

Preparing For Your Period:

“DON'T JUST GO WITH THE FLOW” ✨

A “period” is short for menstrual period. It’s a part of puberty and growing up! Getting your period can be scary, but it doesn’t have to be. By using this guide and talking to someone you trust, like a caregiver or older sibling, getting prepared for your period can be made easier!

Your period is a sign that your body is healthy and working properly. Check out the pictures below to see how you might move through each stage and signs to watch for.

WHAT IS PUBERTY?

Puberty doesn’t happen all at once! Your body needs to go through different stages before your period comes, and everyone reaches each stage when their body is ready.

Each girl’s journey is different, and that’s okay. We all move through each stage, check out the journey below.

Did You Know?

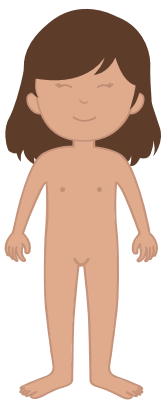
Most girls get their first period between ages 9 – 15.

THE JOURNEY

Your body changes can start anytime between ages 8 - 12.

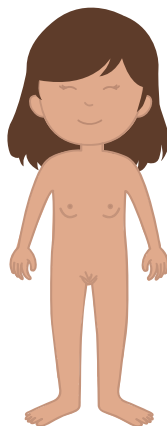
AGES 8 - 12

- No visible signs of puberty



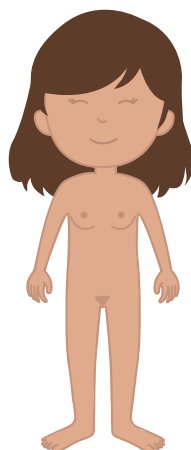
AGES 8 - 14

- You will notice you are growing in height and weight
- Your nipple area maybe tender
- Breast buds appear
- Fine, straight hairs start to grow near your pubic area



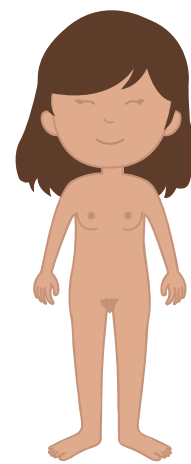
AGES 9 - 15

- You will continue to grow
- Nipples will become more like breasts, round and full
- Hair in your pubic area will become dark, thicker and curlier
- You may notice your hips become wider
- You could see discharge from your vagina
- Your period may start later in this stage



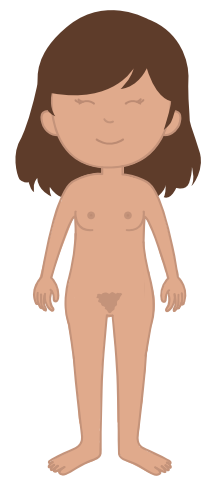
AGES 10 - 15

- Now you see:
- Underarm hair appear
 - Nipple and areola begin to stick out from the rest of the breast
 - Pubic hair starts to form a triangular patch in the pubic area
 - Your period may start later in this stage



AGES 12 - 19

- Now you have the appearance of a young woman.
- Breast development is complete
 - Pubic hair forms a thick, curly and triangular patch
 - You have reached full adult height
 - Your period may occur more regularly

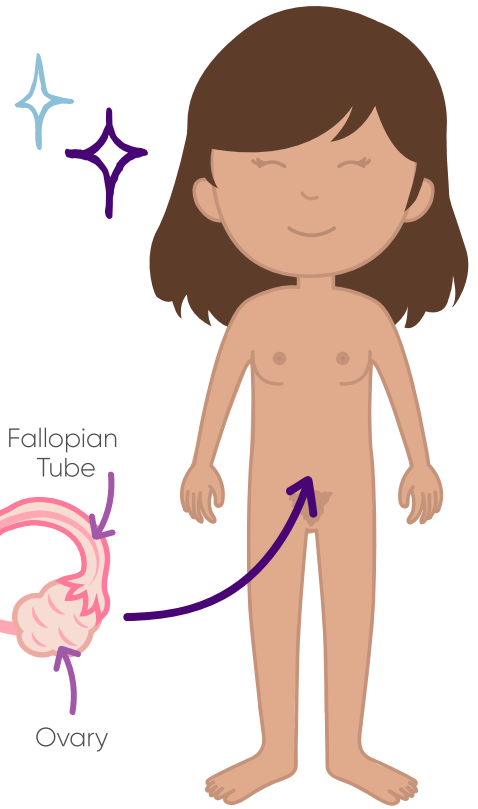


What is Menstruation?

Another word for menstruation is "period". Having your period is the last stage of puberty.

What is Vaginal Discharge?

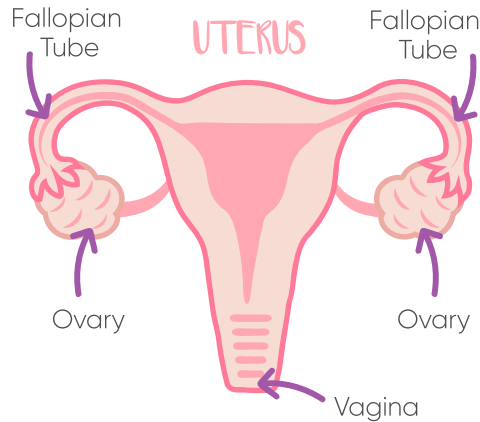
Vaginal discharge is fluid that comes from the vagina. You might see this on the toilet paper when you wipe, or in your underwear. Vaginal fluids should be clear, white, or off-white in colour. This is normal to have.



Periods: The Basics

So, what exactly is a period?

Once a month an egg leaves your ovary and travels down the fallopian tube and into the uterus. Your body builds a lining in your uterus with extra blood and tissue. The extra lining isn't needed and falls off of your uterus wall, passing through your vagina with the egg. This is your period! Your first period may last for 2 – 7 days, and you should lose a small amount of blood and tissue, about 2 tablespoons.



Did You Know?

No period is ever really "regular"! At first, it may take several months (even up to 3 years) before you can expect your period routinely. Eventually you should get your period every 21–35 days, around once a month.

YOUR FIRST PERIOD

Once you've started the stages of puberty, your first period can happen at any time: at home, at school, at soccer practice, at a friend's house or even at night. You may see red to brown stains in your underwear. You may feel cramping, almost like a tummy ache. Don't worry! You can prepare for this!

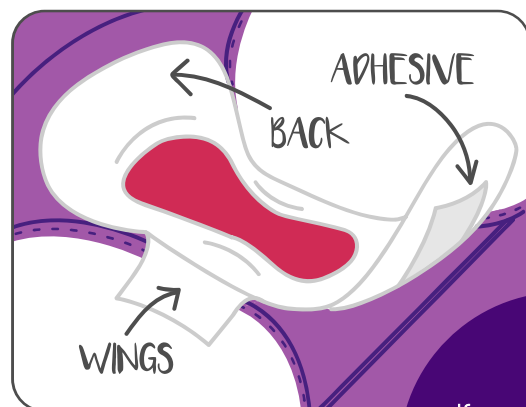
Here's how:

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare!

- ✓ Check in with your body. Are you showing any of those journey stages? (Breast buds? Growth? Hair in new places?)
- ✓ Carry a period pack with you. Add extra underwear and a pad, even some extra bottoms if you have room in your everyday bag! This will help if you bleed through your clothes. That happens to almost everyone!
- ✓ Talk to someone you trust. Let them know that you notice your body changing. They can help you prepare.

Help! My period started! Now what?

Do your best to clean up, and use a pad in your underwear. Find someone you trust and tell them you got your period. They will help get you what you need!



Tip!

If you don't have a pad, use some toilet paper! Layer and roll it so it's thick and absorbent.

Remember: No one will know you have your period, unless you tell them, just like your bleeding disorder.

Your Period with a Bleeding Disorder

So, you live with a bleeding disorder. You've got this! You have to think about a few extra things to make sure that both you and your periods are staying healthy.

Keep these things in mind and speak with someone you trust if any of them are happening to you:

- Your periods are lasting more than 7 days
- You are changing your pad every hour or less because it is full
- You can't participate in school, sports or activities during your period
- You are often worried about leaking or bleeding through your clothing
- You are bleeding through your pajamas and bedsheets at night
- You feel like you don't have energy to play, see friends, or are overtired (want to sleep more), a symptom of low iron

Did You Know?

Once you notice breast budding and tenderness, your first period will typically happen in about 1 1/2 to 2 years.

WHAT DOES LOW IRON MEAN?

The blood in our body has lots of different parts. One of those parts is called iron. Iron is a type of protein that carries the oxygen we breathe from our lungs to the rest of our body. Without enough iron, oxygen has a harder time getting around our body, which makes us feel tired. During your period blood is leaving your body, making it easier for your iron to get low. Check out the website in the Resource Bank for more information on iron boosting food!

WHAT ELSE?

Resource Bank

Tracking your period will give you an idea of when you can expect your next period. It can also give your healthcare team important information, which helps them take better care of you!



Check out WeThrive, a period tracking app!

There are many websites to help you learn more about your period. Check out the Let's Talk Period website for lots of great resources!

LET'S TALK
PERIOD

Iron Boosting Foods: aboutkidshealth.ca

Periods can be hard to talk about. But the more you talk about your period, the more people talk about their period too! Keep an open mind, and open communication with those you trust. We all want to help.



My treatment centre contact information:

References:

- Let's talk period.
- Time to talk puberty: a guide for girls with bleeding disorders, National Hemophilia Federation.
- About Kids Health – Anemia, SickKids.
- About Kids Health – Iron: Guidelines to improve your child's intake, SickKids.
- Know your flow – a guide to periods when you have a bleeding disorder.