



Menstruation

Ages 13+



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What is Menstruation?



Menstruation is a precious thing –

it means that when a young woman gets older and is ready, she is able to have children and nurture the next generation.

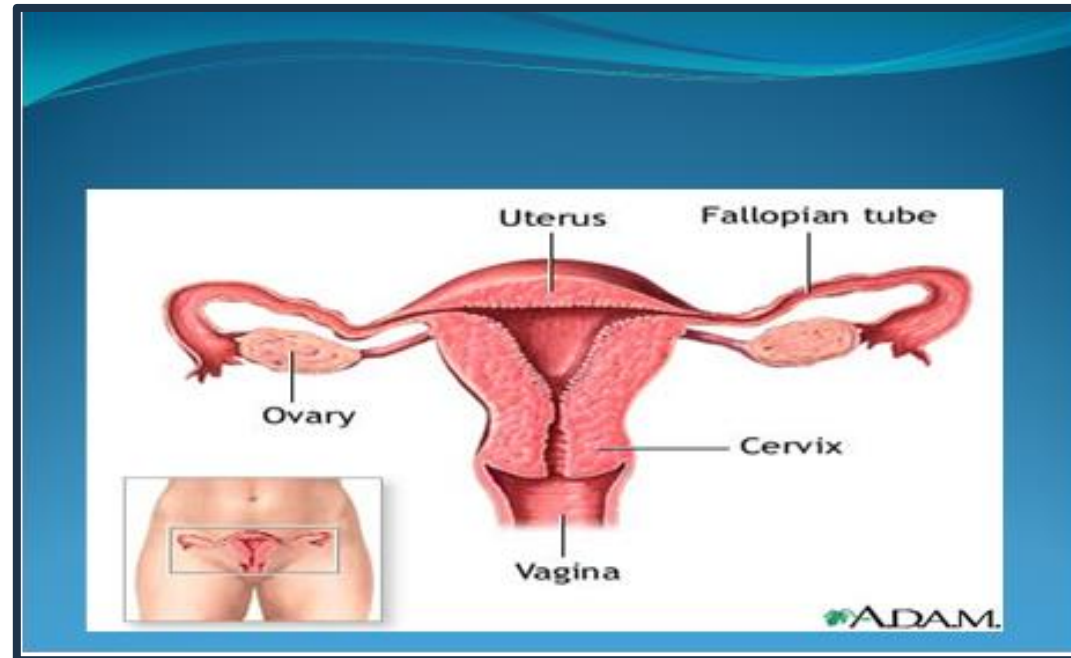
- You should **be proud that you are becoming a woman and never feel shameful about your period.**
- Menstruation begins roughly **two years** after the appearance of the first physical signs of puberty.



The Menstrual Cycle



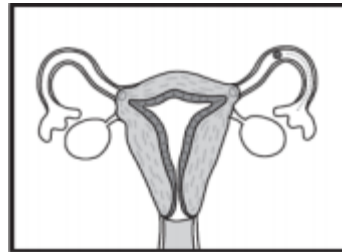
At the beginning of the menstrual cycle, an **egg is released from the ovary and travels up the fallopian tube to the uterus.**



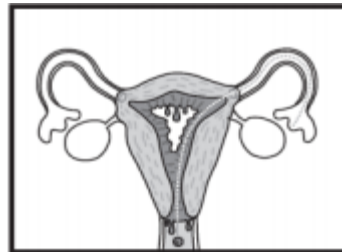
The Menstrual Cycle



- The uterus prepares itself with a thick lining of blood to protect and nourish a fertilized egg.



- If fertilization doesn't take place, the thick lining is not needed.
- So, the thick lining of blood breaks up and starts flushing out of the vaginal opening.



The Menstrual Cycle



- Flushing continues for three to seven days, and is called menstruation or periods.
- The length of the cycle varies from 23-39 days, the average being 28 days.
- Normal flow varies from 2-7 days, the average being five days. If your flow lasts longer than eight days, talk to your parent/caregiver.



Sanitary Pads



- **Good personal hygiene** is necessary to prevent infection, genital itching and bad odor.
- Make sure you have access to **sanitary pads** ...ask your house mother.
- Change pads frequently, **every three to four hours**. If your flow is heavier than normal (must change pad every hour), talk to your parent/caregiver.
- Wash hands with soap **before and after changing** sanitary pads.



Disposing of Pads



- Used pads should be **wrapped in a newspaper** and thrown in a bin which is emptied daily, or **burned/incinerated**.
- **Never throw pads in the toilet** as it will block the sewer line.
- Used pads **should not be** thrown away in the open, into a water body or into drainage channels.



Good Hygiene



- Take baths morning and evening if needed
- Always wear clean, sun-dried clothes and undergarments.



- Before onset of flow you may want to groom the hair around the genitalia, though shaving is not recommended.

Good Hygiene (continued)



- When bathing, wash with soap and water. The inner thighs and labial folds should be cleaned properly, from front to back.



- Washing should be performed using a front to back motion to avoid bacteria around the anus from coming into contact with the vagina. Make sure that you are very gentle and use only light pressure when cleaning your vagina due to sensitivity.
- The anus should be the last part to be cleaned. Over-cleaning should be avoided as it can be harmful; do not repeatedly clean your genitals.
- Perfumes, talcum powder and deodorants should not be directly applied to the genital area.

Cramps



- Some girls feel uncomfortable or have cramp-like pains when they have their period. These pains are often not very severe and do not last very long.
- If you find the pain troublesome, talk to an adult as there are a number of solutions that could help:
 - Placing a warm washcloth or water bottle over the lower abdomen/back
 - Taking a warm bath
 - Taking a walk/exercising
 - Drinking plenty of water



Myths



- **Myth – normal activities such as going to school, offering prayers, entering kitchens, going to festival, wearing new clothes and touching people should be prohibited.** No, menstruation should not be seen as an obstacle to daily activities.
- **Myth – missing periods means pregnancy.** No, this is not necessarily always true as the menstrual cycle could also be affected by stress, illnesses, poor nutrition and exercise.
- **Myth – menstrual cramps are due to cold drinks or showers/bath.** No, menstrual cramps are because the uterus is contracting to shed the uterine lining and blood.

Myths



- **Myth – a woman loses a lot of blood during menstruation.** No, in case of normal bleeding that lasts for five days she loses only 2-4 tablespoons of blood (25 – 60cc), but enough to cause anemia if proper nutrition is not taken.
- **Myth – menstrual flow is dirty and unclean.** No, the menstrual blood is clean, comprising of pure blood and shedding of the uterus lining.



Thank you



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