



# Heavy periods

About one in four women have heavy periods (heavy menstrual bleeding). A heavy period is when you lose lots of blood each period. The amount of bleeding can change at different life stages. For example, in teenage years or before menopause (your last period). Heavy periods are common in women aged 30 to 50.

## How do you know if you have heavy periods?

It can be hard to know if your period is too heavy, but there are some common signs. For example:

- your bleeding can't be contained with a pad or tampon
- you need to change your pad or tampon every two hours or less
- you need to change your pad overnight
- you notice blood clots that are bigger than a 50-cent coin
- your period lasts more than seven to eight days
- your periods stop you from doing things you normally do.

## Common symptoms

If you have heavy periods, you might:

- feel tired or dizzy
- have low iron levels due to blood loss
- look pale
- have cramps or pain in your lower belly (abdomen).

## What causes heavy periods?

Heavy periods may be due to hormonal changes that make your uterus lining grow more than usual. This lining sheds to create a period. But there may be other causes, so it's important to see your doctor as soon as possible.

## Diagnosis

It's important to see your doctor if you are worried about heavy periods. Your doctor will ask about your medical history and may do an internal examination to check your uterus and ovaries.

They might also ask you to do some tests to find out what's causing the problem. For example, a pregnancy, iron or blood test.

Your doctor may also organise an ultrasound to check your pelvic organs. This can be done on your abdomen or inside your vagina.

## Treatment options

If you are diagnosed with heavy periods, your doctor will discuss different treatment options. For example, they might give you medicine to help with your symptoms.

Your doctor may also refer you to a specialist (e.g. a gynaecologist) to do more tests.

### When to see your doctor

If you think you have heavy periods and symptoms are affecting your daily life, see your doctor.

**For more information, resources and references, visit [jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/periods/heavy-bleeding](https://jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/periods/heavy-bleeding)**