

the
conversation...



PRIMARY
Sex and Relationships
Education

PERIODS

PUBERTY

Puberty is the word we use to describe the process in which a child matures into an adult and their body becomes capable of reproduction ie. having children.

For a girl, one of the most obvious developments in puberty is menstruation or, as most people call it, the start of your period.

The idea of starting your period can seem a little scary but it's actually very exciting - it is a clever system in a girl's body which means she can have children when she is older if she wants to.

Below are some links to websites and videos where you can find out a bit more about periods. Have a look at the information in this booklet too and have a chat with a trusted adult.

The most important thing to remember is that there is nothing to be embarrassed or ashamed about when it comes to your period - after all, without the menstrual cycle the human race couldn't continue!

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/you-your-body/puberty>

Search for 'BBC RADIO PUBERTY ADVICE'

WWW.KIDSHEALTH.ORG

WWW.AMIGHTYGIRL.COM



WHAT ARE PERIODS?

When a girl reaches puberty, one of her ovaries releases an egg every month.

To catch the blood, a girl or woman has several options. She may wear special period pants, a pad worn in her pants, or a tampon which is inserted into the vagina.

The egg travels along the fallopian tube to the womb.

WHAT ARE PERIODS?

The womb prepares itself for the arrival of the egg by making a soft, thick lining.

The period looks like blood and will gradually be released over about five days. In total the amount of blood is usually two tablespoonfuls.

If the egg does not meet with a sperm through sexual intercourse (fertilisation), the lining comes away and they both pass out of the vagina. This is menstruation, most people call it a 'period'.



PERIOD PROTECTION OPTIONS



Period pants are a great option. You just swap your usual underwear for these pants whilst on your period. There are lots of sizes and styles to suit teens and pre-teens. Have a look at the websites below for more information.

www.cheekywipes.com

www.modibodi.co.uk

Towels or pads are worn inside your usual pants and you put a fresh pad in every few hours. They come in various sizes and absorbances depending on your flow so try a few out to see what suits you best.

Washable pads are a great option too - softer on your skin and better for the environment - you can get starter kits that include a selection of pads and a discreet bag to keep clean and dirty ones in whilst out and about.



Tampons are inserted into the vagina so can be a little trickier to get the hang of initially. This video might help you get the hang of it.

<https://youtu.be/rADbqmSu37I>

Unlike pads, tampons can be worn when swimming so are ideal if you're a keen swimmer!



PERIOD STARTER KIT

One of the things girls worry about most when it comes to their periods is what to do if they get their period when at school. Firstly, don't worry, schools always have a supply of period products and you can mention it to any member of staff and they will help. However, being prepared can help you to feel a bit more confident so why not put together a period starter kit that you can keep in your bag or locker for when you need it.

This is a nice activity to do with a trusted adult and you can chat at the same time about any questions or concerns you might have.

Your kit should include the following:

- ❁ A nice bag or pencil case to keep everything in
- ❁ Your chosen period protection - perhaps some period pants and a couple of pads so you've got some options.
- ❁ A clean pair of pants in case the ones you're wearing get blood on them
- ❁ A disposable or wipe clean bag to put any dirty pants in.
- ❁ A lip balm - your lips can feel dry during your period
- ❁ Perhaps a sweetie or two as a little pick me up!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do periods hurt?

Often periods will not feel painful. You may experience some discomfort and cramping during your period but it should not prevent you from doing what you normally do. You can take paracetamol or other pain medication to help. A warm bath or hot water bottle can also be soothing.

Can I go swimming if I'm on my period?

Providing you wear a tampon, you can go swimming when you are menstruating.

What if i start my periods when I'm in school?

As you start puberty and notice your body starting to change, it's a good idea to have a little tin or bag with a couple of period protection products in in your bag, in case your period starts. Your school will also have a supply that you can have access to so just ask!

How often do I have to change my tampon or towel?

It is good to change your tampon or towel every two to three hours, or whenever it starts to feel uncomfortable to prevent infection. If you are using period pants, these can be worn for longer periods.

What age will my period start?

Your period can start at any point during puberty, it is possible to start your period as young as 8 or not until you are well into your teen years. Everyone is different. The average for a girl to start her period is 12.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should I keep my period a secret?

No not at all. Periods are a normal part of a woman's life and it's fine to talk about them - with girls and boys.. It can be a good idea to explain to some friends and family that you have your period especially as you can feel a little bit grumpy for a few days! You don't need to hide your period protection either though it's nice to have a little bag or something to keep it all together.

When do periods stop?

Girls/Ladies will continue to have monthly periods until they reach the menopause, this is when the female body stops releasing eggs and usually occurs around the age of 50.

How much will i bleed?

Everyone is different but your period will usually last for between 4 and 7 days and the average amount of blood loss is about 2-3 tablespoons over your whole period. It comes out gradually and the flow will vary - some people have a light flow, some heavier and it can be different each day. You can get different period protection depending on your flow and you will soon get to know your body and what suits you.

How often will I get my period?

Your first and second period might be several months apart, however most people get a period once a month and will get to know exactly when their period is due. It can be a good idea to make a note or mark in a diary or calendar to help you track when your period might be due. It's normal for your period to be a bit irregular too though.



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