXT PERIOD

If pregnancy does not occur, hormone levels fall. You might notice bloating, tender breasts or mood changes.

You might feel different each month

Energy, appetite, skin and emotions can change—or stay the same. There is no “correct” way to feel at each stage.

Feel prepared & supported

Your period kit

Keep a pad or period underwear, spare underwear and a small pouch in your school bag. Change products as directed; wash your hands before and after.

Comfort counts

A warm heat pack, gentle movement, water, food and rest may help cramps. Ask a trusted adult, pharmacist or doctor about suitable pain relief if needed.

Track it your way

Mark the first day of bleeding on a calendar. You can also note how many days it lasts, how heavy it is, cramps and how you feel. Tracking is optional.

When to ask for help

Talk to a trusted adult or GP if pain stops you doing normal activities, bleeding lasts more than 7 days, you soak a pad or tampon every 1–2 hours, or you go 90 days without a period. Seek urgent care if bleeding is very heavy and you feel faint.

If you are worried, you deserve answers. You can ask a parent, carer, school nurse or doctor—no question is silly.

Learn more (Australian health resources)

healthdirect: Menstruation

healthdirect: Puberty for girls

Independent educational summary • Not a diagnosis or a substitute for medical advice.

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YOUR JOURNEY BACK TO SELF

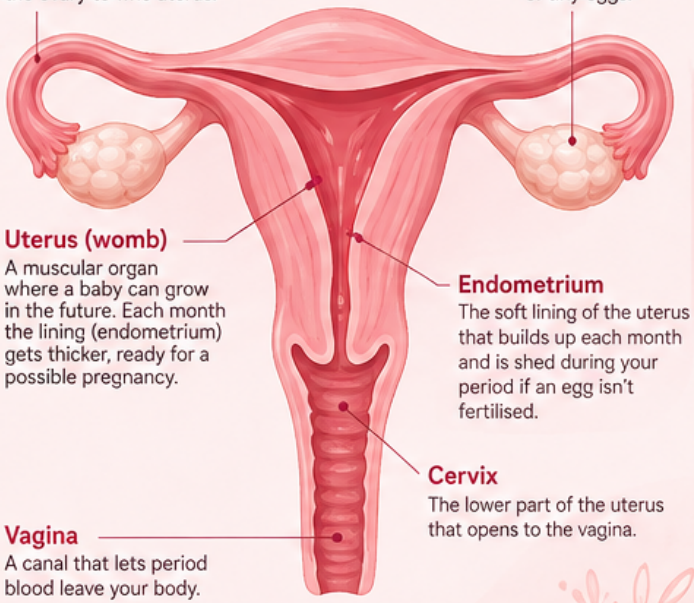
Understanding Your Menstrual Cycle

A friendly guide for your first few years

Your period is a normal and healthy part of growing up. This guide will help you understand what's happening in your body, what to expect and how to take care of yourself through each stage of your cycle.

YOUR AMAZING REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

Your body is designed to be incredible!



Fallopian tube
Carries an egg from the ovary to whe uterus.

Ovary
Holds thousands of tiny eggs.

Uterus (womb)
A muscular organ where a baby can grow in the future. Each month the lining (endometrium) gets thicker, ready for a possible pregnancy.

Endometrium
The soft lining of the uterus that builds up each month and is shed during your period if an egg isn't fertilised.

Cervix
The lower part of the uterus that opens to the vagina.

Vagina
A canal that lets period blood leave your body.

THE 4 STAGES OF YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE

Your cycle usually takes around 21–35 days, with an average of 28 days. Everyone is different, and that's okay!

1 Menstrual Phase (Your Period)

Days 1–5 (average)

- The lining of the uterus sheds and leaves your body as period blood.
- You might feel tired, sore or have cramps.
- It's normal to lose 2–6 tablespoons of blood over a few days.

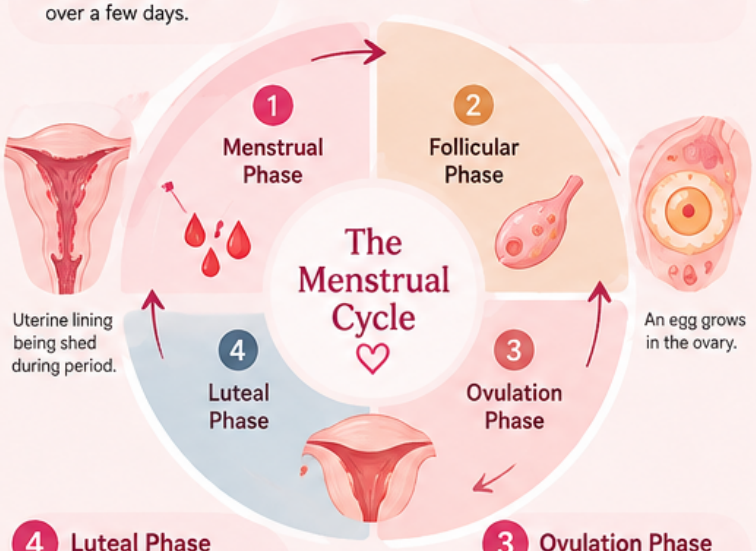


The uterine lining is shed (period).

2 Follicular Phase

Days 1–13 (overlaps with your period)

- Your body starts to prepare a new egg.
- The uterine lining begins to rebuild and get thicker.
- You might notice more energy and a brighter mood as oestrogen increases.



Uterine lining being shed during period.

An egg grows in the ovary.

4 Luteal Phase

Days 15–28 (approx)

- After ovulation, the uterine lining continues to thicken.
- If the egg isn't fertilised, hormone levels drop.
- This causes the lining to break down, and your next period begins.
- You might notice mood changes, bloating or sore breasts.



Uterine lining is thick and ready for a possible pregnancy.

3 Ovulation Phase

Around day 14 (approx)

- A mature egg is released from the ovary.
- The egg travels down the fallopian tube (it can live for 12–24 hours).
- You might notice changes in your discharge, a higher sex drive or feel more energetic.

WHAT TO EXPECT

It's normal to experience different changes during y...

Physical changes

- Period bleeding (light to heavy)
- Cramps or tummy pain
- Bloating
- Sore breasts
- Changes in skin (like spots)
- Headaches
- Feeling more tired

Emotional changes

- Mood changes
- Feeling more sensitive
- Anxiety or worry
- Changes in motivation
- Feeling more confident at times

PERIOD PRODUCTS

There are different options, and you can choose what works best for you.



Pads
Stick to your underwear. Easy to use and good for beginners.

Tampons
Inserted into the vagina. Come in different sizes and absorb blood.

Menstrual cup
A reusable cup that collects blood. Can be worn for several hours.

Period underwear
Reusable underwear that absorbs blood. Comfortable and great for everyday use.

TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



Drink water

Gentle exercise (like walking)

Eat nourishing foods

Get enough rest

Be kind to yourself

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A DOCTOR OR TRUSTED ADULT

It's a good idea to get advice if you:

- Have very painful periods that affect your daily life
- Have periods that are very heavy or last longer than 7 days
- Haven't had a period by age 15 or more than 3 years after breast development
- Your periods are very irregular (after the first few years)
- Have concerns about your cycle, mood or anything else

Your period is a sign of a healthy body. Every cycle is a step in your amazing journey.

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