

All about periods

Easy Read fact sheet

Warning – this fact sheet has pictures of private parts and blood

About this fact sheet

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



Our website has helpful information about
women's health.



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.

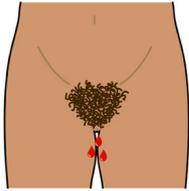


You can ask someone to help you read and
understand this fact sheet.



Contact information is at the end of this
fact sheet.

What are ***periods***?



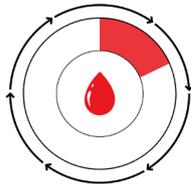
Periods are when women bleed from their ***vagina***.

Your vagina is a tube inside your body that connects to your ***uterus***.



Your uterus is also called your womb.

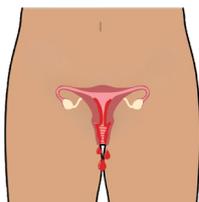
It is where babies can grow.



Periods are part of the ***menstrual cycle***.



A menstrual cycle is the way your body gets ready for pregnancy.

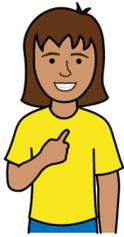


If you do not get pregnant, blood comes out of your uterus and flows out of your vagina.

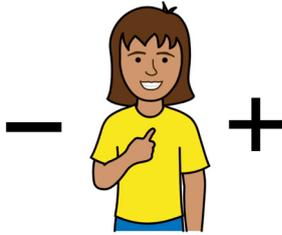


When you get periods it means your body is working in a normal way.

Your first period

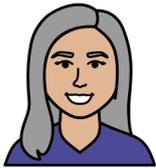


Most girls get their first period at about the age of 12.

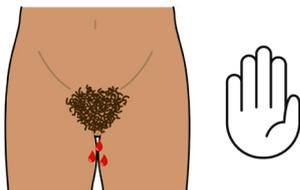


But you can have your first period earlier or later than 12.

Your last period



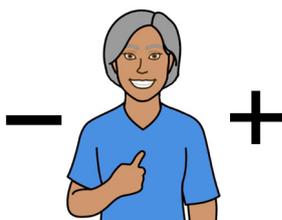
You will reach ***menopause*** later in life.



Menopause is when you stop getting periods.



Most women reach menopause at about the age of 51.



But you can reach menopause earlier or later than 51.

What happens when you get your periods?

Periods are different for everyone.

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

Your periods might last from 3 to 7 days.



Most people only lose a small amount of blood each period.



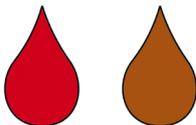
You can manage the blood with period products.



Your bleeding might change during your periods.

It is normal to

- have heavier bleeding at the start and lighter bleeding at the end



- have blood that changes from bright red to dark brown



- have some small blood clots in your period.

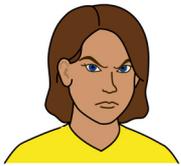


Period symptoms

Period symptoms are things you notice when you get your periods.



You might feel ok when you get your periods.



Sometimes you might feel

- grumpy



- worried



- sad.

You might also have things like



- cramps

- a bloated belly



- sore breasts



- food cravings.

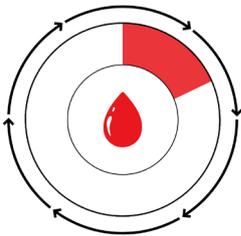
What is *premenstrual syndrome*?



Some people get premenstrual syndrome or PMS.

This is when you get period symptoms before you get your periods.

How long is a menstrual cycle?



Each cycle begins on the first day of your period and ends the day before your next period.



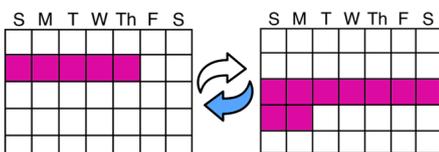
Everyone's menstrual cycle is different.

Most people's menstrual cycle is about 28 days.

Your menstrual cycle can change at different ages.

For example, when you first get your periods your cycle might

- be longer than normal
- keep changing.



When you get your first period

When you get your first period you might have different feelings.



For example, you might feel

- happy



- worried.



You can get ready for your first period.

For example

- talk to a family member or friend about periods



- read information about periods



- carry a pad in your bag just in case you get your period



- look at different period products and talk about how they work.



It may take time to get used to having periods.

But soon it will become a normal part of life.



We have another Easy Read fact sheet about period products on our website.

What is *period pain*?



Period pain is when your uterus muscles tighten around the time of your periods.

It is normal to get period pain on the first 2 days of your period.



You might

- have cramps and a heavy feeling in your belly



- have pain in your lower back



- have pain in your belly



- have pain in your legs.



You might also feel tired or unwell.

What are *heavy periods*?



Some people have heavy periods.

This is when you lose more blood than usual during your periods.



See your doctor if heavy periods stop you from doing normal activities, like school and work.



With heavy periods you might

- feel tired



- feel dizzy



- look pale

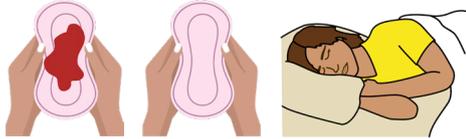


- have cramps or pain in your belly.



Your periods might be heavy if

- you need to change your period product every 1 to 2 hours



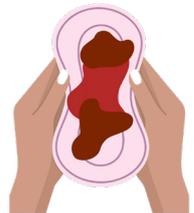
- you need to change your pad during the night

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S

- your periods last more than 8 days



- you bleed through your clothes



- you see big blood clots in your period
 - this means blood clots are bigger than 3 cm.



Your doctor can help if you have heavy periods.

Look after yourself

It is important to look after yourself if you get period symptoms.

For example



- take pain relief medicine



- use heat packs



- rest when you need to



- get a good sleep.



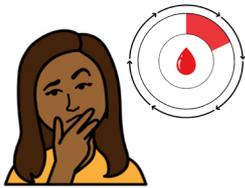
When to see your doctor

Your doctor can help with period problems.

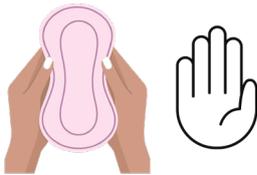
For example, if



- you have **not** had your first period by the age of 16



- your periods change and do not come at about the same time every cycle



- you stop having periods



- you bleed in the time between periods



- you have heavy periods



- you have lots of pain



- your periods stop you from doing things you want to do.

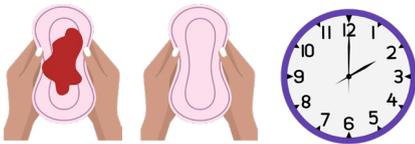
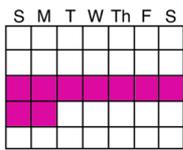
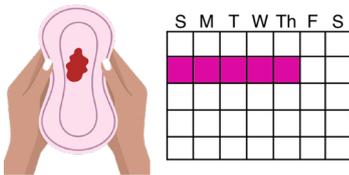
At your appointment



If you visit your doctor, they will ask questions about your periods and general health.

You can take information about your periods with you to the doctor.

For example



- when you get your periods

- how long your periods last

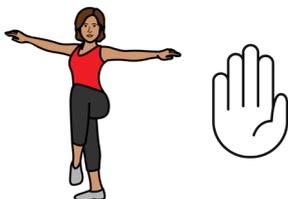
- how often you have to change your period products



- if you get period pain



- if you feel very sad or grumpy before your periods



- if you stop doing things when you get your periods.



Your doctor might ask to

- do some tests



- check your body.

You can say **no** if you do not want this to happen.

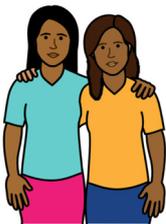


You can get someone to help you get ready for your appointment.

You can also bring someone with you to your appointment.

For example

- a family member



- a friend



- a carer.



 **Jean Hailes**
for Women's Health

More information

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



Call 03 9453 8999



Website www.jeanhailes.org.au



Email education@jeanhailes.org.au



For more information about periods

- visit our [periods webpage](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/periods)
www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/periods



- download our
[Easy Read Period products fact sheet](http://www.jeanhailes.org.au/resources/period-products-easy-read)
www.jeanhailes.org.au/resources/period-products-easy-read



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Website [NRS Helpdesk](https://www.communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs)

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Website [TIS National](https://www.tisnational.gov.au)

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