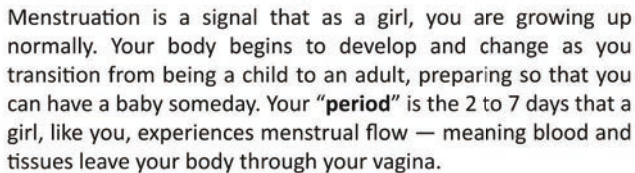


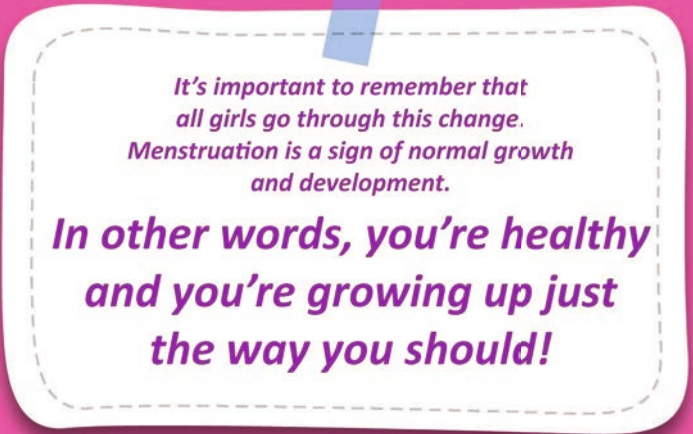
# Growing Healthy

Things that girls  
need to know





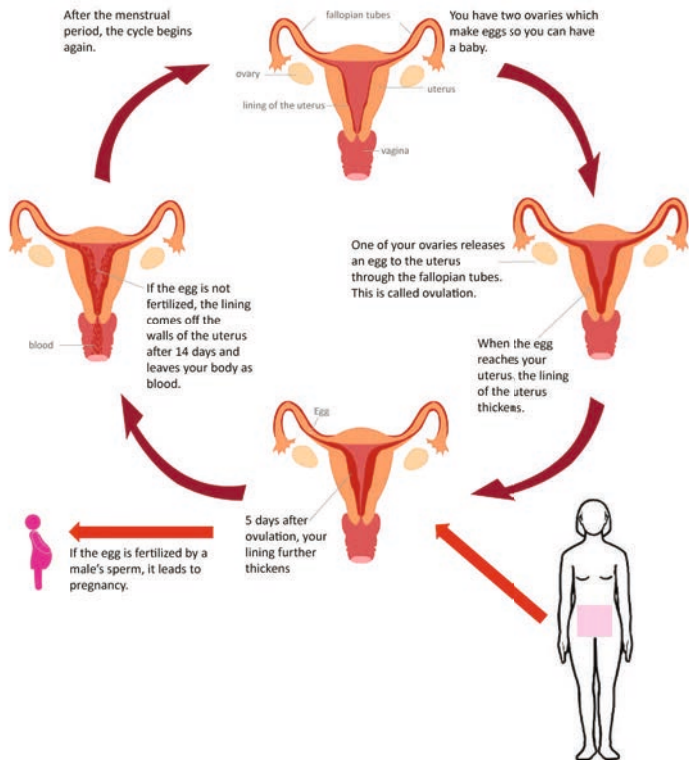
Menstruation is a signal that as a girl, you are growing up normally. Your body begins to develop and change as you transition from being a child to an adult, preparing so that you can have a baby someday. Your **“period”** is the 2 to 7 days that a girl, like you, experiences menstrual flow — meaning blood and tissues leave your body through your vagina.



*It's important to remember that  
all girls go through this change.  
Menstruation is a sign of normal growth  
and development.*

***In other words, you're healthy  
and you're growing up just  
the way you should!***

## The Menstrual Cycle: What's going on inside your body?





**When do girls, like you, get their period?**

You can begin menstruating any time from age 8 to 18, although most girls start having their period between the ages of 10 to 14.

### **How often will you get your period?**

It normally happens every 28 days, but can be from 21-35 days. You may have irregular periods for the first year or two as your body is adjusting to many changes. You may also experience having irregular periods if you are under stress, exercising heavily, eating poorly, or in an emergency situation.

### **How long will you have your period?**

Your bleeding can last for 2-7 days. But it can and may vary for many girls.

### **Is there a bad odor when you have your period?**

The bad odor that you sometimes smell comes from the bacteria that begins to grow when it is warm and moist. Changing your pad or cloth often (every 3-5 hours or when the cloth/pad becomes soaked) will help eliminate odor and reduce the chance of getting an infection.

### **Is it normal to feel pain during your period?**

Yes. You may experience pain in your lower back or in your stomach when you have your menstrual period. To relieve your discomfort it is helpful to move and stretch, have some exercise, apply a hot compress to any painful area, or have a warm bath. If available, ibuprofen medicine may help relieve the pain.

### **Why do you have a clear or white discharge throughout the month?**

When not menstruating, you may have vaginal discharge—this is normal. Discharge may be clear, cloudy white or yellowish. Changes in discharge may signal infection.

## What can you do?

- Be prepared! Use sanitary pads or cloth pasadors to absorb the blood.
- Change your sanitary pad or pasador every 3-5 hours or more often, if needed.
- Keep a sanitary pad or pasador with you at all times, even if you don't think your period is coming. It is better to be prepared, especially when you are at school.
- Take a bath as needed and wash genital area with bath soap and water at least twice a day.
- Wash hands with soap and water after the toilet or changing sanitary pads/pasador.

## How to wash your hands



Wet your hands



Soap



Lather



Scrub



Rinse



Shake hands to dry

- Wipe private area from front to back after toilet use to prevent infection.
- Do not use special products, perfumes, herbs or ointments on private parts.
- Watch out for signs of infection—changes in discharge, odor, itching and burning sensation.

Here are some tips on how you can use the calendar to monitor your period:

1

*Use the calendar in the next page to make a note of which day period starts, how long it lasts, and how heavy it is on which days.*

2

Your cycle will probably be about the same length each month and have similar heaviness of flow on the same days of your cycle. You can use the calendar to help predict when your period will begin and what it will be like.

3

From the end of each period, count 21 to 35 days to predict on which day you would have your next period. It is usually every 28 days but some girls can have it earlier or later.



# My Calendar

Fill out with the current months and days of the year.

This should be able to help you monitor your period.

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Mark the days which you have your period by encircling them.

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### What if blood leaks through your clothing?

It happens to just about every girl at some point. Sometimes it happens when you aren't at home, so you can't change right away. But if you are wearing a sweater or jacket, you can take it off and tie it around your waist. Then get a new pad so that it doesn't bleed through your cloth more than it already has. To avoid this, change your pads regularly and keep extras in your bag.

### Disposal and Care of Menstrual Hygiene Materials



Wrap used sanitary napkins in paper or plastic.



Dispose sanitary napkins in a garbage container.



NEVER throw sanitary napkins in the toilet!



Use only clean and dry pasadors.



Pasadors should be washed with clean water with soap.



To dry, hang pasadors in the sun. The sun helps kill germs that may cause infection.

## Menstrual Myths

### TRUE or FALSE

**You can take a bath when you have your period.**

**TRUE.** Bathing and washing are good habits to maintain proper hygiene when you have your period. Being in water will not cause sickness or insanity and may help prevent infection during menstruation.

**Eating sour or salty foods can stop your period.**

**FALSE.** Eating sour or salty foods will not stop your menstrual flow. Neither will drinking cold liquids. You should eat whatever makes you feel good during menstruation, including healthy choices.

**You shouldn't run or move around too much when you have your period.**

**FALSE.** You do not need to reduce your movements when you have your period. Increasing physical movement may actually reduce pain associated with menstrual cramps and provide additional energy. However, if you have cramps and feel like limiting physical activity or having more rest, listen to your body's needs.

**Menstrual blood is dirty.**

**FALSE.** Menstruation is not a disease or an impurity, it is a natural biological experience of women and girls.



*It's ok to want to know more and ask for help.  
Your questions and concerns need to be shared.  
Talk to a trusted female teacher, friend,  
family member or nurse for assistance!*



Save the Children



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