



EL NEEMA
CARES INITIATIVE



NEEMA'S MENSTRUAL BOOKLET

For Young African Girls



A SENSITIZATION PROJECT BY
EL NEEMA CARES INITIATIVE

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Hi Girlie,

My name is Ms. Titi. I am your Girls' Body Teacher, and in this book, I will teach you about a very important thing that happens to a girl's body as she grows.

So, make sure you pay attention as you read this book. You can read it with your mum or any older woman you trust. Remember to share everything you will learn from this book with other girls like you.

Let's go and have some fun learning together!



UNDERSTANDING MENSTRUATION



There's a very important thing that usually happens to girls as they grow older. It usually starts around the puberty stage. This special thing is called **MENSTRUATION**

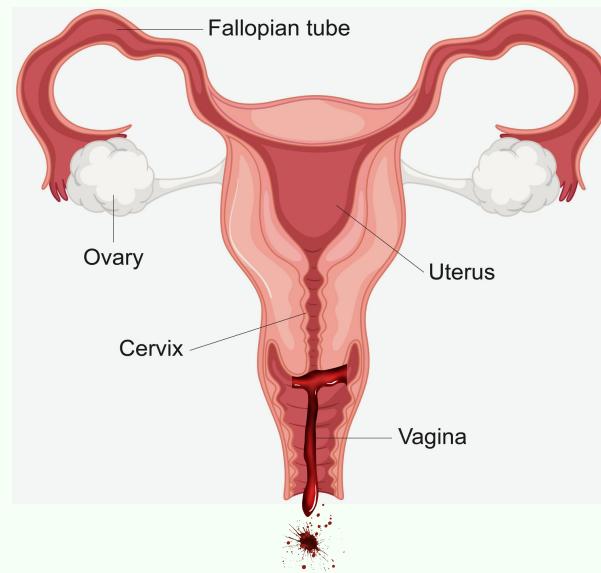
Menstruation is a monthly event where the special organ inside a girl's belly, known as the womb, releases blood and some special tissues from its walls. This blood and tissues come out of the girl's body through the private part of her body, known as the vagina.

When this happens, a girl is said to be menstruating or having her period. Periods happen once a month and to girls only.

MENSTRUATION AND THE BODY OF A GIRL

When a girl starts to menstruate, it is a sign that her body is growing and getting ready for the possibility of having babies, although she won't be ready for that until she becomes an adult. In a girl's body, special organs work together to make menstruation happen. The most important ones are shown below.

- **FALLOPIAN TUBES** - a passage for egg movement
- **OVARY**- the egg producing centre
- **VAGINA**- the special opening in a girl's body
- **UTERUS**- where babies grow during pregnancy
- **BLOOD**- flowing out of the vagina during menstruation



the actual position of these special organs in the body of a girl

COMMON QUESTIONS YOUNG GIRLS ASK

GIRL: Dear Ms Titi, when will I start menstruating?

MS TITI: Starting your period is different for everyone, but most girls begin between 9 and 16 years old. Many start around 12 or 13, but it can be earlier or later. Your body will do it when it's ready

GIRL: Ms Titi, how long does the monthly period last?

MS TITI: It can differ from person to person. However, it usually lasts about 3-7 days. Some people might have shorter or longer periods. It is normal for periods to be different for everyone. When you start having your period, you'll learn more about how your own body works. If period lasts more than 10 days, tell an adult, so you can see a doctor.



GIRL: Will menstruation ever stop, or will it be forever?

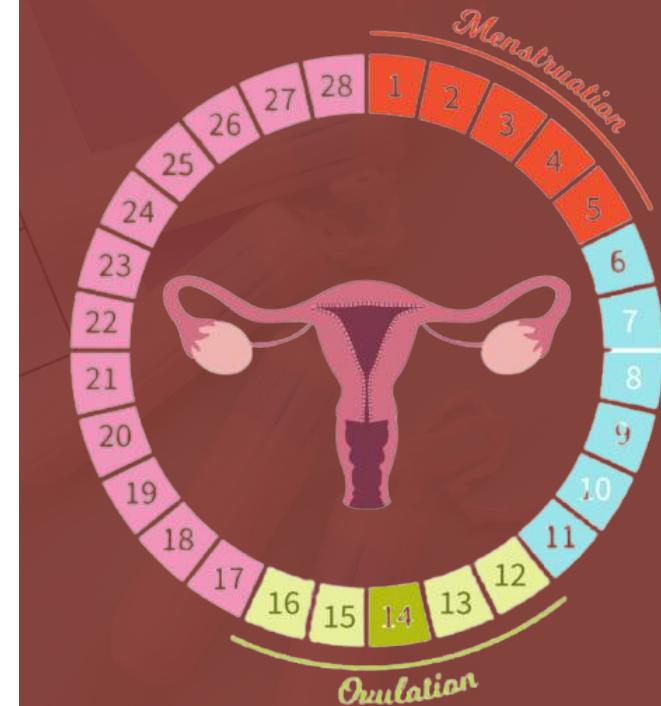
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UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE

The menstrual cycle is a term used to describe the lineup of activities that happen in your life as it prepares for the possibility of pregnancy each month. Girls get to have many cycles in their lifetime, beginning from the first time they have their period to when they stop menstruating at menopause.

Each menstrual cycle starts from the first day of your menstrual flow and ends the day before another menstrual flow starts. This means that the first day of each monthly period is the first day of a new menstrual cycle. The length of menstrual cycles varies in different girls, and even the length of each cycle can be different in the same girl. However, the average cycle length is 28 days. Sometimes, it can be shorter or longer.

As your period starts, you will observe and record your experience properly to know to understand your own cycle.



HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE

- First Day of Your Cycle: The first day of your menstrual cycle is the day you start to see blood. This is called "Day 1" of your cycle.
- Last Day of Your Cycle: Keep track of the days until your next period. This will vary for each person but is usually between 21 and 35 days. Let's say it's 28 days for you (which is an average cycle).
- How to Predict Your Next Period: To know when your next period will likely start, add your cycle length (28 days) to the start date of your current period (Day 1). So, if your last period started on September 3rd, your next period might start around 1st October (September 3rd + 28 days = October 1st).
- Ovulation: Around the middle of your cycle, usually about 14 days before your next period (in this example, around September 16th), your body releases an egg. This is called ovulation, and it's when you are most likely to get pregnant if you have unprotected sex.

Pay attention to your body. Some girls and women may feel changes like mild cramps or changes in discharge around ovulation. This can help you learn more about your cycle over time. Remember that every person's menstrual cycle is different. It may take some time to figure out your own cycle length and patterns. Using a calendar or a period-tracking app can be helpful for keeping track of your periods.

PREPARING FOR MENSTRUATION

Before a girl's period comes for the first time, there are certain things that happen to the girl around that time, and they include breast development, increase in height, pimples, pubic hair, enhanced feminine features, vaginal discharge, cramps etc.

After your first period, some similar signs can also indicate that your monthly period is on the way, including breast tenderness, acne breakout, increased vaginal discharge, bloating, headache, lower back pain, tiredness and even food cravings.

Remember not to be shy about your period. There is nothing to be ashamed of; it is a good thing to start seeing your period and to see it every month. It's okay to talk to your friends about it too. They might have advice or stories to share.

Here are ways you can prepare for your period:

- Supplies: Ask a grown-up to help you get some menstrual supplies like pads or tampons. Keep them in a safe place where you can easily reach them when needed.
- Track Your Period: You can use a calendar to do it, just as taught earlier, or a period tracking app on your phone.
- Stay Clean: Take regular showers, change your pad or tampon as needed, and wash your hands before and after.
- Plan your Comfort: Sometimes, you might feel cramps or discomfort. A warm water bottle, gentle exercise, or a hug can help ease the discomfort.
- Be Always Prepared: Keep a spare pad or tampon in your school bag or purse just in case your period starts when you're not at home.

MENSTRUATION-RELATED TERMS

- **Dysmenorrhoea:** Dysmenorrhoea is another big word that means having painful cramps during your period. Some girls and women experience cramps in their lower belly during their period. These cramps can feel uncomfortable or even hurt, but there are ways to make them feel better, like using a warm water bottle or taking pain relieving medicine prescribed by your doctor.
- **Menopause:** Menopause is something that happens much later in life, usually when someone is in their 50s. It is a period when a woman's body stops having periods altogether. It is normal and happens to older women. When this happens, it means the person won't be able to have babies anymore.
- **Pad/Tampons:** Pads are like soft, absorbent cushions that you wear in your pants to collect menstrual blood and prevent it from staining your clothes, seat or bed. Tampons are smaller and are inserted inside your body to help catch the blood from your period. You can choose which one you like better when you start your period. You can also ask older adults in your circle for their recommendations on brands to use.
- **Pre-menstrual Syndrome (PMS):** this is your body's way of giving you some signals before your period starts. Sometimes, you might feel a little different a week or so before your period. You might feel moody, get cramps, or have tender breasts. These are just signs that your period is on its way, and they usually go away once your period begins.
- **Amenorrhea:** sometimes a girl may not have her period because of certain conditions. This absence of period is known as amenorrhoea. Until 16 years, it is normal for young girls to have an absence of period. Some people can start having period and at some point notice absence of period. Whenever any of these happens, inform an adult who will take you to see a doctor to make sure everything's okay.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

Congratulations on completing this sensitization booklet on menstruation. Your knowledge is powerful in protecting and caring for your body, as you're now equipped with important information about your body. I want you to understand the importance of self-respect and maintaining your sexual purity. Your future is bright, and you must make choices that will help you live the life of your dreams. Avoiding unwanted pregnancies by staying away from premarital unprotected sex will help you stay focused on your goals and also protect your emotional well-being. Remember, you have the right to say no to sexual advances, and you should set boundaries for friends of the opposite sex. Focus on your education, discovering yourself, and laying strong foundations for your future. Never compromise your purity and emotional well-being. Stay strong, stay true to yourself, and keep yourself till marriage.

With love,

Mabel Adojo

Founder, Elneema Cares Initiative

About Mabel: Mabel is a Nigerian media enthusiast, anchor, writer, and motivational speaker who is on a global mission with a special focus on empowering girls. She is a silent achiever who has touched countless lives, including teenagers, widows, and the poor. Her eloquence, charisma, and wisdom inspire others to pursue their dreams and overcome life obstacles. Mabel's philanthropy goes beyond money; she actively engages with communities to create lasting impact. Her deep faith in God drives her, as she aspires to hear "WELL DONE" from her maker at the end of her life.

ABOUT ELNEEMA CARE INITIAVE

El Neema Cares Initiative is a Non Governmental Organization given to Cares and humanitarian services majoring on school age girls and helpless widows. At El Neema, our passion drives us to the education of the human mind, as it is one of the greatest gifts we could ever give to humanity, and a way to preserve our entire race's knowledge over the centuries. Our core principles are centered around improving human lives through the instruments of humanitarian service and superior education for young minds.

Our current initiatives include:

- Widows Smile at Christmas. (WS@C)
- Pad a Yarinya outreach(P. A. Y)
- Pad Scholarship Scheme (PSS)

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