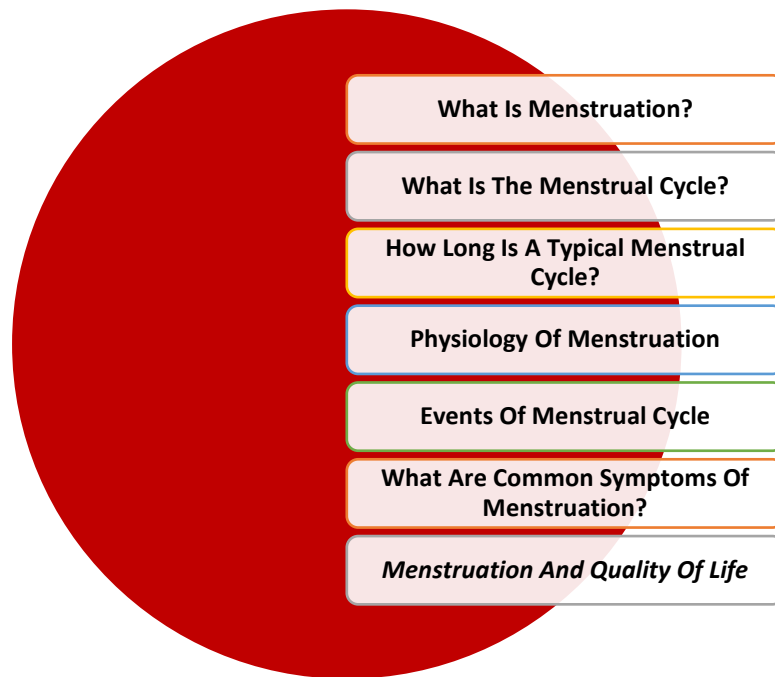


Periods / Menstrual Cycle:-



The menstrual cycle is the hormonal process a woman's body goes through each month to prepare for a possible pregnancy. Regular menstrual periods in the years between puberty and menopause are usually a sign that your body is working normally. Irregular or heavy, painful periods are not normal. Many women also get premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms. You can take steps at home and **talk to US** about ways to treat your period problems and PMS.

Q. What is menstruation?

A. Menstruation is a woman's monthly bleeding, often called your "period." When you menstruate, your body discards the monthly build-up of the lining of your **uterus** (womb). Menstrual blood and tissue flow from your uterus through the small opening in your **cervix** and pass out of your body through your **vagina**.

During the monthly menstrual cycle, the uterus lining builds up to prepare for pregnancy. If you do not get pregnant, estrogen and progesterone hormone levels begin falling. Very low levels of estrogen and progesterone tell your body to begin menstruation.

Q. What is the menstrual cycle?

A. The menstrual cycle is the monthly hormonal cycle a female's body goes through to prepare for pregnancy. Your menstrual cycle is counted from the first day of your period up to the first day of your next period. Your hormone levels (estrogen and progesterone) usually change throughout the menstrual cycle and can cause menstrual symptoms.

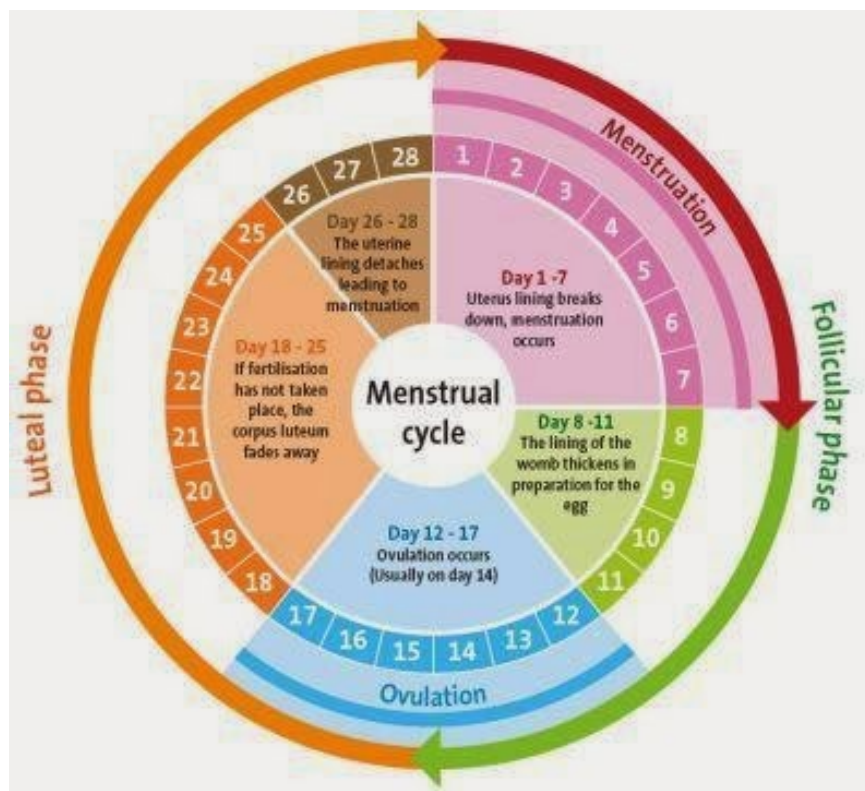
Q. How long is a typical menstrual cycle?

A. The typical menstrual cycle is 28 days long, but each woman is different. Also, a woman's menstrual cycle length might be different from month-to-month. Your periods are still "regular" if they usually come every 24 to 38 days. This means that the time from the first day of your last period up to the start of your next period is at least 24 days but not more than 38 days.

Some women's periods are so regular that they can predict the day and time that their periods will start. Other women are regular but can only predict the start of their period within a few days.

Q. Physiology Of Menstruation

General overview of the menstrual cycle:



The menstrual cycle includes several phases. The exact timing of the phases of the cycle is a little bit different for every woman and can change over time.

Q. Events of the menstrual cycle

<i>Cycle days (approximate)</i>	<i>Events of the menstrual cycle</i>
<i>Days 1-5</i>	<p>The first day of menstrual bleeding is considered Day 1 of the cycle.</p> <p>Your period can last anywhere from 3 to 8 days, but 5 days is average.</p> <p><i>Bleeding is usually heaviest on the first 2 days.</i></p>
<i>Days 6-14</i>	<p>Once the bleeding stops, the uterine lining (also called the endometrium) begins to prepare for the possibility of a pregnancy.</p> <p><i>The uterine lining becomes thicker and enriched in blood and nutrients.</i></p>
<i>Day 14-25</i>	<p>Somewhere around day 14, an egg is released from one of the ovaries and begins its journey down the fallopian tubes to the uterus.</p> <p>If sperm are present in the fallopian tube at this time, fertilization can occur.</p> <p>In this case the fertilized egg will travel to the uterus and attempt to implant in the uterine wall.</p>
<i>Days 25-28</i>	<p>If the egg was not fertilized or implantation does not occur, hormonal changes signal the uterus to prepare to shed its lining, and the egg breaks down and is shed along with lining.</p> <p><i>The cycle begins again on Day 1 menstrual bleeding.</i></p>

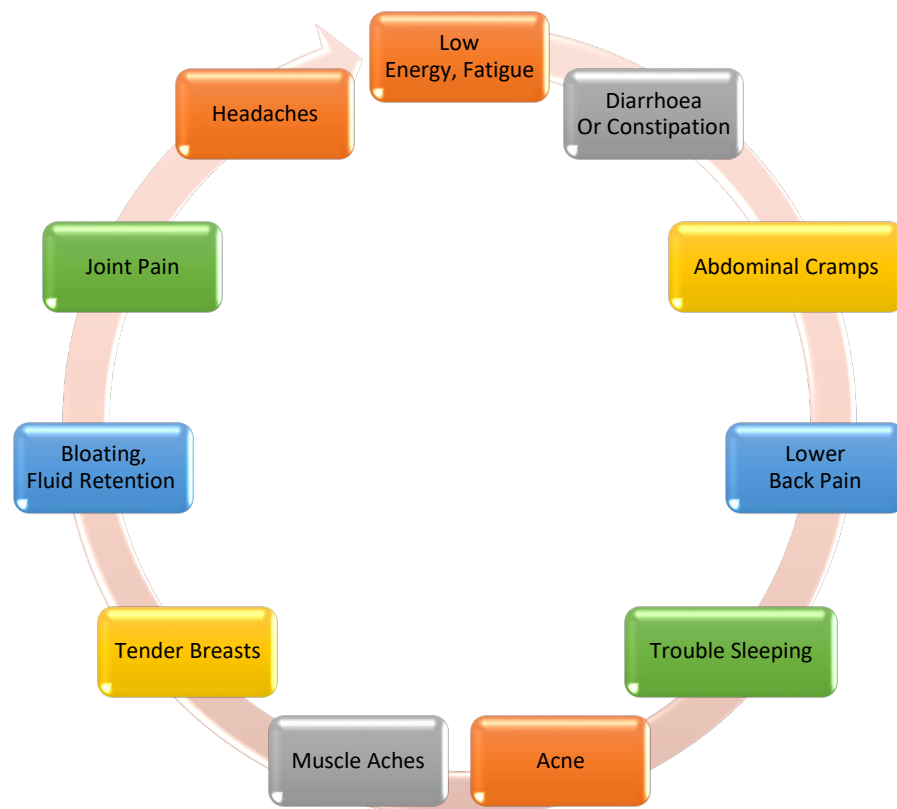
Most women experience minor symptoms just before and during their periods.

It is normal to experience some degree of discomfort in the days leading up to your period and for the first day or two of bleeding, although some fortunate women have no discomfort. For most women, these symptoms, while annoying, are easily managed and do not interfere with day-to-day living.

Q. What are common symptoms of menstruation?

Most women experience mild symptoms in the few days leading up to menstruation and in the first day or two of menstruating when the flow of blood is heavier. There are over a hundred symptoms that have been attributed to menstruation, and these may change over time and from cycle to cycle.

Here are some of the normal physical symptoms of menstruation:



Painful symptoms such as cramps, backache, and tender breasts can usually be relieved by over-the-counter, anti-inflammatory pain relievers such as ibuprofen or naproxen. Prescription medications (such as Ponstan) are also available. Warm baths or compresses can be useful to alleviate cramping. Constipation can make the cramps far more intense,

and the hormones in the latter half of the menstrual cycle do increase constipation. Plenty of fluids, high fibre foods or a simple bulk forming stool softener such as psyllium can relieve pain. If you are finding that your periods are difficult to manage, or they seem worse than what is described, it is time to see your doctor.

Q. Menstruation and quality of life

The symptoms of menstruation can affect your quality of life. It's important to take note of whether your period is impacting any aspects of your life. Talk to your doctor if your period is causing you to:

- Miss work or school
- Not be able to participate in activities that you usually enjoy
- Struggle to carry out your usual daily activities
- Accomplish less than you would like to
- Have difficulty in your relationships with your family or friends
- Have severe pain
- Feel very blue
- Lack energy or feel very fatigued
- Not exercise when you normally do
- Choose not to go out when you normally would