

Menstrual Hygiene Day 2021

What is Menstruation?

Menstruation starts during puberty, usually between 10~18 years old, but they may start earlier or later. Periods may be irregular during the first few years. A period usually occurs every 28 days and it is when a woman bleeds from her vagina and can last for about 3 to 8 days. *Periods are different for everyone and can vary due to diet, age, exercise, weight, medication, or diseases*

Puberty

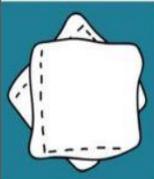
Puberty is the time in your life where you grow the greatest amount in height and weight. It is sexual/physical maturation initiated by hormonal changes. For females, the signs of puberty begin around age 8 and last till around 16. Girls will begin to have menstrual periods monthly so that the body is able to release eggs from the ovaries.

Common Myths/Stigmas

Menstruation is a taboo subject in many cultures. Many women and girls often feel shame and embarrassment because menstruation is perceived as a process of cleaning out the “bad” and “dirty” blood, but this is not true. Menstruation is a normal biological process and a vital sign of good reproductive health! Women and girls may feel a certain amount of discomfort or pain but this is normal and not a sickness (though there are some menstrual disorders that require medical attention).

Maintaining proper hygiene is the key to healthy and safe periods!

Be sure to change out your menstrual product 2-3 times a day or when you feel discomfort. The graphic on the left shows some common menstrual products you can use.

MENSTRUAL CLOTH	REUSABLE PAD	DISPOSABLE PAD	MENSTRUAL CUP	TAMPON
				
Reusable, affordable, already used in many contexts.	Reusable, can be home-made or produced locally, where good quality, comfortable.	Convenient, widely available, preferred by many women and girls, comfortable.	Reusable, available in some countries.	Convenient, available in some countries.
Relies on privacy, clean water and soap, and time to wash and dry.	Relies on privacy, water soap and time to wash and dry.	Relies on disposal systems and access to markets.	Relies on privacy, water and soap to clean, and hindered by cultural taboos on inserting and virginity.	Relies on disposal systems and hindered by cultural taboos surrounding insertion and virginity.



Common Menstrual Disorders

Toxic Shock Syndrome: Bacterial infection commonly caused by super-absorbent pads or leaving tampons in too long. Often causes high fever and vomiting.

Endometriosis: A painful disorder where menstruation tissue flows to other areas of the body. This is often mistaken as cramps.

PCOS: Hormonal disorder among women that can cause infrequent or prolonged periods.

Please seek medical attention if you suspect you are experiencing any of these!

Coping with Menstruation

- Apply heat to abdomen
- Avoid fatty foods, salty foods, caffeine
- Drink herbal teas
- Moderate exercise
- Drink water and eat nutrient-dense foods
- Eating bananas can help relieve cramps

Information for Parents

It is important for parents to talk about menstruation in a positive light and explain how it is a natural process for a woman to go through. The first period can be met with either celebration, fear or concern. For every girl, this signifies an important transition to womanhood - a time when they would benefit from the support of family and friends.