

Periods and heavy bleeding

Easy Read fact sheet

About this fact sheet



This fact sheet is from
Jean Hailes for Women's Health.



You can read more information about this topic
on the
[Jean Hailes Periods web page.](#)



This fact sheet is written in a way that is easy
to understand.



We add a star before and after ***hard words***.
Then we explain what the words mean.

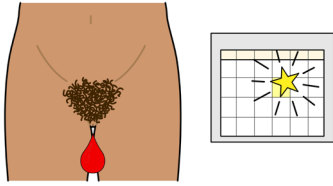


You can ask someone to help you read and
understand this fact sheet.



Contact information is at the end of this
fact sheet.

What is a ***period***?



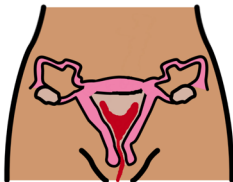
A period is when you bleed from your vagina every month.



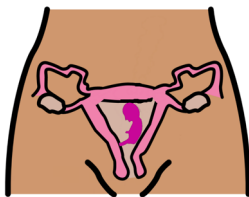
Periods are a natural part of your body's ***menstrual cycle***.



Your menstrual cycle gets your body ready for pregnancy.



If you do not get pregnant, blood comes out of your ***uterus*** and flows out of your vagina.

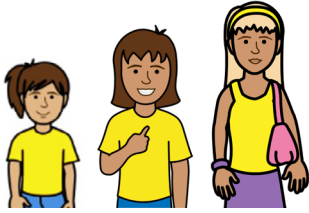


Your uterus is also called your womb. It is where babies can grow.

Your first period

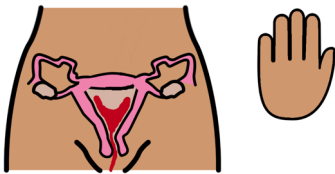


The average age for people to have their first period is about 12.

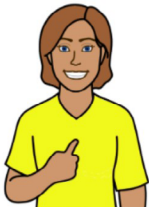


But you can have your first period earlier or later than the age of 12.

Your last period



Your last period is called ***menopause***.

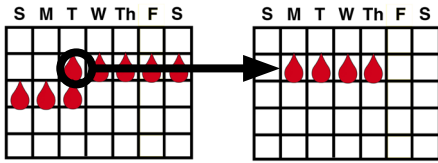


The average age for people to reach menopause is about 51.

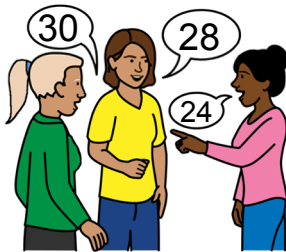


But you can reach menopause earlier or later than the age of 51.

How long is a menstrual cycle?

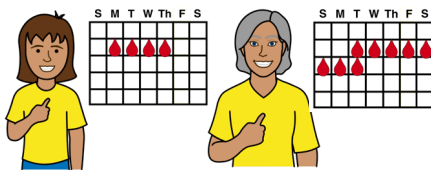


A menstrual cycle is from the first day of your period to the first day of your next period.

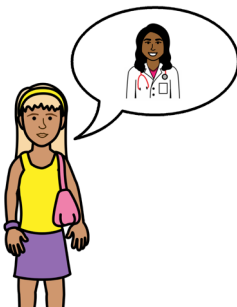


The average length of a menstrual cycle is about 28 days.

But everyone's menstrual cycle is different.



Your menstrual cycle can change at different ages.



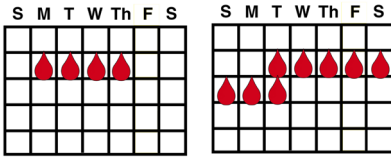
See your doctor if you have **not** had your first period by about the age of 16.

Also see your doctor if your period

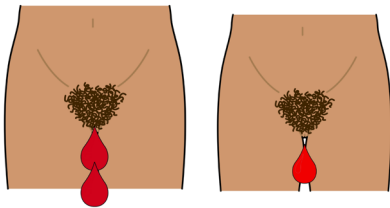
- does **not** come every month
- does **not** come at about the same time every month
- does **not** come at all.



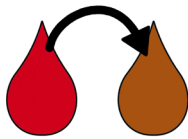
What happens when you get your period?



Your period might last 4 to 8 days.



Your bleeding might change during your period. For example, you might have heavy bleeding on the first 3 days and light bleeding at the end.



The colour of your period might change during your period.

For example, it might change from bright red to dark brown.

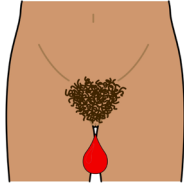


It is normal to have some small blood clots in your period.



It is normal for your period to smell a bit. Talk to your doctor if you are worried about the smell.

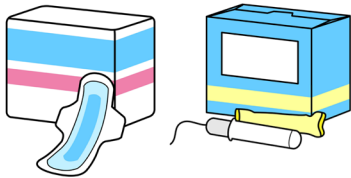
What ***period products*** can you use?



Period products help you manage the blood from your period.



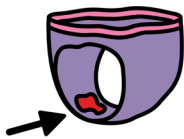
Wash your hands before and after you use period products.



There are many different period products.

For example

- pads and tampons



- period underwear



- menstrual cups.



You can choose period products that are right for you.

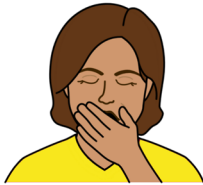


You can buy period products from most supermarkets and chemists.

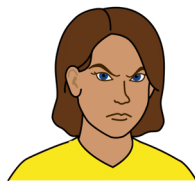
What is *premenstrual syndrome*?

Premenstrual syndrome or PMS is when you have different symptoms **before** your period.

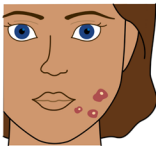
For example, you might



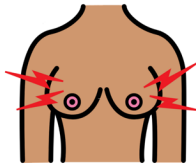
- feel tired



- be in a bad mood



- get pimples



- have sore breasts



- have a bloated belly.

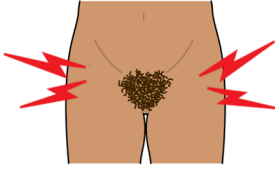


See your doctor if your PMS is bad and stops you from doing things you want to do.

What is *period pain*?

Period pain is when your uterus muscles tighten.

You might feel



- cramps and a heavy feeling in your belly



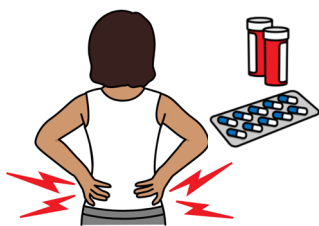
- pain in your lower back



- pain in your belly

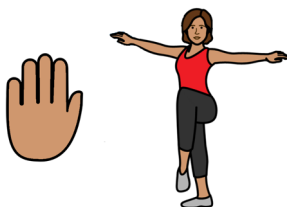


- pain in your legs.



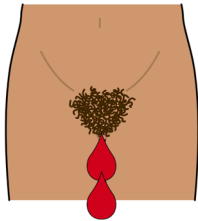
See your doctor if

- the pain does **not** go away with medicine or a heat pack

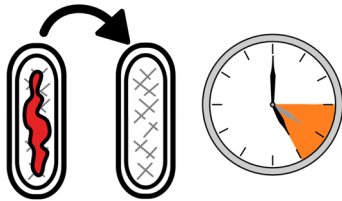


- the pain stops you from doing things you like to do.

What is *heavy bleeding*?

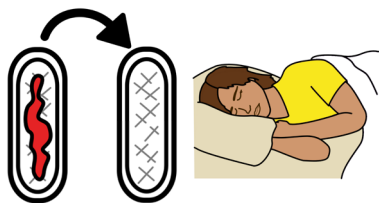


Heavy bleeding is when you lose lots of blood each period.



Heavy bleeding might mean

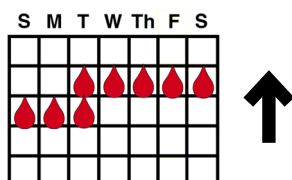
- you need to change your pad or tampon every 2 hours or less



- you need to change your pad during the night



- you see big blood clots in your period
 - blood clots that are bigger than a 50 cent coin



- your period lasts more than 8 days.



With heavy bleeding you might

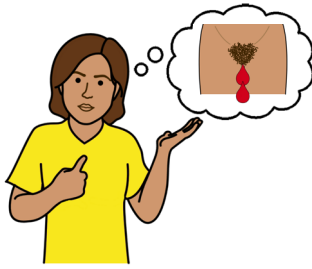
- feel tired and dizzy



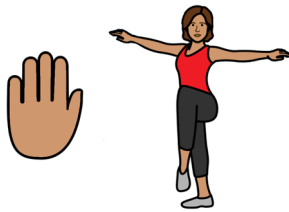
- look pale

- have cramps or pain in your belly.

When to see your doctor about heavy bleeding



See your doctor if you think you have heavy bleeding.



See your doctor if your period stops you from doing things you like to do.



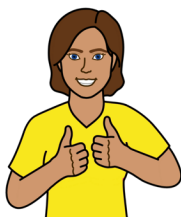
Your doctor will ask questions about your periods and general health.

They might also ask to

- check your body



- do some tests.



It is important to find the cause of the problem.



 **Jean Hailes**
for Women's Health

More information

For more information contact
Jean Hailes for Women's Health.



Call 03 9453 8999



Website jeanhailes.org.au



Email education@jeanhailes.org.au

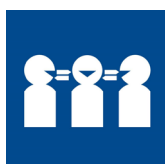


If you need help to hear or speak, contact the
National Relay Service.

Call 1300 555 727

Visit

communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs



If you need help with other languages, contact
the Translating and Interpreting Service.

Visit tisonational.gov.au



© 2023 Jean Hailes Foundation. All rights reserved. This publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without written permission of the copyright owner. Contact: licensing@jeanhailes.org.au

This Easy Read document was created in December 2023 using Picture Communication Symbols (PCS). PCS and Boardmaker are trademarks of Tobii Dynavox LLC. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

For more information, please visit jeanhailes.org.au