

The page features five decorative floral icons arranged in a circle around the title. Each icon consists of a central white teardrop shape with two smaller, rounded shapes on either side, one white and one light purple.

# INFORMATION ON MENSTRUATION



Irise International

Empowering  
People through  
Period Equality.

What is menstruation?

**Menstruation is another word for a period, the passing of blood from the vagina.**

What age should I start my period?

**Age 8 - 18.**

How long should it last?

**Length of each period -  
2 - 10 days**

How many weeks should be between my periods?

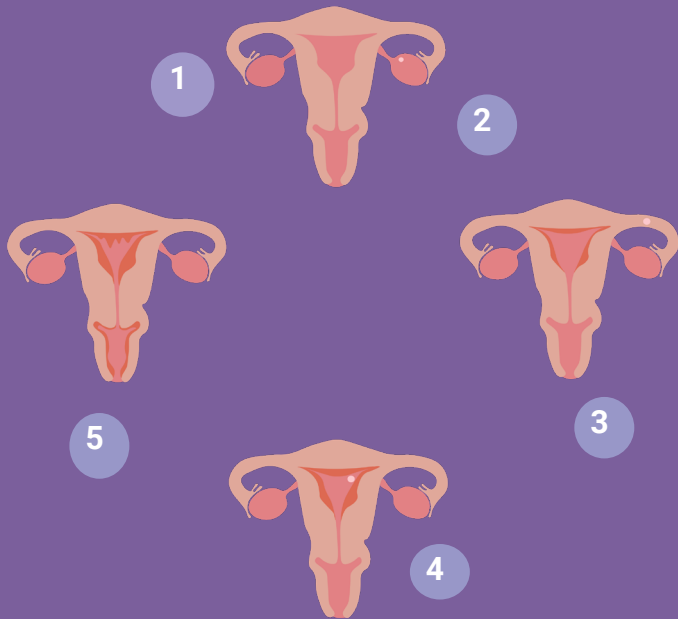
**Length of cycle: 3-6 weeks**

**Remember: Each person's cycle is completely unique to them and their body!**



# Why do I bleed every month?

Once a girl reaches a certain age, messengers (called hormones) are released into her body. These messengers make changes to her body so she is able to one day have a baby, if she chooses to do so. She starts to release an egg into her uterus (womb) every month. If this egg is not fertilised by sperm from a man during sexual intercourse (when a man inserts his penis into the vagina), then it will not grow into a baby. The body gets rid of it instead. This is the monthly bleeding that girls experience.



## Stages of the Menstrual Cycle:

- 1 An egg develops in the ovary.
- 2 The egg moves down the fallopian tube and the lining of the uterus thickens.
- 3 The egg reaches the uterus and the lining continues to thicken.
- 4 The egg is not fertilised and the lining of the uterus begins to break down.
- 5 The menstrual blood and the egg sheds from the vagina.

# Here are the parts of your body that are involved with having a period

## Uterus (Womb)

This is where the egg implants itself if fertilised. The womb is the size of your fist. It expands when a foetus (an unborn baby) is growing inside it.

## Fallopian Tubes (Oviduct)

Connect the ovaries to the uterus - the egg travels through here after release from the ovary.

## Ovary

Contains a woman's eggs and releases one regularly as part of a woman's menstrual cycle.

## Eggs (Ovum)

Matures in the ovary and is released into the fallopian tube where it may be fertilised by a man's sperm. It is tiny, just the size of a full stop.

## Cervix

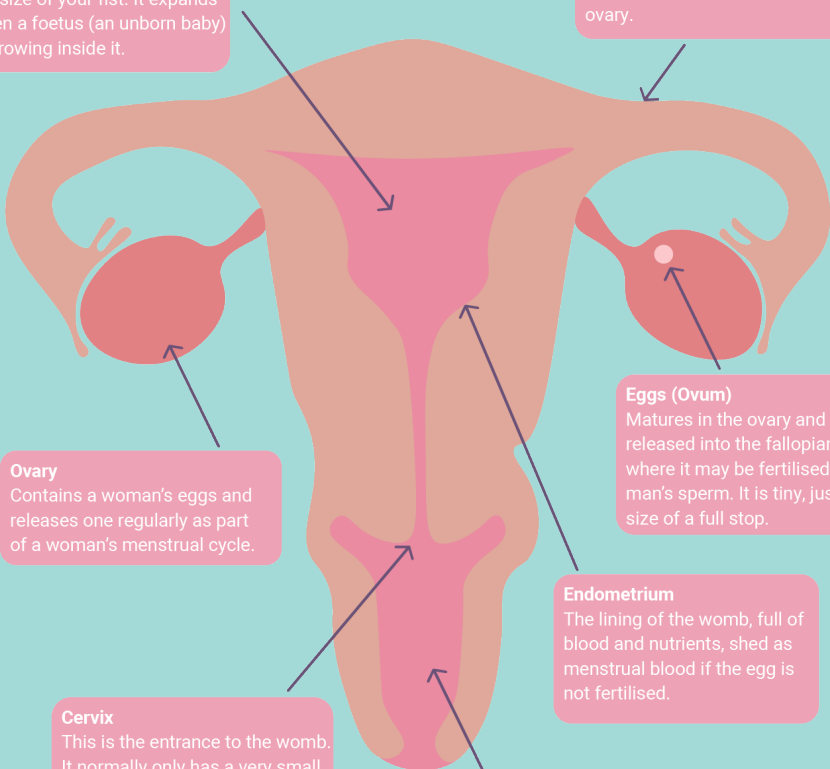
This is the entrance to the womb. It normally only has a very small hole which stretches during childbirth. It then returns to its previous size.

## Endometrium

The lining of the womb, full of blood and nutrients, shed as menstrual blood if the egg is not fertilised.

## Vagina

This is the passageway from the womb which menstrual blood passes through and is the site of sexual intercourse.

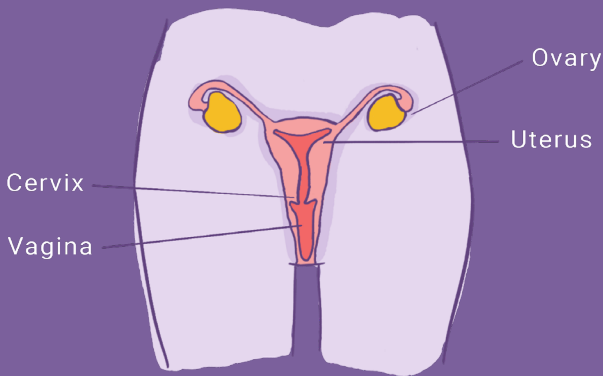


# It's important to know your own body...

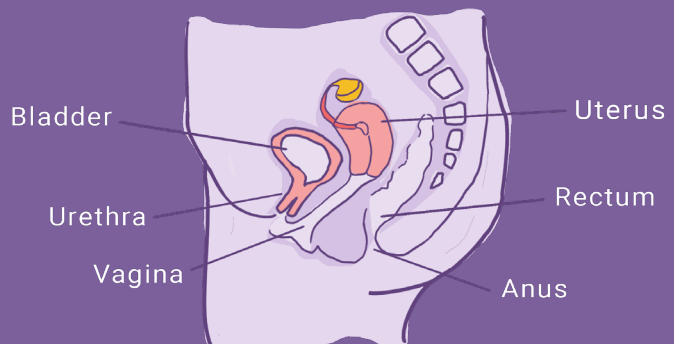
A woman has three openings in the genital area:

- 1 The urethra: this is where urine comes from
- 2 The vagina: this is where blood comes from during menstruation. A man inserts his penis into the vagina during sexual intercourse. The baby is also delivered through the vagina when it is born.
- 3 The anus: this is where faeces (poo) are released.

## Front view



## Side view

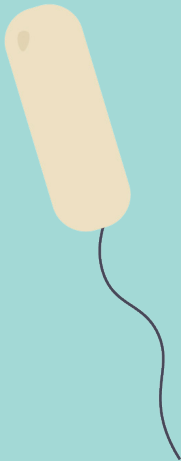


# How can I manage my period?

There are lots of different period products available to suit your needs and each person has the right to choose the right one for their body, without judgement.

Period products should be changed at least once every 8 hours, although it may be more frequent depending on the heaviness of your flow; everyone's different!

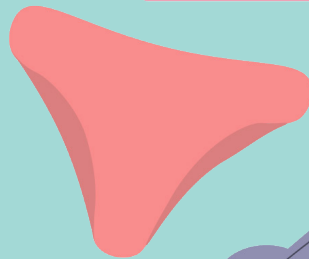
Tampon



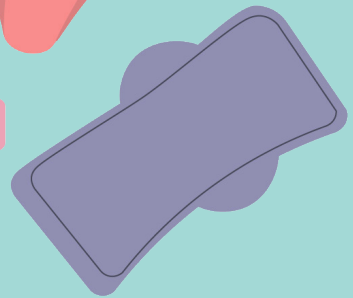
Reusable menstrual cup



Reusable period pants



Menstrual pad

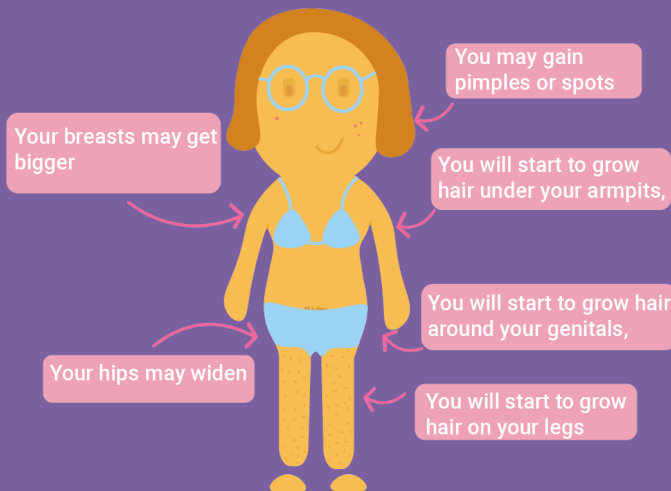


# What other changes happen during puberty?

Puberty is the process of physical and emotional changes through which a child's body matures into an adult body

- Growing taller
- Breasts developing
- Hips getting wider
- Hair under the arms & pubic hair (hair growth on the genital area)
- Sweating more
- Starting your period
- Pimples/spots
- Feeling extra emotional
- Experiencing sexual desire

Just because your body is growing up does not mean you are emotionally ready to have sex. It is your body and your decision about who to share it with and how, once you reach the legal age of consent in the UK, which is 16.



Some girls experience these changes more than others, for example, one girl's hips may widen more than another - this is normal, every body is unique.

# Why have I missed my period?

Many girls have irregular periods when they first start. There are a number of reasons you may miss a period, for example:

- Stress
- Not having enough food to eat
- Too much exercise
- Pregnancies
- Some medicines
- Older age – older women experience irregular periods and eventually stop menstruating. This is called the menopause.





# Why do I get pain during my period?

Because our bodies go through a monthly hormone cycle, we can feel both physical and mental side effects of periods.

Girls can experience tummy pain and back ache. This is caused by the muscles contracting in the uterus as the lining breaks down and leaves the body. Simple pain killers, hot water bottles and gentle exercise can all help with discomfort.

Girls may also experience headaches, tiredness, heightened emotions, breast tenderness and bloating. All of these experiences are caused by the hormones, or messengers, that control a woman's menstrual cycle. These side effects might sound scary, but your period doesn't need to hold you back. Women are strong and many learn to recognise the motions of their monthly cycle. Although experiencing some pain is normal, you should always talk to your doctor if you feel the pain is too much as it could be a sign of another issue.



# Am I normal?

All the changes that happen during puberty, both physical and emotional, are normal and happen to girls all over the world. Periods are a natural bodily process, half of the world has them! Remember that every person's cycle is unique to them and their body. But talking to your friends and family about your period can really help ease any worries and help you feel supported.

Remember: if you are worried about your health speak to a health worker, nurse or doctor.



Irise supports all people with periods and recognises that everyone is unique and has the right to manage their periods however they choose. If you have more questions about this, go to:

[www.irise.org.uk/support](http://www.irise.org.uk/support)





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