

Menstruation Basics

FOR ADOLESCENTS



WHAT IS MENSTRUATION?

Menstruation, otherwise known as a period, is normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of a female's monthly cycle. Menstruation starts at puberty, ends at menopause, and is absent during pregnancy. Each month the body prepares itself for pregnancy by thickening the wall of the uterus. If pregnancy does not occur, the uterus will shed the lining, which is the vaginal discharge experienced during menstruation.

MENSTRUATION FACTS

- › Menstruation has many names including but not limited to: period, cycle, or menses
- › Menstruation is normal!
- › The menstrual fluid that is discarded during one's cycle is made up of blood, cervical mucus, vaginal secretions, and tissues
- › About 1-5 tablespoons of menstrual fluid is lost in a typical cycle, but an average is about 3 tablespoons
- › On average, a person who menstruates spends about seven years of their life menstruating when all cycles throughout their lifetime are added up
- › The menstrual cycle takes about 28 days, but this varies
- › Periods can last between 2-7 days
- › Typically, menstruation begins between the ages of 12 and 13, but everyone is different
- › The first two years of menstruation can be very irregular

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS



Pads

Pads are great for menstruators who want to use an external product. There are reusable and disposable options that should be changed every 3-4 hours.



Tampons

Tampons are an internal product that come in many sizes, based on flow. They should be changed every 4-8 hours. Tampons, like other internal options, may be uncomfortable while learning how to use them but should get better with time.



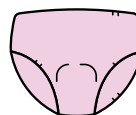
Cups

Menstrual cups are another great internal option and are reusable. They should be boiled before use and between cycles, but rinsed between insertions. They need to be changed at least every 12 hours.



Discs

Like cups, menstrual discs are reusable and internal. Unlike cups, they rest further in the vagina, right below the cervix. They should be emptied at least every 12 hours.



Period Underwear

Period-proof underwear are absorbent underpants that have multiple layers of material such as microfiber polyester. They look like regular underwear, but they are designed to keep moisture away from your skin and soak up menstrual fluids. Dependent on brand, these need to be changed every 12 hours, or more often if needed. Washing instructions will differ based on brand.

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