

Menstruation is normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of a monthly cycle. This happens for any person with a uterus.

It is the time of the month when a person sheds the lining of their uterus and it exits through the vagina.

Every month, your body prepares for pregnancy. Ovaries release an egg which thickens the uterine lining. If the egg is not fertilized by sperm, the egg is then reabsorbed into your body and the shedding or bleeding occurs. This is also commonly referred to as your period or your "time of the month."

Periods typically begin between the ages of 8 and 17. An average menstrual cycle lasts 28 days, but each person's cycle length may vary.

MENSTRUATION SYMPTOMS

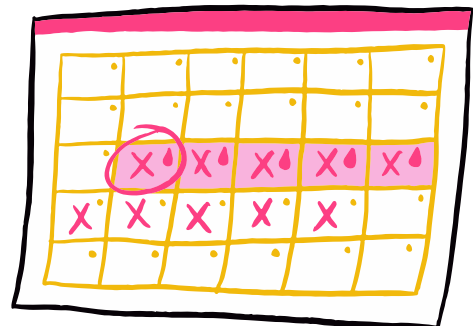
- Mood changes/swings/irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Spotting
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Food cravings
- Loss of appetite
- Bloating
- Breast tenderness
- Acne
- Upset stomach
- Cramping in lower stomach and/or back



**These symptoms vary for each person and may be experienced before and during your menstrual/bleeding days. **

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE

- **Pre-Menstrual Days:** The few days that occur before your period begins. You may experience symptoms such as: mood swings, bloating, loss of appetite, and sore breasts. There are many other symptoms and they often last around 3 days.
- **Menstrual Days:** These are the days when blood and tissue discharge from the vagina which usually lasts 2 to 7 days. You may continue to experience many symptoms similar to the pre-menstrual ones.
- **Neutral Days:** Days when hormones are calmer, and one is typically not experiencing menstruation symptoms.
- **Ovulation Days:** In an average 28-day menstrual cycle, ovulation usually occurs about 14 days before the start of your next menstrual period.



TIPS FOR DEALING WITH YOUR PERIOD

- Painkillers (Consult with your doctor, follow recommendations and directions on bottle).
- Heating pad on stomach or lower back.
- Hot bath or shower.
- Rest.

TRACKING YOUR PERIOD

It's important to keep track of your period so you know what is typical for your menstrual cycle. This information is helpful to your doctor/healthcare provider since having an irregular period or severe bleeding period can be a sign of a problem. Tracking your period can also help you predict when you will ovulate which is when you are more likely to become pregnant. Keeping a record can be useful when planning special events or vacations.

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

People often use a variety of products based on what works best for them. Try different items to see what you prefer. Carry a small menstruation/period kit with you. Reminder to dispose of soiled disposable products in trashcan.

- Sanitary pads
- Tampons
- Menstrual cups
- Extra pair of underwear
- Bag for soiled underwear
- Pain medicine
- Water-based wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer

[Click here for more information.](#)



WHAT IS NORMAL WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR PERIOD?

Remember that there is no "normal" but here are some ideas of what to expect.

- Bleeding from your vagina that can last 2-7 days.
- You may discharge approximately 5-12 teaspoons of blood which can appear pink, red, or brown. It may be thick, thin, watery, or variations of this over the days that you bleed.
- Having stomach and/or back cramps and pain.
- Vaginal odor may increase at different times of your cycle so continue to practice good hygiene and bathing.
- Periods will change throughout your life. It is normal to have longer cycles and/or a heavier period flow when you first get your period. When your body begins menopause, your period becomes more irregular and eventually stops. (The average age is 51 but can occur in your 40's. Some people may not reach menopause until they are in their 60's).