



## Menstrual cramps:

Menstrual cramps are throbbing or cramping pains in the lower abdomen. Many women have menstrual cramps just before and during their menstrual periods. The pain, also known as dysmenorrhea or period pain, ranges from dull and bothersome to severe and extreme.

## Symptoms:

Symptoms of menstrual cramps include:

- Throbbing or cramping pain in the lower abdomen that can be intense
- Pain that starts 1 to 3 days before the period, peaks 24 hours after the onset of the period and subsides in 2 to 3 days
- Dull, continuous ache
- Pain that radiates to the lower back and thighs



Some women may also experience:

- Nausea
- Loose stools
- Headache
- Dizziness

## **When to see the doctor:**

You should visit the doctor if:

- Severe menstrual cramps that disrupt your life every month
- Your symptoms progressively worsen
- You just started having severe menstrual cramps after age 25

## **Causes:**

Menstrual cramps happen because of contractions in the uterus, due to prostaglandins a substance the uterus makes.

It can be also caused due to some medical conditions:

- Endometriosis: which is abnormal growth of endometrial cells (the lining of the uterus) into the two fallopian tubes, ovaries or the lining tissue of the pelvis.
- Uterine fibroids: Benign growths in the womb may cause pain
- Pelvic inflammatory disease caused by sexually transmitted bacteria
- Cervical stenosis: The cervical opening in some women is too narrow to allow the menstrual discharge to get out of the body, and hence causes a painful increase of pressure on the uterine wall.





## **Treatment:**

Pain relievers

Hormonal birth control

Surgery: If the menstrual cramps are caused by a disorder such as endometriosis or fibroids, surgery to correct the problem might help your symptoms

