



hey girls...



It's that
time of
the month!

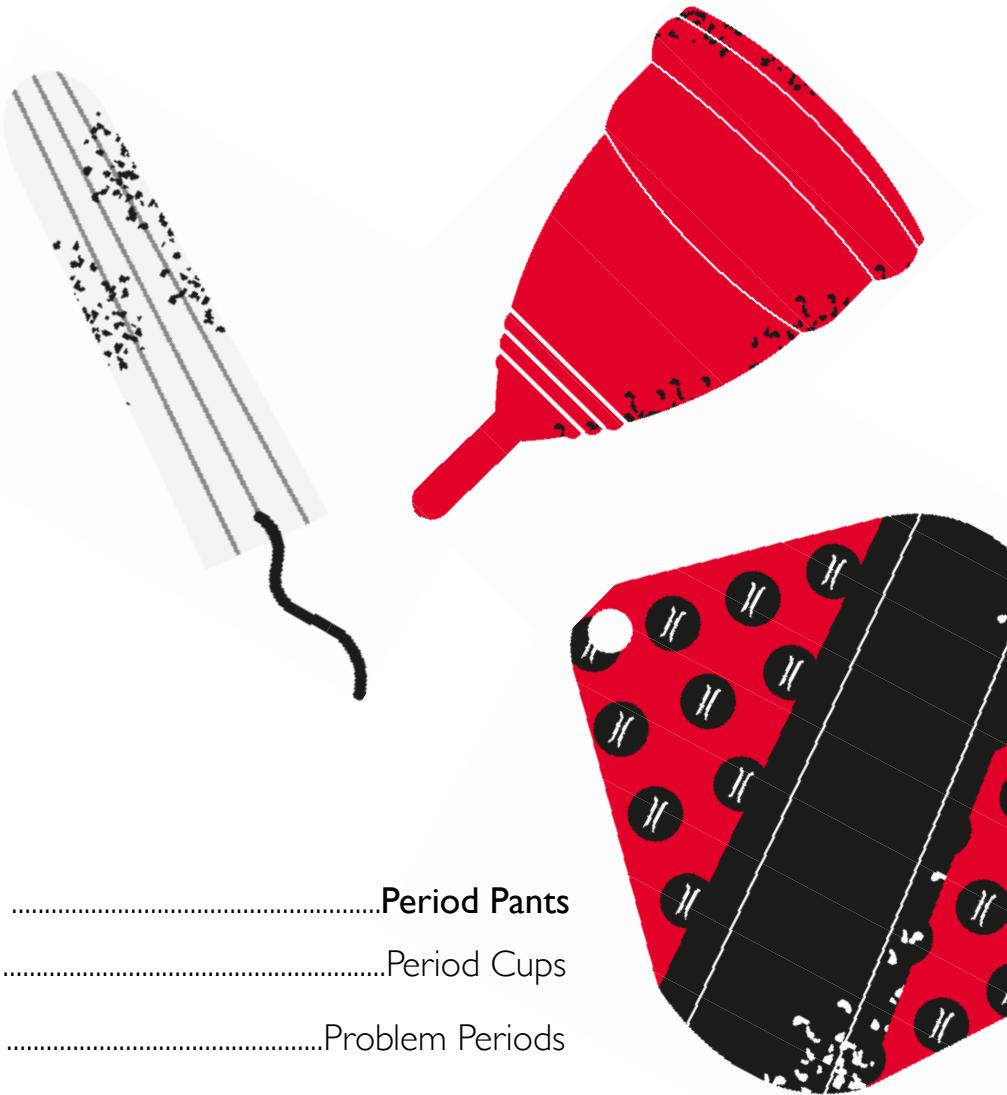
A get ready guide for all things periods!

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hello from **hey girls!**

This booklet has been written especially for you to help you through the questions and experiences that puberty brings.

It will arm you with knowledge and offers advice on dealing with the changes happening to your body.

Along with the physical development you will experience emotional changes. It can be an exciting and confusing time. Knowing some of what to expect can help you avoid any unnecessary worries, so we hope you find the information in the following pages helpful.

Whether you've already had a period or not, we're sure that you have loads of questions, so we're here to give you some answers. Don't stress if you still want to know more, we're always here to give advice at

www.heygirls.co.uk or
www.heygirls.com.au

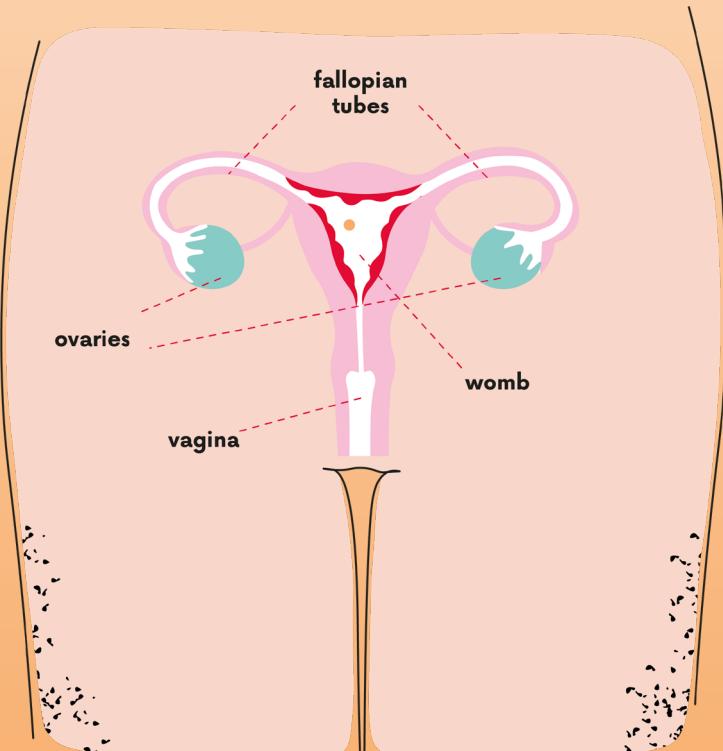
@heygirlsuk
@heygirlsau

say hey



what is what (inside)

Let's start with ovaries. These are where your eggs live within your body. When someone enters puberty, the ovaries will begin to produce hormones, and these trigger the release of an egg every month.

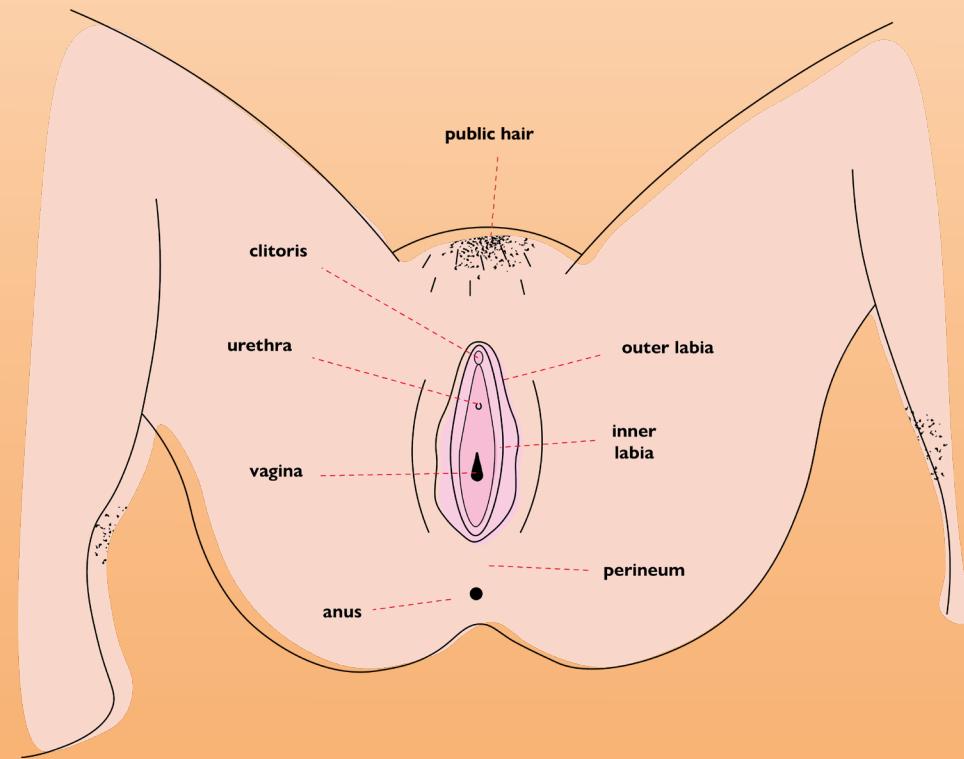


This process is known as ovulation, and it occurs around two weeks before you get a period. The egg moves through the fallopian tube and down to the uterus (womb) where the egg remains waiting to be fertilised.

The uterus wall is lined with blood and mucus which is designed to protect a fertilised egg. However, if the egg is not fertilised then the wall lining is discarded along with the egg - **this is your period**.

what is what (outside)

If you separate the labia you can use a mirror to see three openings. At the front is the urethral opening, which is where urine (wee) comes out. Further back is the vaginal opening which is where discharge and period blood is released.



Behind the vaginal opening, you can see the anus. The area between the vagina and anus is called the perineum. Just inside the vagina is a thin fold of mucous membrane called the hymen. The hymen is elastic and becomes more stretchy when you enter puberty.

when will I start puberty?

The first sign is usually that your breasts begin to grow. They may start to feel slightly tender and one may grow a little quicker than the other, although no one but you is likely to notice!

Another clue that you are about to start your journey into puberty is that you may notice hair growing under your arms, pubic hair developing or you may start to sweat more.

All of these are normal signs of puberty. You may not notice all of them at once, as we all change at a different rate, but take any of them as a hint that your body is preparing for adulthood and your period could start soon...

everyone is different

...and for some people, it can take a while after breasts start developing for periods to start.



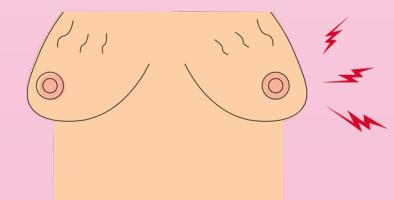
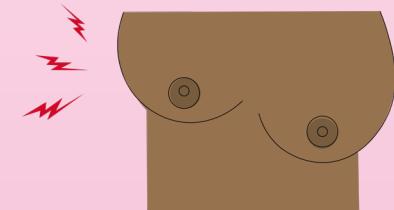
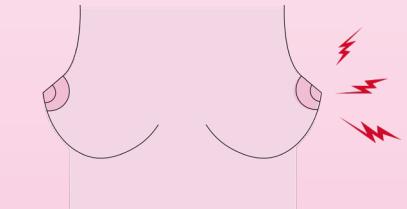
when will I start my period?

So many people worry about when they might have their first period, hoping it won't be embarrassing. There are clues to look for that signal your body is changing and your period is on its way.

Around half of people aged 12 have started their period but some may start when they are 9 years old, while others might be 16.

We're all different, so don't panic, if your periods start earlier or later than your friends.

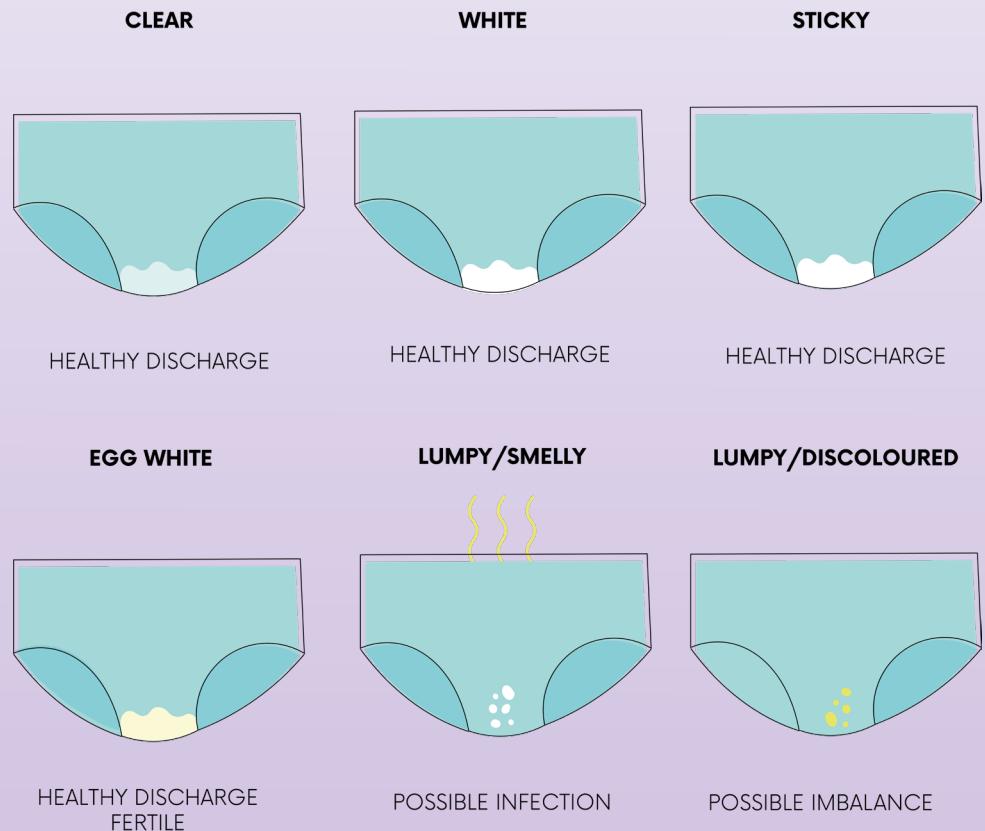
One clue is that your breasts may become larger and perhaps a bit tender. You are also likely to get some vaginal discharge - normal discharge is a whitish fluid, produced by the vagina and cervical canal. This discharge keeps the vagina clean and reduces the risk of infections.



there are lots of funny names used for periods

Aunt Flo.... Time of the month...On the rag...
Code Red... Monthly visitor... Lady time...
Crimson wave...Bloody Mary...The Blob...
Painters are in...

what does the colour of my discharge mean?

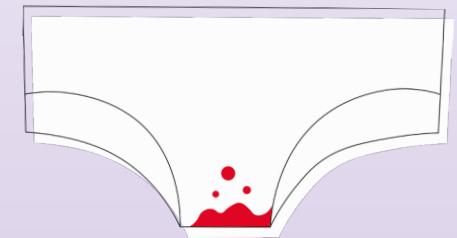


“my period began 1-2 years after I started to get discharge.”

what if I start my period during school?

**red spots, white pants!
don't panic!**

If you do get caught out and find some blood on your favourite pants, it can easily be removed with **some cold water** and a little salt.



A panty liner is thin and easy to store – and as your first period will probably be very light it is perfect to rescue you if you need it. If you are caught unaware, the school nurse will be able to help. If you can't find the nurse, ask one of the female teachers – they will have been in the same situation when they were younger too!

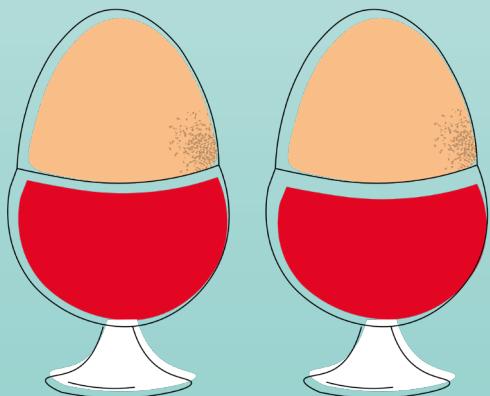
a tip from us...

Be prepared and keep a liner or pad in your bag, just in case. If you don't want anyone to see it, pop it in a small bag, in an inside pocket if there is one, or in your school locker.

how much **blood** will I lose?

For some, their first period may seem like a little brownish discharge. Others may think that they bleed a lot. **Actually, an average period produces about 50ml.** This is about 3 tablespoons of liquid so is hardly anything really.

TWO EGG CUPS PER CYCLE



= **50 ML**

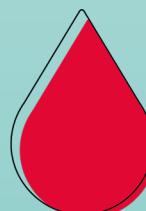
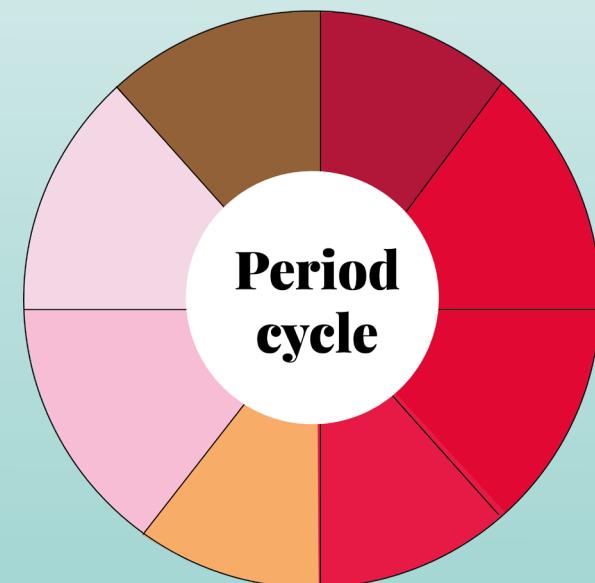
Bleeding is normally heavier during the start of a period than it is at the end and can last from 3 to 7 days.

The next cycle will usually begin between 25 and 35 days later. However, your body doesn't always follow the calendar so be prepared to adapt.

Eventually your body should settle into a more regular cycle which will continue until one day when you may decide to get pregnant.

Most people get periods until they reach menopause at around the age of 50, leaving plenty of time to learn what is normal for you.

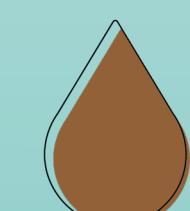
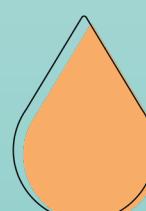
why does the colour of my period **change**?



FRESH BLOOD &
STEADY FLOW



PERIOD BLOOD MIXED
WITH CERVICAL FLUID



END/BEGINNING

The start and end of your period is usually when your flow is at its lightest which may result in a lighter colour than the middle of your cycle. Sometimes your period can appear slightly brown which is completely normal – it just means the lining has taken a little longer to leave your body.

will everyone know when I've started my period?

No one will know that you're on your period unless you tell them - honestly. It's fine to tell other people if you wish, but the truth is you'll look exactly the same as you did the day before, even if your body or your emotions feel different.



will I smell?

Normal discharge has a slightly sour smell but should not smell bad; likewise period blood can have a sweet smell when it comes into contact with air.

If you feel like this is beginning to get a bit much then change your pad or tampon. It's good to keep a couple of pads or tampons in your bag anyway, just in case.

Use a mild soap when you wash and be sure never to use soap directly inside your vagina as that can cause a bacterial imbalance and possibly very smelly discharge. If this does happen then always go to your doctor for advice.

tip...

Get into the habit of showering or bathing every day. This way you will always feel fresh and clean. Who wouldn't like that?

what can I do if I get period cramps (stomach pains)?

try these tips to relieve pain:



A hot shower



Hug a warm pillow or hot water bottle to your stomach



Light exercise



Going for a walk

When you first start having periods it's quite common for you to not experience cramps, however after a year or so these can be quite intense.

The pain usually pops up just before or at the beginning of your period. Period pain can feel a bit like stomach cramps and can also cause back pain but it normally goes away after a few days.

gender & diversity...



Basically, not all women have periods, and some men have periods. So, it can be better when talking generally to use the phrase

'people who have periods'

Of course, it's up to you how you talk about your own experience of periods, and it's absolutely OK to use whatever gender identity you are comfortable with when talking about yourself.

But if we're talking about the population as a whole and we want to involve everyone, that includes transgender people (identifying as gender different to their biological sex) or gender non-binary people (not identifying as male or female) too.

So, 'people who have periods' is a phrase that accounts for every human who has a menstrual cycle with bleeding.

problem periods when you're not cisgendered...

For transgender boys and men who have periods, or people who have periods that don't identify with one gender, problem periods can be complicated.

It's likely that fairly common symptoms like sore breasts or bloating can be extremely stressful for someone who doesn't identify as a girl or a woman, because the bodily symptoms don't match the gender that they really are.

Periods can cause people in this situation to experience new or worsened feelings of gender dysphoria (distress caused by a mismatch between the physical body and the person's gender, pronounced dis-for-ee-a), and having to focus on problems that relate to periods because they interfere with daily life can make things much more difficult.

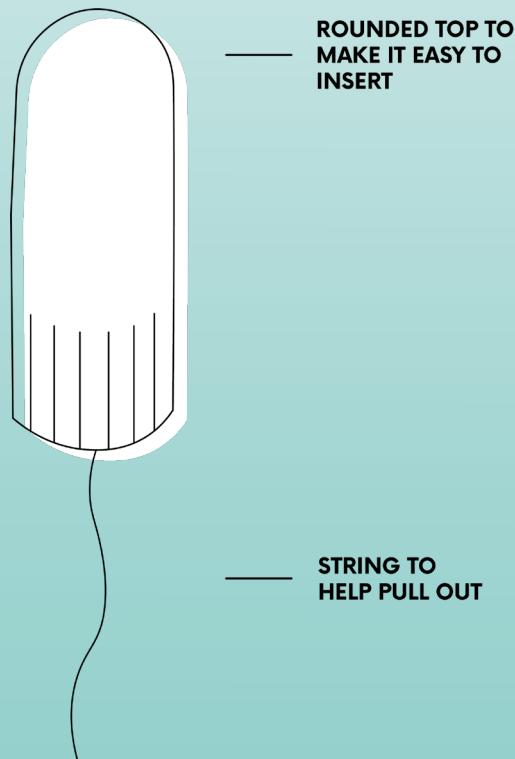
Your body is your own. It is unique to you, you decide what to do with your body, and every body is different.



tampons...

how does a tampon work?

A tampon allows you to move around freely and can be useful for activities like swimming as it does its job inside rather than on the outside. Always start with the smallest size - mini. A tampon works by absorbing blood inside the vagina so that you always feel dry outside. You can tell if you've put a tampon in the right way as it will not feel uncomfortable, move, or fall out - in fact you shouldn't be able to feel it at all.



there are several types of tampons, the most popular are:

Non applicator tampons:

the tampon doesn't come with a cardboard or plastic applicator to assist with inserting. You use your fingers to gently push the tampon inside.



Applicator tampons:

the tampon comes with a cardboard or plastic applicator, a bit like a tube, that makes insertion easier.



There are several types of absorbencies and sizes of tampons

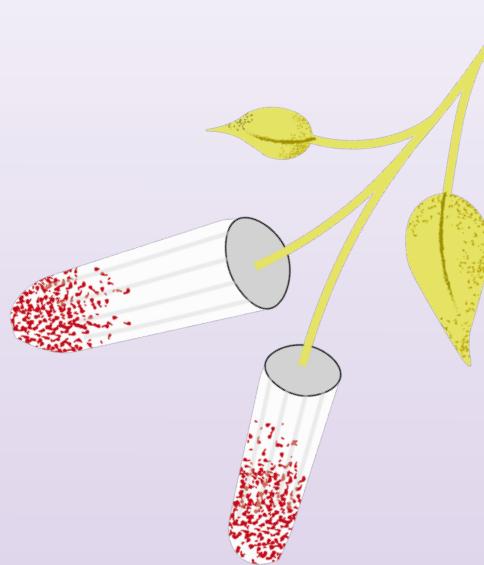
so always be sure to read the packaging when choosing the right one for you. The most common absorbencies and sizes are 'regular' for a moderate flow and 'super' for when you have a heavier flow.



“I was really scared the first time but now I don’t even think twice about it.”

did you know most young people can use tampons and it won't affect the hymen or your virginity!

A tampon acts like a sponge inside your body, soaking up blood and storing it until you change your tampon. The design has a rounded top, making it easier to insert and the string is there to help you pull it out. If you're finding it hard to insert a tampon, perhaps try a smaller size that is less absorbent and won't expand as much.



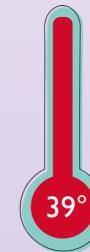
There is a myth that the hymen is only broken the first time someone has sex, causing them to bleed. This can happen sometimes but there are many other ways the hymen can be broken, such as gymnastics, cycling and horse riding.

toxic shock syndrome symptoms

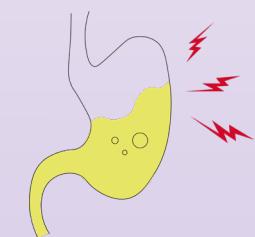
Toxic shock is rare but can be serious. Be sure to change your tampon regularly and look out for these symptoms:



headaches, sore throats, dizziness



high fever (39°C or more)



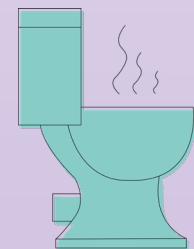
vomiting



rashes similar to sunburn



muscle aches



diarrhoea

It's perfectly safe for you to use tampons if you wish to do so, just be sure to understand the symptoms of Toxic Shock Syndrome first and always read the safety instructions to know how often you need to replace your tampon.

how do I insert the tampon?

Make sure your hands are clean and dry and remove the tampon from its wrapper.

Nothing is easy when you do it for the first time, so it is good to practice. Make sure you take your time and be sure to go somewhere where you will have plenty of peace and privacy.

It is easiest to insert a tampon on a heavier day as it will slip in more comfortably. **You should always start with the smallest tampon: a mini.** It's normal to feel nervous and tense to begin with but take a deep breath and try to relax.



DEEP BREATH IN



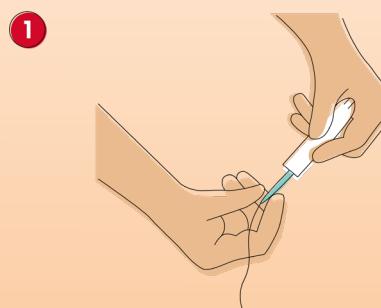
SLOWLY BREATHE OUT



HOLD FOR 5 SECONDS

Being nervous can cause your vaginal muscles to contract, making it harder to insert the tampon fully!

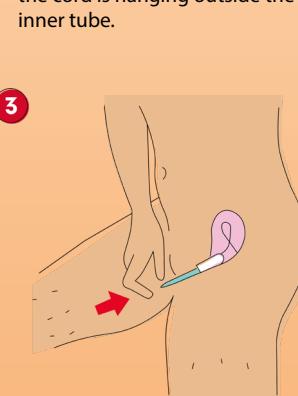
If you do feel yourself getting tense, stop, take a breath and carry on when you're ready. There's no rush.



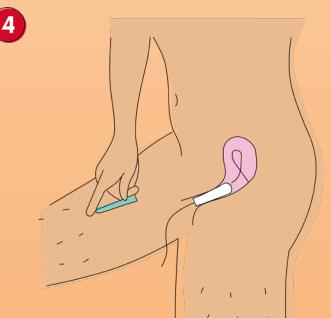
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2



3



4

For applicator tampons, there are two tubes one inside the other. Extend the inner tube fully before you insert your tampon. Make sure the cord is hanging outside the inner tube.

Hold the applicator with your thumb and middle finger just below the ridge, point the tip of the tampon towards the base of your back and gently push the applicator into the opening of the vagina.

You know your tampon is in correctly when you can't feel it at all. It shouldn't be uncomfortable in any way and the string should always be visible outside of the vagina to easily remove it later.

When it's in as far as it will go, hold the outer tube and push the inner tube inside to release the tampon. Carefully pull out the applicator leaving the cord hanging down.

...and how do I get it back...

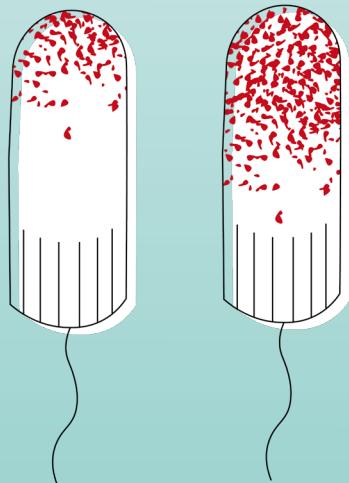
It is very easy to remove a tampon - gently pull the little cord, drop the tampon onto some toilet paper and throw it in the bin. Do not flush it down the toilet! Always wash your hands before and after changing a tampon.

how often should I change a tampon?

CHANGE EVERY

Providing that you are using the right tampon for your flow, you don't need to change it that often. Every three to six hours is enough when your period is heaviest and you should change every four to eight hours when it gets lighter.

Always choose the lowest absorbency possible.



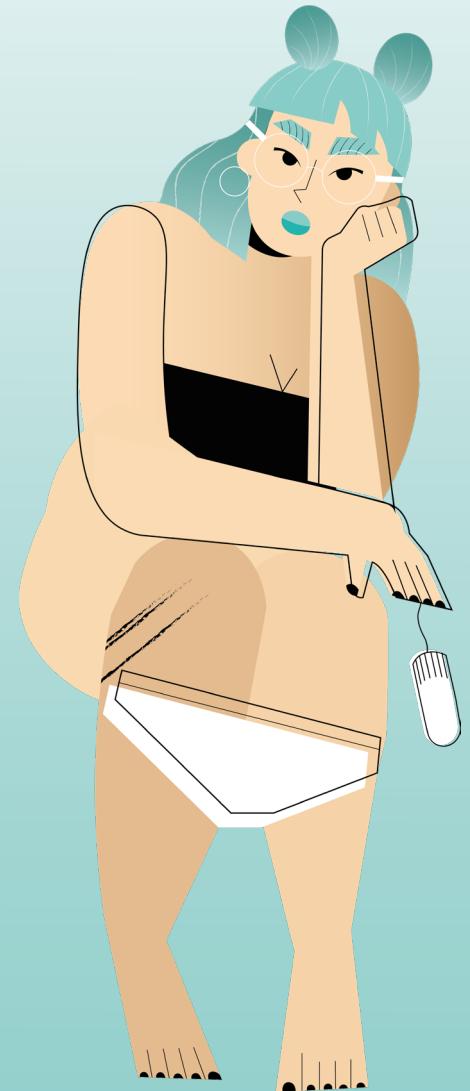
4-8 HOURS 3-6 HOURS

a top tip from us...

If your tampon is completely red when you change it then you can be confident you are using the right size. If there are still white areas, try a smaller size next time.

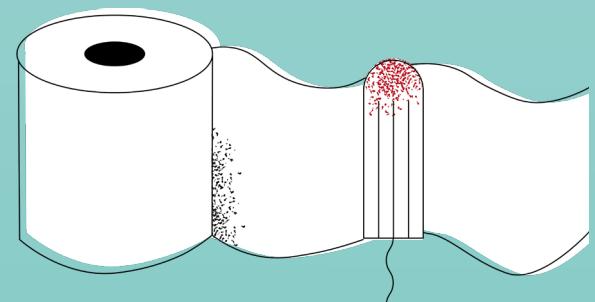
do I need to change **every** time I go to the toilet?

You can still go to the toilet as normal when you are using a tampon. You do not need to remove or change your tampon every time, however **you must remember to change your product regularly to avoid TSS and to keep yourself fresh.**



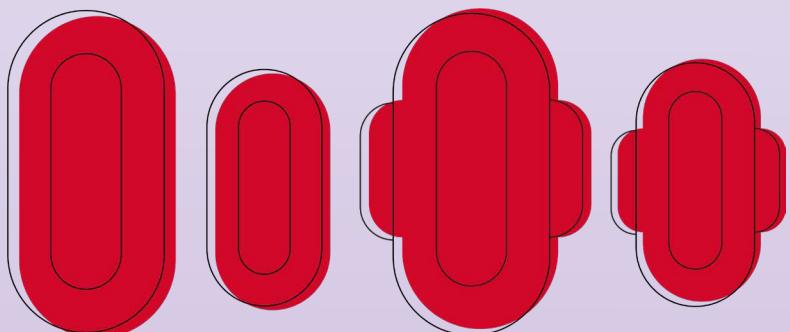
what do I do with used pads and tampons?

Don't flush them down the toilet as this can cause the drains to block. Instead, **wrap it in loo roll and pop it in a bin, often there's one near the toilet**



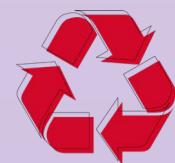
pads...

Pads come in a variety of sizes and thicknesses. A pad is secured to your underwear by a sticky strip, meaning you can move around as you wish without worrying it will slip out of place. Some pads also have 'wings' that fold around your underwear for extra security. Pads can't be seen outside your clothes and panty liners are so thin that you will barely notice they are there! It can be useful to read the packaging, as it offers more information about sizes and styles so that you can find the perfect one to fit in with your lifestyle.



A good pad is shaped to fit your body, comfortable on your skin, discreet and most are invisible through clothes.

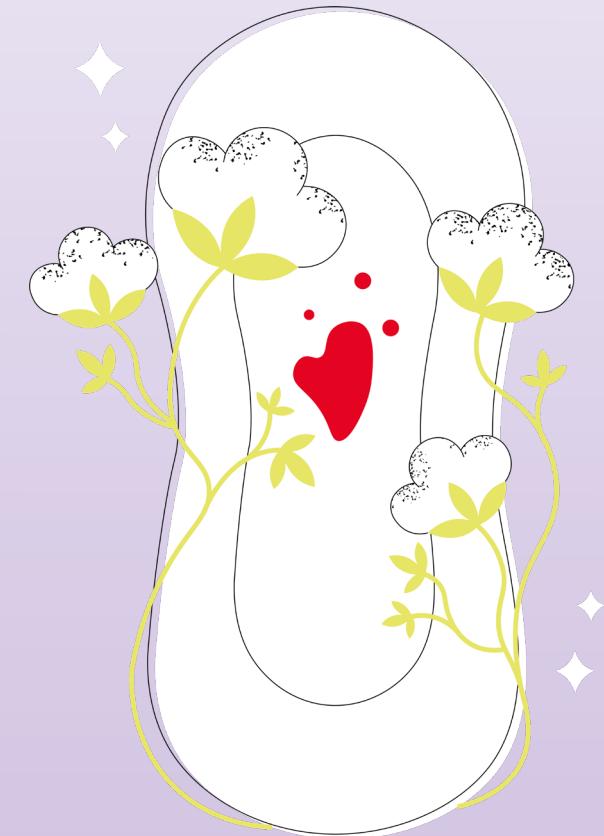
Remember to always put used pads in the bin and not the toilet!



liners... (or panty liners)

You can use panty liners to absorb vaginal discharge, to carry when expecting your first period, or if you are bleeding just a little.

Liners are just like period pads and also come in various sizes and may be used to keep you feeling fresh when you're not on your period.

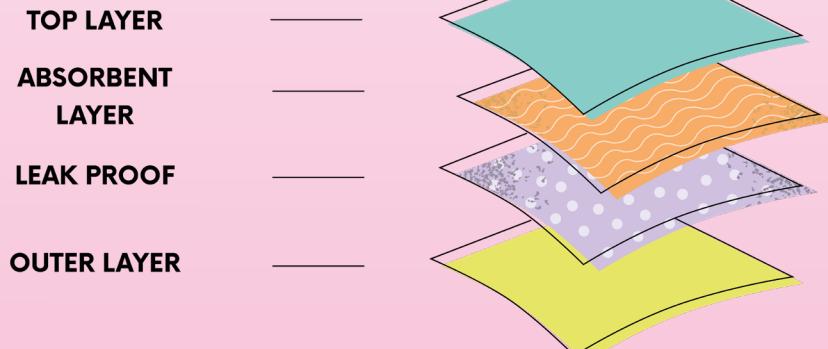


a top tip from us...

It can be a good idea to count 25 to 35 days from the first day of your last period. For example, if the first day you last had a period was 1st March, it is likely that your next period will be between 26th March and 5th April.

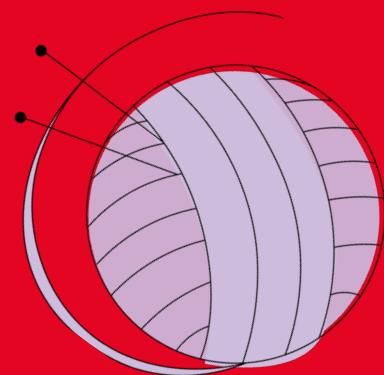
layers of a pad...

A pad is made up of several layers. The top layer, which faces towards your body, draws the fluid through the pad so it still feels completely dry on your skin. The middle layer is highly absorbent and soaks up blood then locks it into the pad



The underside of the pad consists of a layer of soft film that provides extra protection against leakage.

**did you know
that until the 1940's
people knitted their
own pads and washed
them clean to re-use?**



can I sleep with a pad on?

At night, you do not need to set your alarm to wake up and change!

You shouldn't wear a tampon for more than 6 - 8 hours. So if you're planning a long sleep - best to use a pad.

We'd recommend using winged pads to help you feel more secure during your period. Often they come in two absorbencies; day and night but really they can be worn any time of the day depending on what you feel comfortable with.



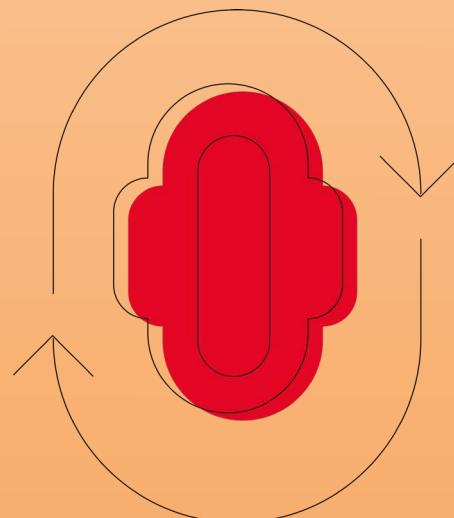
A day pad often has a moderate absorbency and is the most common pad used by all ages. A night pad often has a heavy absorbency and is thicker and longer to keep you leak free while you're sleeping. There are plenty of products to choose from so you can explore what is most suitable for you.

what are reusable pads?

Reusable period pads are a similar design to disposable pads but made from fabric. They are often winged in the same style as disposable pads and lined with absorbent material. Because they are reusable, they can be washed and worn again. It can take up to 800 years for a disposable pad to biodegrade and they often end up in landfill so using reusables is a great alternative to disposable period products.

how do you use reusable pads?

Use reusable pads exactly the same as you would disposable ones. Place them in your underwear and secure in place with poppers and wings. Be sure to wash your pads before use - some, especially those made of cotton or bamboo become more absorbent the more they are cleaned. Keep used pads in a bag or box if you can't rinse them straight away.



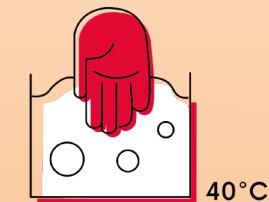
how to wash reusable pads...

1



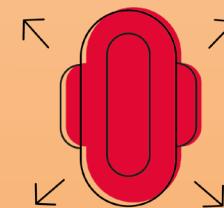
BEFORE WASHING
GIVE THEM A RINSE IN
COLD WATER UNTIL IT
RUNS CLEAR.
DO NOT SOAK.

2



GIVE THEM THEIR VERY OWN
BUBBLE BATH IN THE SINK...
OR POP THEM IN
THE WASHING MACHINE
DO NOT USE FABRIC SOFTNER.

3



ONCE SQUEAKY CLEAN
STRETCH THEM BACK
TO THEIR
ORIGINAL SHAPE.

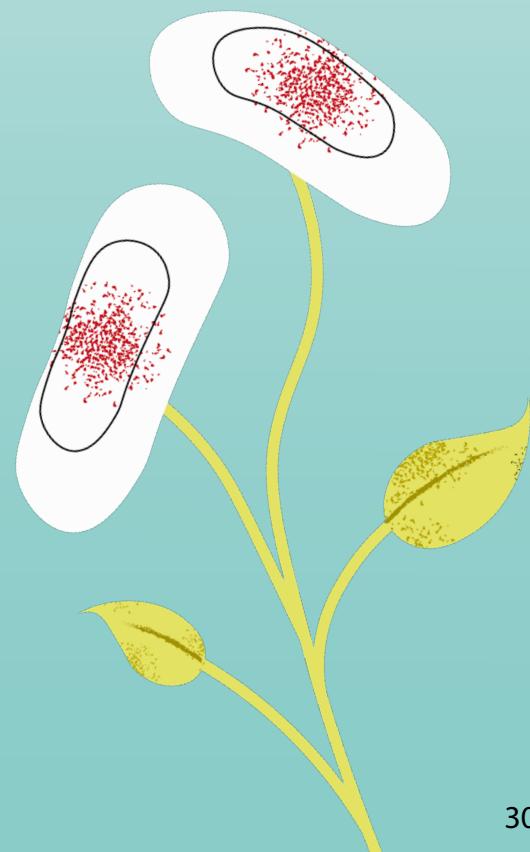
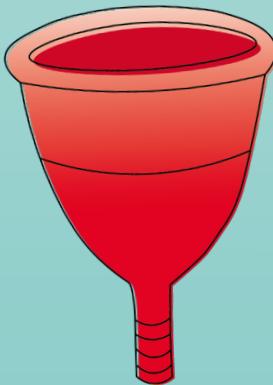
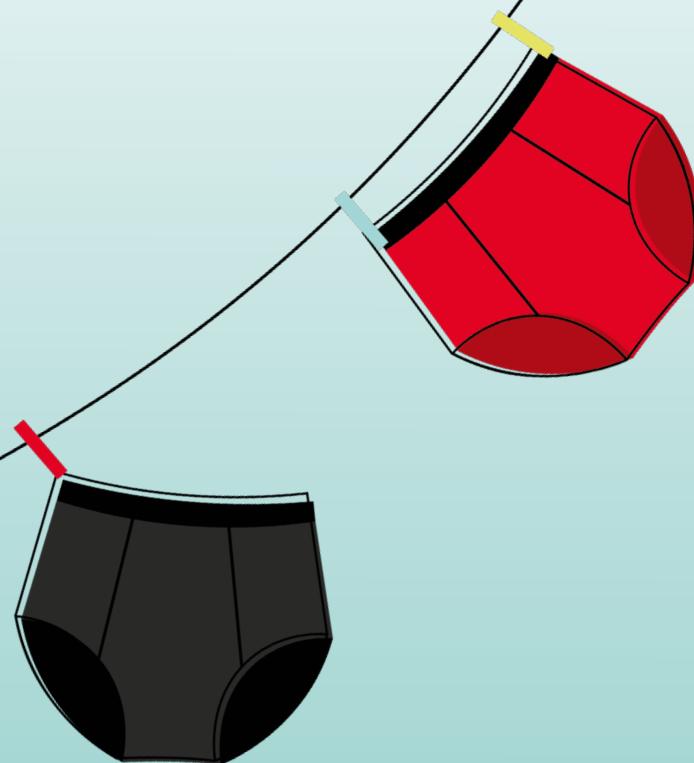
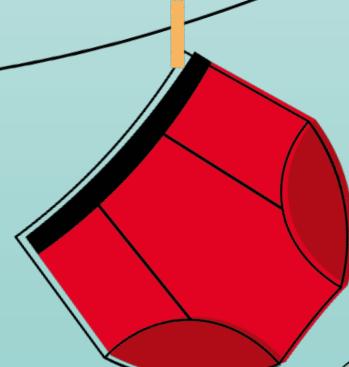
4



AIR DRY OR REST ON
THE RADIATOR AND WEAR
AGAIN - EASY!
DO NOT TUMBLE DRY.

period pants...

Period pants are worn like normal underwear and have additional layers of fabric that will absorb period blood so you don't need to wear any other protection with them. They are great for wearing to school, sports or for bed as they can be worn for up to 12 hours, then simply wash and wear again. Everyone's choice of product and experience during their period is individual and you should decide what works best for you.



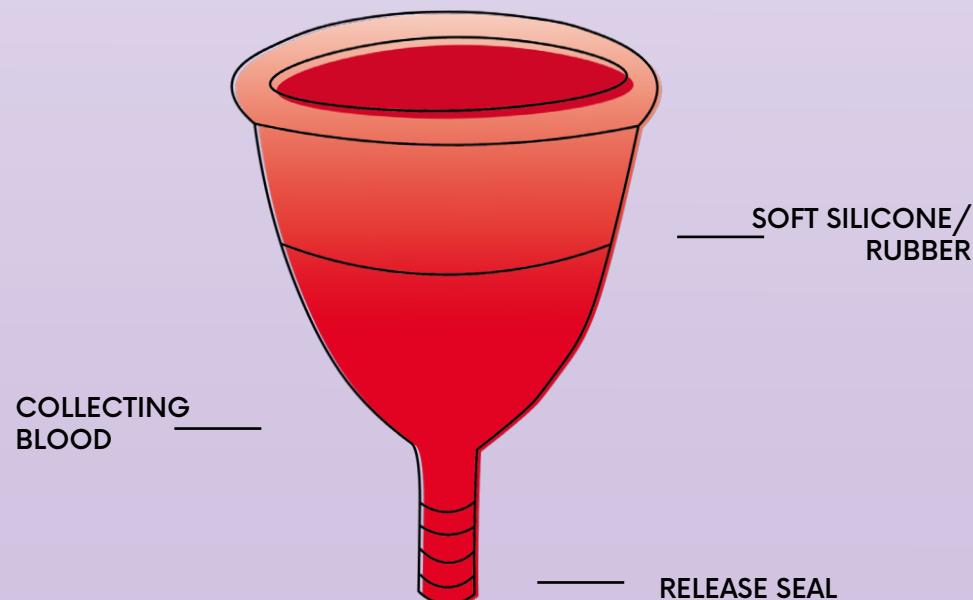
Lots of people now choose to use a reusable product that can be washed and worn again. It's better for the environment and can work out cheaper than using single use products in the long run!

Reusable pads and pants are easy to take care of and give you as much coverage as a disposable product.

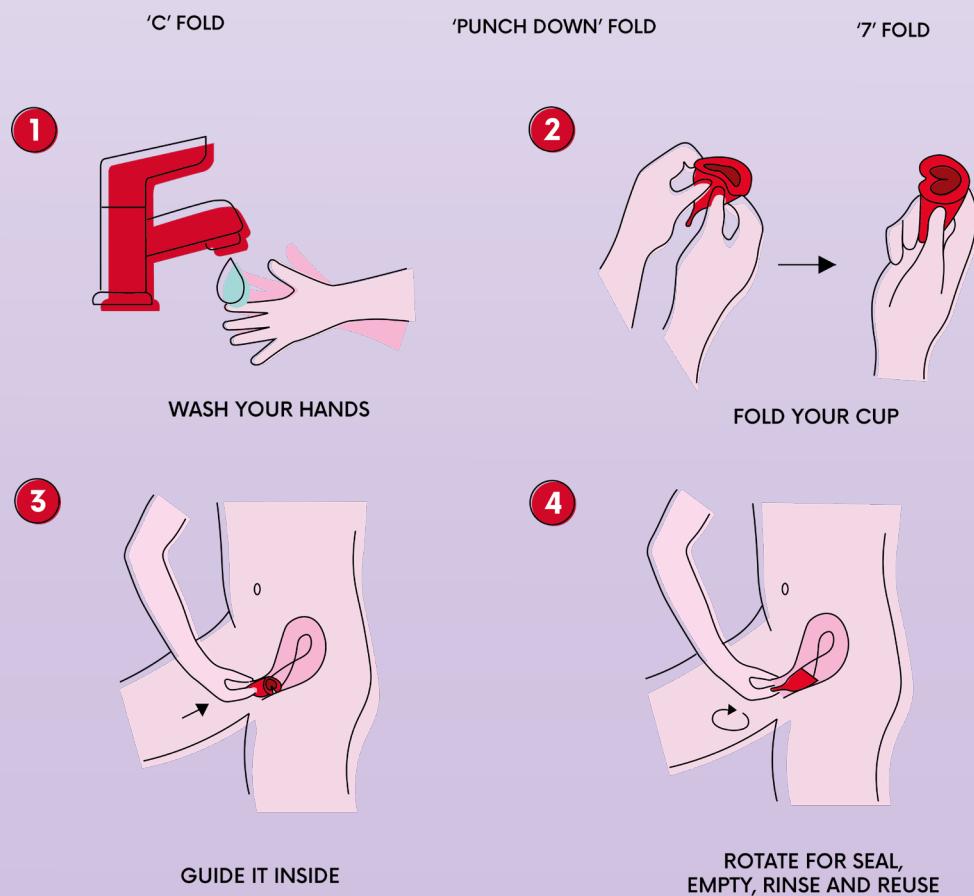
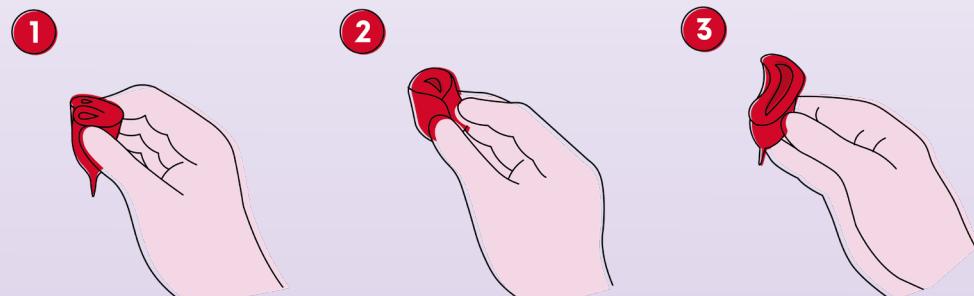
period cups...

Period cups are small, bell-shaped, and made of soft silicone or rubber. They're worn internally like a tampon but collect the blood rather than absorbing it.

A light seal is formed with your vaginal walls allowing your flow to pass into the cup. To remove it, pinch the base of the cup to release the vacuum seal and gently pull the stem from the bottom of the cup. Then you just empty, wash with natural soap and water and replace it.

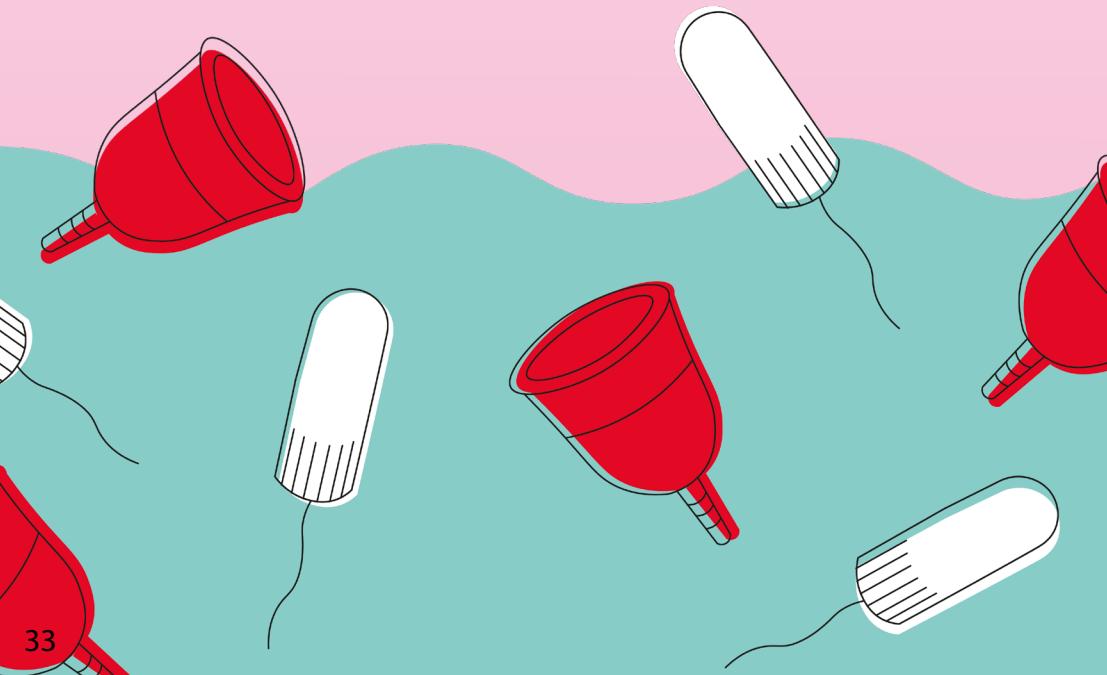


usage, care & folding methods



“let’s go swimming... ... but I have my period!”

Many people think that when they have their period, they can't do PE or go swimming as they are afraid something might leak... which might be embarrassing! This is not true at all. Most tampons and pads are specifically designed so that you can get on with life and do what you want to do. However, if you do go for a swim, you're going to need a tampon or a period cup! Be sure to replace it when you've finished in the pool.



“in the few days before my period I can feel cross at things that normally don’t bother me and feel upset and cry easily...”

is this normal?



The days before your period can be difficult because of hormone changes in your body. Everything can feel a bit more trying than usual and sometimes you might feel you would rather stay under the covers all day. You may also find that your breasts are tender, your skin feels rougher

and you don't feel quite 'yourself'. **Those physical and emotional feelings will go away once your period starts.** In the meantime, do things you really enjoy like going to the cinema, seeing friends, or going for a run. If it really gets you down every month then ask your GP for advice.

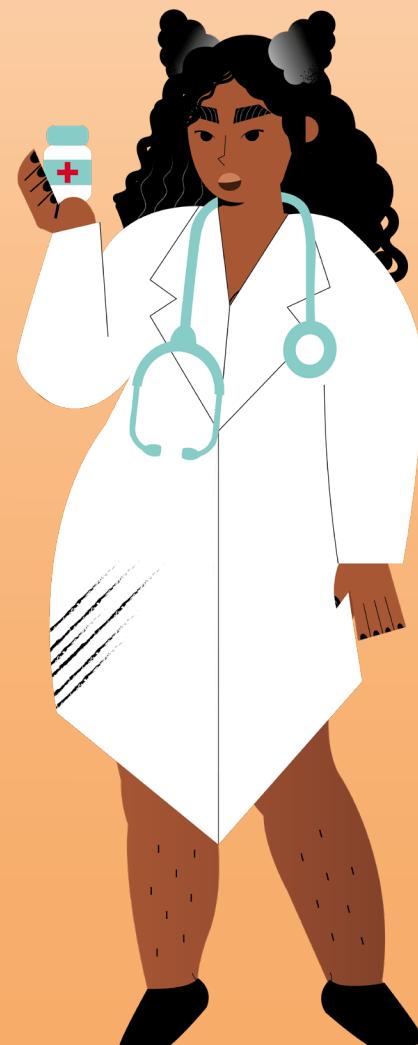
problem periods...

Having a period is a perfectly normal and healthy bodily function and isn't anything to feel shameful of. It doesn't need to be kept a secret, but it's OK if you want to keep it private. There are some medical conditions associated with having your period but these are quite rare. If you notice particular pain, a lot of blood or signs of depression making it difficult to cope with day-to-day life you should speak with someone you trust for support.

There are some people who have problems with their periods, because they have an illness or health condition that is linked to the menstrual cycle.

Most conditions can be managed with different treatment options. It's really important to speak to a medical professional if you have any concerns.

These are some of the most common problems that people with periods may find themselves dealing with, but it's important to remember not to try and diagnose yourself with lists of symptoms, or by going on Google! Symptoms give an idea of what might be going on, but medical professionals are the only people who can tell for certain and offer guidance on how to manage health conditions, so **always speak to your GP or practice nurse**.



endometriosis:

This is a condition where cells that bleed grow outside the uterus, which can cause pain and can be linked to other symptoms like bloating, tiredness and heavy periods. Endometriosis can only be diagnosed by a doctor, using keyhole surgery to look inside the body.

premenstrual syndrome (PMS) or premenstrual tension (PMT) :

The terms PMS and PMT describe groups of symptoms that happen every time the person has a period but go again once the bleeding stops, including physical symptoms like bloating, sickness, headaches and cramps, and emotional symptoms like low mood, feeling irritable, finding it hard to concentrate or feeling tearful.

polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) :

This is a condition where cysts grow on the ovaries causing pain and problems with hormone balance. Excessive hair growth and weight gain can also be symptoms. PCOS can only be diagnosed by a doctor, by looking at symptoms and doing an ultrasound scan.

bacterial vaginosis:

This is a condition that develops when the levels of good and harmful bacteria in the vagina become unbalanced, or when harmful bacteria enters the vagina. It can be caused by using soaps, deodorants, perfumes or other products that irritate the vagina. Signs can be greyish discharge and an unpleasant smell.

thrush:

This is a fungal infection in the vagina (although it can also be found in the mouth) that causes a thick white discharge, itchiness and discomfort. It happens when the balance of bacteria is affected. Using soaps, perfumes or other products inside the vagina can cause thrush, and it can develop after taking antibiotics. It's usually treated with medication from the pharmacist.

period work book...

Here is a list of questions that might be helpful to think about before going to see a medical professional. You can also bring them with you if you need help remembering what to say.

what am I worried about?

what symptoms or problems am I having?

is it having an impact on my daily life?

is this a new problem?

how long has this been happening?

have I tried anything to manage the problem already?

do I have additional needs?

do I need reasonable adjustment?

it's a good idea to take a notepad with you.

For people who have learning disabilities most hospitals use a 'Health Passport', which covers all questions medical staff need to know the answers to so that they can give the best possible care. Speak with your local hospital for more information.

Seeing a medical professional can make people feel frightened, anxious or confused. Even when we try to be rational, it's hard not to worry about all the different possible outcomes, and it's normal to feel uneasy about going to a place you're unfamiliar with, talk to somebody you don't know or doing new things, especially if you're already stressed because you've been feeling unwell.

here are some things you can do that make it easier to communicate with a medical professional and make things less stressful:

Keep a **diary of symptoms** - this should work out what's been going on, and how much of an effect it's actually having on your life.

Keep a **diary of bleeding** - for period related problems, it's really helpful to know when your last bleed was and how long you bled for, so mark on a calendar or on your phone the date you start bleeding, how heavy it is, and the date you stop.

Write down any questions or concerns that you have and bring the list **with you** - so you don't have to remember everything on the spot!

Bring a **notepad and pen to write down important things** - so you can look at it again once you get home or talk to key people about what happened.

Bring **someone with you who you trust** - it can be really helpful to have another person to talk to.

Bring something comforting **like a phone with music and headphones or some sweets** - it can help to prepare for times when you might be stressed by bringing something you know can help you stay calm.

Know that you can **leave and take time out if you need to** - it's OK if you need time to pause, think, phone somebody to calm down.

Know that you have the right to **refuse treatment** (unless it's an emergency or you feel **so unwell that you need someone you can trust to make a decision for you**) - medical professionals should have your best interest in mind, but if you really don't want to do something and it isn't an emergency, you don't have to.

Know that it's OK to say **you need some time to go away and think about what you want to do, or to change your mind whenever you want to, even if you've already made a choice** - if you're making choices that you won't be able to reverse, it's especially important to make sure you are certain about what you want.

Ask for **more information if you need it** - if you don't understand something, say so. If you need to know more, ask somebody. Medical professionals should always provide you with all the information that you need to make a decision.

Take a look at our website for more information, products and educational materials.

Visit www.heygirls.co.uk or www.heygirls.com.au

period tracker...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
JANUARY																															
FEBRUARY																															
MARCH																															
APRIL																															
MAY																															
JUNE																															
JULY																															
AUGUST																															
SEPTEMBER																															
OCTOBER																															
NOVEMBER																															
DECEMBER																															

SPOTTING MODERATE
 LIGHT HEAVY

Most people have periods every 28 days but everyone's cycle is unique. It's common to bleed up to 7 days and usually your flow will be lighter at the start and end of your cycle.
Period blood can change colour from bright red, to dark brown, this is nothing to cause concern.

notes:

Handwriting practice lines with vertical teal and red margin lines.

quiz...

1. How many **openings** does a girl have between her legs?

2

3

5

2. Which one of these statements is **true**?

Everyone starts their periods at the same age

You have to be 13 for your first period to arrive

Periods arrive at different times for everyone

3. What do ovaries contain?

Eggs

Menstrual blood

4. If an egg is fertilised, where would it happen?

The ovaries

The womb

The fallopian tubes

5. How often is an egg released from the ovary?

Every week

Every month

Once a year

6. What are the alternatives to using pads?

7. How much blood is lost during a period?

a teaspoon full

3 tablespoons

a tumbler full

8. How long does the average monthly cycle last for?

7 - 10 days

15 - 20 days

25 - 35 days

9. You're allowed to shower and wash your hair

when you have a period

True

False

10. You can go swimming when you have a period

True

False

11. You will lose your virginity if you use a tampon

True

False

12. You need to set your alarm at night to remind you

to change your pad or tampon.

True

False

see the back cover for answers!

activities...

So, to clear up the confusion around what the menstruating body needs, and what it really doesn't, here's a game called...

can I put that in my vagina?

moisturisers?

No! General moisturisers are not designed for use in the vagina. They have lots of ingredients that are fine for the skin but harmful for the vagina and could cause soreness and irritation, yeast infections or bacterial infections.



vaginal moisturiser?

Yes! Approved and clinically tested vaginal moisturisers made specifically for the use inside the vagina can be bought from the pharmacy. They are to be used if a person is suffering with vaginal dryness, but check with your pharmacist before buying it for the first time.



soap, deodorant, perfume and scented wipes?

No! The vagina cleans itself, which is pretty amazing! So it never needs to be cleaned internally. And vaginas all have their own smell, which definitely does not need to be covered up with perfume or deodorant. The outside of the vulva is pretty sensitive too, so only needs to be cleaned with warm water and a mild, non-scented soap.



swabs as directed by medical professionals?

Yes! A swab is like a bigger version of a cotton bud and sometimes a doctor or a nurse needs to put a swab inside a vagina to check for infections, or you may be asked to put a swab inside your own vagina so the doctor can send it off to be tested. This should be quick, easy and painless, and no problem at all for your vagina!

impress your friends:

Five interesting facts about vaginas:

- 1.** The vagina is amazing because it cleans itself! The fluids produced by the vagina keep the inside clean, so vaginas never need to be washed internally (inside).
- 2.** No two vaginas or vulvas are the same! Each vulva has its own shape, size and colours; there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way for a vulva to look.
- 3.** Vaginas have their own smell, and that smell usually changes throughout the menstrual cycle.
- 4.** Nothing can get 'lost' inside the vagina! Sperm is so tiny that it can only be seen with a microscope, so it's small enough to pass through the cervix, but objects like tampons can't go anywhere.
- 5.** Some people have two vaginas! The medical term for this is uterus didelphys, and it means that the person has two vaginas, and often two uteruses, and two periods.

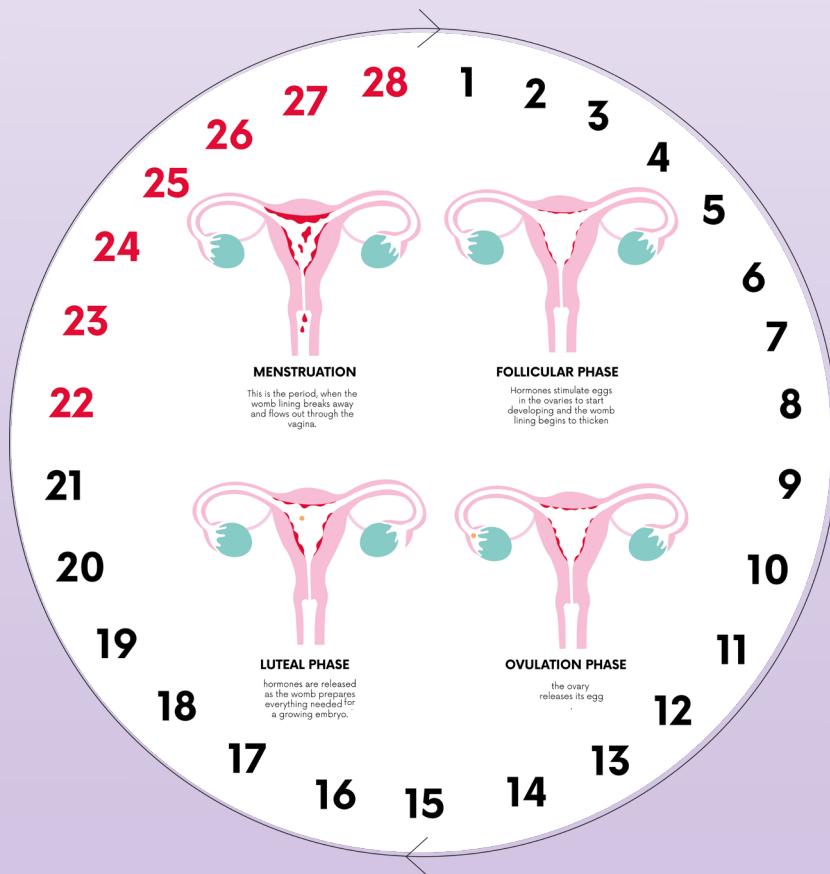


"my inner labia seem to hang outside the outer labia. is this normal?"

Sometimes the outer labia can be smaller than the inner labia which can make the internal part appear to stand out. This is completely normal. Every body is different! Many believe that the hymen is a thin piece of skin. In fact it is a membrane which sits in the vagina. It doesn't block it and menstrual blood can flow through.

glossary of terms...

The cycle is the time from the first day of your period to the first day of your next period. It is usually between 25 and 35 days but periods aren't always regular - especially when they first start. Diet, exercise levels, stress, travel and pregnancy can also change the frequency of your period.

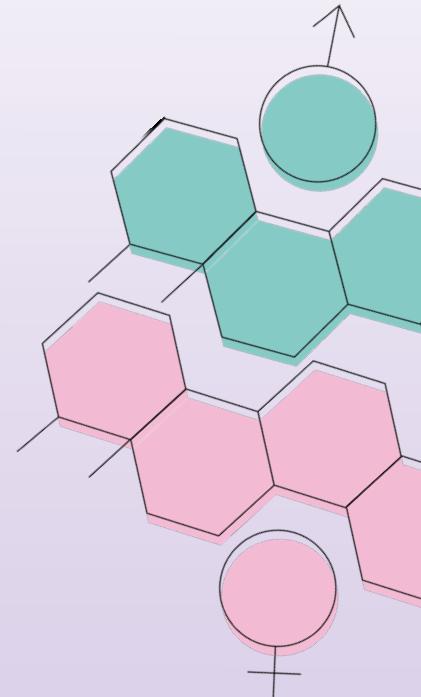


tip...

Periods are a sign that your body is healthy and well.

hormones

Hormones are chemical substances produced by various glands in your body. This includes the pituitary gland, the testes in boys and the ovaries in girls. Human beings have over 100 different hormones in their body!



puberty

Puberty describes a series of changes over a period of time when the body starts transforming from child to adult. Your body will change so that it is fertile and can one day produce children. These changes happen in both boys and girls, but usually start a little earlier in girls.

toxic shock syndrome (TSS)

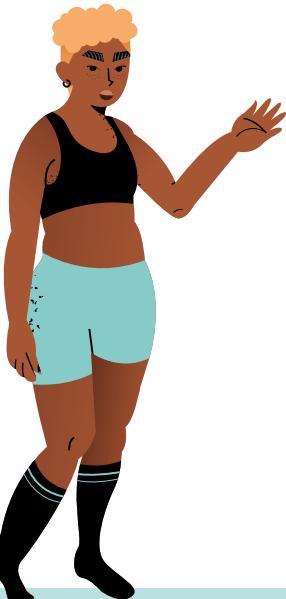
TSS is a rare but serious infection that can affect people who are on their period and using tampons. It is caused by an imbalance in the body's bacteria and can be life-threatening, so should always be treated seriously. When on your period, if you suddenly suffer from: high fever (39°C or more), vomiting, diarrhoea, headaches, sore throats, dizziness, muscle aches or rashes similar to sunburn, you should remove your tampon at once and contact a doctor. Mention the symptoms are similar to TSS and tell the doctor that you are having your period. However, this is very rare and tampons are completely safe for most people so don't worry! Change your tampon at least every 8 hours and always remember to remove used tampons - especially the last one of a period.

Periods can be overwhelming for all of us which is why we've created a go to guide that covers everything you need and should know about periods.

We discuss the biology of menstruation, exactly what you can expect to happen and see during your cycle, product tips, guides for using them and even indications of 'problem periods' to look out for.

We believe in a better period for everyone, so enjoy our inclusive guide to periods with activity section, period tracking chart and even space to write notes if you need to.

An informal learning resource for you, parents, teachers, and everyone that wants to get the conversation flowing.



Visit www.heygirls.co.uk or www.heygirls.com.au for lots more information and chat around periods and period health.

quiz answers:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. 3 | 7. 3 tablespoons |
| 2. periods arrive at different times | 8. 25-35 days |
| 3. eggs | 9. true |
| 4. fallopian tube | 10. true |
| 5. every month | 11. false |
| 6. tampons, menstrual cups, reusable pads and period pants | 12. false |

Written with the help of Olivia Brinkley and the team at Hey Girls.

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Hey Girls CIC makes no warranties or representations regarding the completeness or accuracy of the information. This information should be used only as a guide and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional, medical or other health professional advice.



BIG SISTER
Special thanks to the Big Sister Project

 **hey girls...**

For additional copies of this booklet or business queries, please email: contact@heygirls.co.uk