

# Always Growing Up Teens

What you need to know about puberty



TAMPAX | *always*

Puberty Education Program

# Table of Contents

## Growing from a girl to a woman - what a trip!

### Your Body is Changing

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Puberty: why do girls and boys start to change? | 4  |
| Body changes that happen to both girls and boys | 5  |
| How to deal with these changes?                 | 6  |
| Changes to the reproductive system              | 10 |

### Your Period

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Understanding your menstrual cycle      | 12 |
| Period FAQs                             | 14 |
| An overview of period protection        | 15 |
| Pads                                    | 16 |
| Tampons                                 | 19 |
| Discharge & pantyliners                 | 24 |
| Caring for the environment              | 25 |
| Premenstrual syndrome and period cramps | 26 |
| Tracking your period                    | 27 |

### Staying Confident and Healthy

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Your brain is changing, too! | 28 |
| Sex, gender & society        | 31 |
| Eat well                     | 32 |
| Be active                    | 32 |
| Sleep well                   | 32 |
| Stay safe                    | 33 |

### Healthy Relationships

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Discovering new feelings    | 34 |
| Getting support from others | 35 |

### Find out More

# From a Girl to a Woman

## An important time of your life!

You're a growing girl. Growing independent, strong and into a woman. Puberty isn't just the time when you get your period; it's when you learn to be a better leader, a better friend, and a better you.

Puberty can start as early as 7 years old for some girls or as late as 12 for others. Puberty is a series of changes that your body will go through as you grow up. It can be a confusing time. Don't worry! These changes are completely

normal and natural; they will happen to all women.

The goal of this guide is to get you started with what to expect and help you feel more relaxed and confident. It includes helpful tips from experts.

It also helps to talk about puberty. Ask your parent or trusted adult for advice to help answer your questions. They've experienced it, too, so they can help.

Let's get started!



# Your Body is Changing

## Puberty

Puberty is a time of physical and emotional change that happens as children grow and mature. These changes are normal, they're a sign you're healthy and all girls and boys experience them!

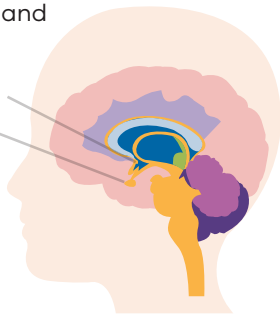
They usually start occurring earlier for girls (between the ages of 7 and 12), than they do for boys (between 9 and 14). But keep in mind, the time puberty begins is different for everyone. Your time is the right time for you!

## So, why do we all change?

Puberty simply happens to prepare your body for reproducing. During puberty, two parts of the brain called the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland start making more hormones.

Hormones are chemical substances that act as messengers in the body and make changes happen. Some hormones will make your bones grow longer, others will guide the development of your brain or the changes in your reproductive system.

**Hypothalamus**  
**Pituitary Gland**



**Did you know?** Girls and boys produce all the same hormones, but in different levels. Boys have more testosterone and girls have more estrogen. That's one of the things that makes us different!

# Changes During Puberty

Now you know why changes occur, let's take a look at what changes children go through during puberty.

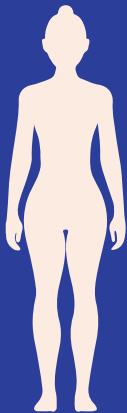
## Female

- Breasts start to grow
- Vaginal discharge begins
- Hips and thighs broaden
- Labia may change

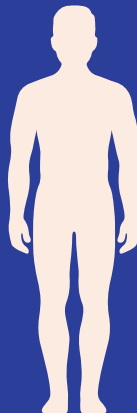
## Male

- Breasts can grow
- Voice cracks and gets deeper
- Adam's apple enlarges
- Shoulders get larger and body gets more muscular
- Chest hair may appear
- Penis and testicles grow

## Shared



- Emotions and feelings may seem stronger
- Brain development improves the way you think and understand
- New feelings of attraction may begin
- You grow taller
- Skin gets oilier and pimples may appear
- Sweating increases, body develops own odor
- Body hair grows: face, armpit, leg and pubic



These changes can be tough for many people, so it's helpful to support each other as best you can through this stage in life.

# How to Deal With all These Changes?

With all these changes happening, it's important to learn how to keep your body healthy. As you're growing up, it's time to start making your own choices and developing healthy habits.

## Breasts

Developing breasts is exciting because it's one of the first signs that your body is changing. Like everything else, breasts come in all different shapes and sizes, and develop at different rates. One may grow larger than the other; that's okay. If you're worried, talk to a trusted adult or doctor.

## Bra Basics

Once your breasts develop, wearing a bra provides support and coverage that can help you feel more comfortable. It's important to have a proper fitting bra for the support you need. Plus, bras come in tons of fun colors and designs, so you can find ones that match your personal style. Talk to a parent or trusted adult to help find a bra that fits you.



## Skin Care

As the skin on your face gets oilier you may start getting pimples, blackheads or acne. If you get acne, it doesn't mean you're not clean or you've done something wrong. Most of the time, it's related to your new hormones that cause the extra oiliness, and it is also genetic. The good news is that developing a regular skin care routine can help!

### 3 Steps to Better Skin

**1. Clean** – To help get rid of everyday dirt and oil on your face, wash twice daily with a gentle soap or cleanser. It can be medicated or non-medicated. Deep cleanse with a cleanser containing salicylic acid (look for “salicylic acid” to be listed in the active ingredients on the back of the bottle).

**2. Prevent** – To help prevent pores from becoming clogged, use a salicylic acid product all over your face. Make sure to moisturize after each wash so your skin stays hydrated.

**3. Treat** – To help eliminate pimples quickly, use a benzoylperoxide product to unclog pores.

### Smile Care

Part of staying healthy is making sure you keep your teeth clean. Make sure you brush them properly every morning and every night with a good toothpaste and a soft bristled brush.

Toothpaste helps fight cavities, strengthen teeth enamel and freshen breath. You should also floss daily in between your teeth and a mouthwash can help reach places that brushing may have missed.



## Hair Care

Puberty may cause your hair to become oilier, thicker, coarser – even curlier or straighter. Some girls need to wash their hair more often, some don't. The important thing is to develop a routine for taking care of your hair and scalp.

### 1. Wash with shampoo

A good shampoo will clean your hair by removing deposits such as dirt, sebum and styling products. It can also protect it from damage and nourish it, too!

### 2. Apply conditioner

The role of the conditioner is to untangle your hair and make it easier to manage. It will also keep it moisturized and protect it from damage.

## Sweat and Body Odor

Everybody sweats, or perspires. It's a normal and important function – it helps regulate your body temperature. But once you hit puberty, sweating can also cause body odor. Your body actually has two different types of sweat glands.

**Eccrine glands** start working at birth, producing a clear and odorless perspiration. But when you hit puberty, your **apocrine glands** kick in, producing the kind of sweat that can smell bad when it comes into contact with the bacteria on your skin. It's these apocrine glands that activate when you are in stressful situations.

### Body odor busters

Wash regularly with soap – at least once a day and especially after physical activity. Make sure to wash your underarms thoroughly. Apply deodorant or antiperspirant at least once a day.



## What's the difference between deodorants and antiperspirants?

**Deodorants** are basically perfumes that help mask or cover your body odor. **Antiperspirants** help stop the body odor from developing by reducing sweat. Both come in many different styles and fragrances and are usually combined in one product. Talk to your parent about choosing the right product for you.

## Body Hair

During puberty, thicker and darker hair begins to appear in many new places, such as legs, underarms and in the pubic area. Having body hair is normal and natural. Some people may decide to remove it, some may choose not to.

If you feel like you want to start removing your hair, talk to a trusted adult first, and learn how to do it with your own razor, by epilating or using any other existing method that is safe for you.



# Changes to the Reproductive System

Some of the most significant changes that happen during puberty are the changes that happen to our reproductive organs.

## What happens to girls?

During puberty, girls start to produce more estrogen and progesterone. **Estrogen** causes your reproductive organs to grow, mature, and prepare to start your **menstrual cycle**. It is a very normal, healthy and positive part of growing up. Your menstrual cycle prepares your body for pregnancy. Most of the time, an unfertilized egg occurs, and then the lining of your uterus will shed and leave your body as a **period**.

Remember – just because your body is now able to prepare itself to carry a baby, it does not mean that you need to start thinking about becoming a mom.



## What happens to boys?

During puberty, boys start to make more androgens (reproductive hormones), especially **testosterone**, which causes a lot of the male puberty changes and makes the penis and testicles grow.

As testosterone increases, boys begin having more **erections**, which is when the penis becomes stiff and sticks up as it fills with blood. During puberty, most erections happen randomly, usually for no reason.

Eventually, the testicles begin making the male reproductive cell called **sperm**. This is the cell that can fertilize the female egg to help create a pregnancy.

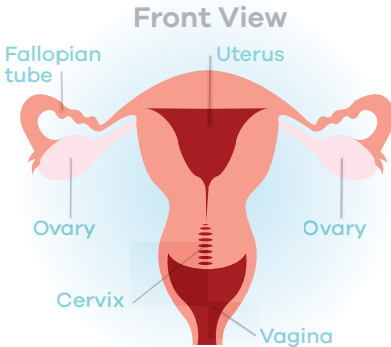
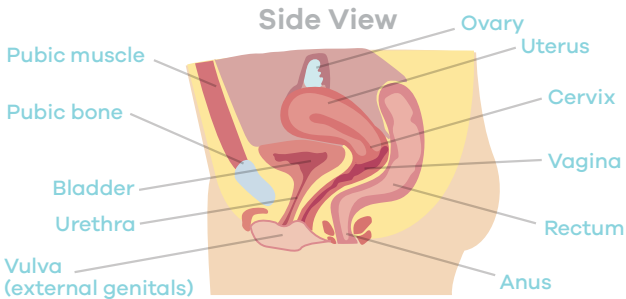


# Your Period

## Understanding your menstrual cycle

Your menstrual cycle is the time from the first day of one period to the first day of the next period. The average time this takes is 28 days, but between 21 and 35 days is normal. Then the cycle starts again.

Like many girls, your period will most likely be irregular at first. You could have one period one month and then two periods the next, or wait as long as six months for the next one.

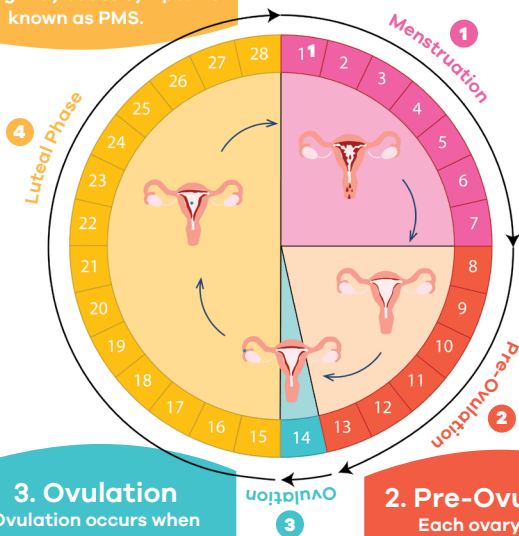


## 4. Pre-Menstrual (Luteal Phase)

The endometrium is thick and ready to receive a fertilized egg, but if fertilization does not happen, the lining is no longer needed. As a result, hormone levels change and the lining is shed. The hormones and shedding may cause symptoms known as PMS.

## 1. Menstruation

Your menstrual period, which is made of endometrial tissue, blood, and other fluids, exits the uterus through the cervix and vagina.



## 3. Ovulation

Ovulation occurs when a mature egg is released from the ovary. The egg travels along the fallopian tube to the uterus. If a sperm fertilizes the egg, the cells can begin to form a pregnancy. Around the time of ovulation you may notice increased vaginal discharge.

## 2. Pre-Ovulation

Each ovary holds thousands of eggs, and every month, rising hormones cause the ovary to produce a mature egg. During this time, estrogen causes the endometrium to get thicker.

# Period FAQs

You've just seen that during menstruation, you will shed the lining of your uterus (made up of tissue, blood and other fluids) through your vagina - this is known as your period. But, relax! Periods are simply a sign that your body is healthy and well.

## How long does your period last?

It varies. For most girls and women, a period usually lasts between 3 to 7 days.

## I haven't started my period, am I late?

There is no right time for your first period to come. You're most likely to get it between the ages of 10 and 16, but every girl is different. Your period will start when your body is ready.

## Why and how to keep track of my cycle?

Everyone's menstrual cycle is unique. Keeping track of your cycle helps you understand how your body works and when your period will start. It can also be a big help for your doctor if you ever think there is a problem. Simply use a period calendar to keep track of your cycle. You can find one on [Always.com](https://www.always.com)

## What if my period is irregular?

Many girls have unpredictable periods for the first 2 years. You could have a period one month, then skip several months before the next one.

## How much blood will I shed?

The average female loses about 4 to 12 teaspoons of menstrual fluid during her period. But only a small amount of that is blood. Since your body contains 4 liters of blood on average, it doesn't miss the little bit lost during a period - and your body makes up for it quickly.





## Will my period hurt?

While period themselves don't hurt, a lot of women experience pain or cramps before their period. We'll learn more on how to deal with this discomfort later in this guide.

**If you haven't started your period by age 16, or your period remains irregular, talk to your parent or trusted adult about seeing a doctor.**

# An Overview of Period Protection

How do you deal with the menstrual fluid coming out of your vagina? There are lots of options. As you learn about them and try different things you'll be able to decide what works best for you.

| Period Protection   | Worn Inside or Outside the Body | Disposable or Reusable |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|
|  PADS                | Outside                         | Both                   |
|  TAMPONS             | Inside                          | Disposable             |
|  CUPS                | Inside                          | Reusable               |
|  MENSTRUAL UNDERWEAR | Outside                         | Reusable               |

## Don't get caught by surprise

Before your cycle becomes regular, your period may happen unexpectedly. It's a really good idea to always be prepared—especially when you're at school, camp or just out with friends.

### Below are some tips to make sure you're never caught off guard:

- Keep a pad or tampon in your purse, schoolbag, or locker for yourself or a friend.
- Start **using a pantyliner** a few days before you expect your period to start. It will help protect your underwear from discharge and light period flow.
- If you don't have period protection available, or simply can't afford it, you can ask a friend, teachers or school nurse, or use rolled up toilet paper until you get a pad.



# All You Need to Know About Pads

Most girls start with pads to manage their period, as they're really easy to use. A pad, or sanitary towel, is a piece of absorbent material that you stick to the inside of your underwear to absorb your menstrual flow.

## Understanding a pad is fairly easy

**SHAPED** to fit your body

**ABSORBENT CORE**

pulls fluid away from your body

**STRONG ADHESIVE**  
for stay-put protection



**WINGS** help your pad stay in place and prevent side leaks, enabling you to move freely



**Change your pad every 4 to 8 hours,** or more often if your flow is heavy. Don't forget to use clean underwear every day; change them if they become soiled.

*always*



## How to use a pad



1. Wash hands with soap and water before changing your pad.



3. Detach the pad from its wrapper and remove the paper strip that covers the wings.



2. Open the wrapper of your pad.

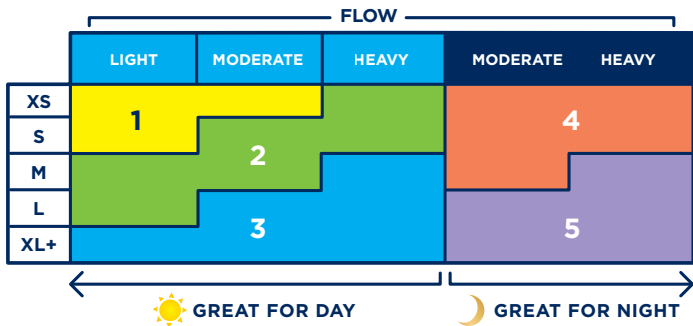


4. Attach the sticky part securely to the inside center of your underwear. Wrap the wings around it. When done, wash your hands with soap and water.

## Choosing a pad

It is important to choose a pad that will be the best fit for you. Always pads have different shapes, lengths and level of absorbencies so you can choose yours according to your shape and flow. The pad you choose should be touching your body in order to minimize the risk of leaks.

**The better it fits, the better it protects!**



## Types of Always® pads

A range of period protection is available for your period needs. Always pads are designed to fit different body shapes and sizes, and to provide protection for all types of period flows (from a light flow to a heavy flow). Whether you prefer thick pads or thin pads, or day or overnight protection, there are several options of pads to choose from to fit your shape and flow.

### **Always Radiant™ and Always Infinity®.**

An absorbent thin pad made with a soft cover that feels incredibly light. Look for the Always Radiant and Infinity pads in a box.

**Ultra Thin.** A thin pad that provides great protection and comfort without the bulk of a maxi pad. Look for the green Always bag.

**Maxi.** A thicker pad with a close body fit and gentle, panty-hugging shape for comfort. Look for the blue Always bag.



## Are Always pads safe?

Every woman and girl deserves what's best for their body. At Always, we have more than 500 scientists working across the globe to ensure our products are 100% safe and comply with all laws and regulations - so you can use them with confidence. For more information visit [Always.com](https://www.always.com).

## How to dispose of a pad

### **Bin it – Don't flush it!**

1. Fold the pad up & wrap it in the wrapper from your new pad or in toilet paper if you don't have a wrapper available.
2. Put the wrapped up pad in the waste bin and ensure the lid is closed once the product has been disposed.

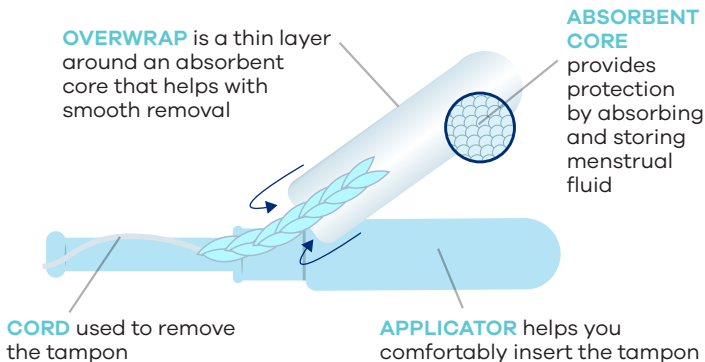


# All You Need to Know About Tampons

A tampon is a type of period protection made from soft materials, that you insert in your vagina to soak up menstrual fluid before it leaves your body. Tampons can give you the protection and comfort you need to move freely, whether you're in class, on the field, or in the pool!

**Keep in mind:** Tampons go in your vagina (not your urethra). That means you can still pee while wearing a tampon, as the tampon does not go in the same hole as where your pee comes from.

## Understanding a tampon is fairly easy



# You might be wondering...

## Can I use a tampon at night?



**YES!** Insert a new tampon before you go to bed and replace it immediately when you wake up. If you sleep for more than 8 hours, use a pad instead.

## Do tampons hurt?

**You shouldn't feel a thing!** If it's uncomfortable, you probably did not insert it far enough, which is an easy fix. Use your finger to push it in a little further, or gently pull it out and try inserting a new one.

## Are tampons easy to take out?

**YES!** The removal string is sewn on tight, so just pull it in order to remove the tampon and it will easily slip out! If you feel a strong resistance, the tampon might not be full yet. You might want to switch to a lower absorbent tampon for next time.



## Am I old enough to use tampons?

**As soon as you start having your period,** you're old enough to use tampons and your body is ready.

Just make sure you feel ready and your parents are cool with it too. Remember that using tampons doesn't mean you'll lose your virginity.



## Can I use tampons when I play sports or go swimming?



**YES!** Tampons will keep you protected through all your kicks, jumps, and dunks. And yes, you can even go swimming!

## Do I need to wear a pad and a tampon?

**NO.** Tampons are designed to work on their own. But while you're getting used to tampons, you can use a pantyliner as well.

## Choosing a tampon

Tampons come in different levels of absorbencies. Your flow is different every day. Your tampon should be, too. Choosing the right tampon absorbency throughout your period can make a big difference in protecting you from leaks and helping you have a comfortable experience.



We recommend you start using a regular absorbency tampon. If you find it difficult to remove your tampon after 4-8 hours and there are still white parts on your tampon when you remove it, try switching to a lower absorbency. If you find you're having to change it very frequently, try switching to a higher absorbency.

## Types of Tampax® Tampons

Tampax® offers reliable protection that is both comfortable and easy to use. Tampax tampons are available with three types of applicators: plastic, compact and cardboard.

### Tampax Pearl Plastic® and Tampax Pocket Pearl Plastic®

Up to 8 hours of comfortable period protection with a LeakGuard™ Braid that helps stop leaks before they happen.









### Tampax Radiant™ Plastic

Up to 100% leak & odor-free protection in full-size and compact applicators.



## How to use a Tampon

-  Wash your hands well. Then unwrap the tampon. Find a comfy position. Most girls either sit on the toilet with their knees apart or stand with their knees slightly bent.
-  Find the little grip marks on the applicator. Hold them with your thumb and middle finger. With the string hanging down insert the plastic tube into your vagina at a slight upward angle. Gently slide the applicator inside your vagina until your fingers touch your body.
-  With your pointer finger, push the smaller plastic tube all the way in; this slides the tampon out of the applicator and into the right place inside of you.
-  To remove the applicator, keep your fingers on the grip marks and pull down gently, leaving the tampon inside you and the string hanging outside. If you got it right you should not even feel it! If it is uncomfortable, chances are it is not inserted far enough. Don't worry - either use your finger to push it in a little further, or gently pull it out and try again with a new tampon.
-  Congrats, you got it! Now dispose of the applicator. Place it back into the wrapper and throw it in the bin, NOT the toilet. Wash your hands after inserting the tampon.
-  To remove your tampon, gently pull the string of your tampon to remove it and dispose it in the bin. Once you're done, wash your hands with soap and water.

### Top tips!

- Change your tampon every 4-8 hours or more often if your flow is heavy
- Ensure that the last tampon is removed at the end of your period.
- Set an alarm on your phone to help you remember when to change your tampon.

### Bin it – Don't flush it!

Too many people still believe tampons, wrappers or applicators can be flushed in the toilet. Good habits make a difference. You can contribute to the care for the environment by not flushing your period products and disposing them in the bin instead.

## What's TSS?

TSS, or Toxic Shock Syndrome, is a rare but serious infection that has been associated with tampon use. It is caused by a certain type of bacteria that may live on healthy skin, but become a problem if they grow too rapidly. It isn't just associated with tampon use, it may also occur in men, children, and women who are not menstruating.

**TSS is treatable, but the earlier you catch it the better. Be aware of the warning signs:**

- Sudden high fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sunburn-like rash
- Dizziness
- Muscle ache
- Fainting/near fainting when standing

TSS can rapidly progress from flu-like symptoms to a serious illness that can be fatal. If you have one or more of the warning signs above, immediately remove your tampon and contact a doctor. Tell them your symptoms, that you were using tampons and you think you may have TSS. Also, make sure you consult your doctor before you use tampons again if you have had TSS warning signs in the past or if you have any questions about TSS or tampon use.

**Although TSS is rare, here are a few ways to reduce your risk of getting it:**

- Use the lowest absorbency necessary for your flow
- Alternate between tampons and pads during your period
- Look out for the warning signs above

## Are Tampax tampons safe?

Tampax tampons have been trusted by millions of girls and women since 1936. Our scientists are working across the globe to ensure our products are 100% safe so you can use them with confidence. If you want to learn more on safety and quality standards visit [Tampax.com](http://Tampax.com).

## Discharge, What Is It?

You've probably noticed that your underwear sometimes has traces of a creamy white/yellowish fluid. This is called discharge. It comes from your vagina and is **perfectly normal**, natural and a healthy sign that your body is functioning properly – all women have it. It helps prevent the vagina from drying out and protects it from infections. Similar to the way tears clean and protect your eyes.

The amount of vaginal discharge varies during the menstrual cycle as hormone levels in the body change. If your discharge is significantly different than usual, has a bad smell or you experience itching in your intimate area you should talk to a trusted adult and go see a doctor.

### All you need to know about Pantliners

A pantliner is worn on the inside of your underwear like a pad, and most are smaller and thinner than pads and can feel invisible.

Unlike pads (which are designed to be used during your period) pantliners are designed to be worn every day. You may want to try wearing them as part of your daily hygiene routine, like putting on deodorant.





# Caring for the Environment

At Always and Tampax, we are committed to environmental sustainability and we believe we have a role to play in reducing waste. This is why we design our products to have as little impact on the environment as possible. We are also launching new projects that will help with the recycling of the period products we create.



## Caring for those in need

At Always, we believe that every girl has the right to be able to manage her period with dignity, and that no girl should have to miss school and things she loves because of her period.

If your family is struggling to afford period products, speak to your teacher or school nurse.



# Premenstrual Syndrome and Period Cramps

## Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

Between ovulation and the first day of your period, your hormones levels go up and down. These fluctuations can sometimes make you feel more emotional than normal and cause physical symptoms. These symptoms are usually called Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) and are very normal.

### Common PMS symptoms that you might experience:

- Feeling swollen or bloated
- Change in appetite
- Breast tenderness
- Abdominal cramps and feeling queasy
- Acne or skin rash

- Mood changes: feeling sad, tearful, tired or irritable
- Headaches

### How to manage PMS?

- Chart your symptoms and be aware of when you may experience them
- Get enough rest
- Exercise
- Take time for yourself
- Practice deep breathing exercises
- Eat foods rich in fiber and low in sugar and fat
- Listen to how you feel — don't feel bad if you want to curl up on the sofa instead of going out with your friends

## Period Cramps

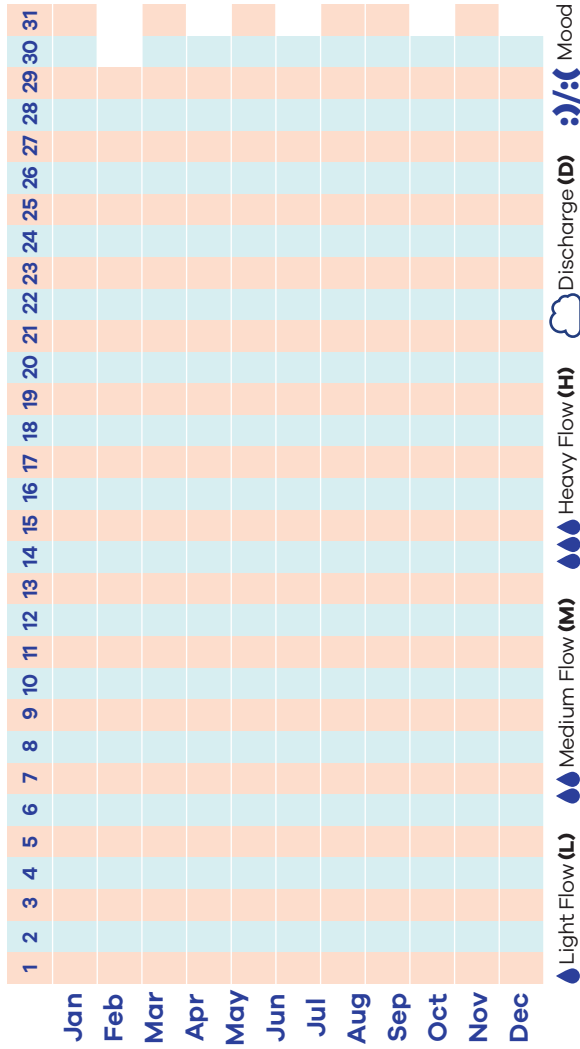
Cramps can occur just before or during your period when the muscle of your uterus contracts to make the lining of your uterus leave your vagina as menstrual flow.

### How to treat them?

- Moderate exercise and stretching
- Use a hot water bottle or warm towel on your belly
- Take a warm bath
- Practice deep breathing exercises

# Tracking your Period

Simply mark the days you have your period and track your mood, too, so you can see when your hormones are changing. Everyone's menstrual cycle is unique. Use this calendar or go to [Always.com](https://www.always.com) to keep track of your menstrual cycle and help you prepare for your next period.



# Staying Confident and Healthy

## Your brain is changing, too!

While changes to your body are obvious, there's a lot of changes happening to your brain, too! You develop new, stronger emotions and these changes can affect your confidence. But they are normal and you have control over whether you listen to the negative or focus on the positive.

## Build your brain power & embrace the Growth Mindset

Your brain is like a muscle, so you need to exercise it. When you take on challenges and practice until you overcome them, neurones in your brain create new and stronger connections. And when your brain gets stronger, your skills do, too. The growth mindset is the belief that your mind can grow and change with practice. Start training using the table below.

| Growth Mindset       |                                       | Fixed Mindset   |                                  |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| CHALLENGING YOURSELF | Embrace Challenges                    |   | Avoid opportunities              |
| FACING CRITICISM     | Learn From Feedback                   |  | Ignore useful feedback           |
| MAKING AN EFFORT     | See effort as key to success          |  | See effort as useless            |
| OVERCOMING OBSTACLES | A misstep is a step forward           |  | A misstep is a reason to give up |
| WHEN OTHERS SUCCEED  | Find inspiration in their performance |  | Feel threatened and upset        |

## Take risks and keep going

Remember – you only truly fail when you don't even try, so take positive risks. It can be scary, hard and, well, risky. It can also be exciting, fun and rewarding!

### Here are a few tips to take positive risks:

- **Don't be afraid to fail!** If you fail, use it as an opportunity to learn, get stronger and keep going!
- **Try again, and again, and again.** Know that sometimes you have to keep practicing and trying new ways to get better.
- **Remind yourself of all the things you've achieved** in the past. It can help you feel positive when you feel like you can't do something.
- **Break big things down** in to smaller, more manageable steps.
- **We all have strengths** - focus your attention on yours. It will help you become more confident and will give you energy!

## Powerful words to help you out

A majority of girls believe words can harm. The good news is that changing the words you use can change your world.

### Try these words:

**YET!** Yet is a very powerful word. You can use it to remind yourself that though you haven't accomplished it yet, you will!

**AND.** When you praise yourself, it's easy to add "but" to lessen your success. Try using "and" instead. So instead of "I'm pretty good at geometry, but I still have a B", try saying "and I am getting better every week".

**I CAN.** Have you ever said things like "I'm totally going to fail this test, I got so many questions wrong"? Lose the negative talk and think about how you can study harder and do better next time.

## Making good decisions

You're probably starting to earn more freedom at school and at home – and probably more responsibilities, too! As a result, you'll be making more decisions on your own than when you were younger. You'll need to evaluate and make sense of all the influencing factors in your life such as friends, parents, teachers and things you see in the media and read on the internet.

At times, it can be difficult to know what to think and how to act. Learning to make the right decision for YOU is an important part of growing up. It's easy to get into situations that are challenging when you don't take the time to think about your decisions.

Remember, great decision-making skills are learned – no one is born with them!

### I-D-E-A-L solution building

**IDENTIFY** the problem

**DESCRIBE** all the ways you might solve the problem

**EVALUATE** all the possible solutions

**ACT** on one of the solutions and try it out

**LEARN** if your solution solved the problem effectively

# Sex, Gender & Society

## Let's start with a few definitions:

**Biological sex:** Your biological sex is based on the genitals you're born with and the chromosomes you have. At birth, most people are either male or female.

**Gender identity:** This is about how you feel and how you think about yourself when it comes to gender. Everyone's gender identity is unique to them and should be respected.

**Gender roles and stereotyping:** These are socially constructed – they relate to characteristics and behaviors that are typically thought to go alongside a person's biological sex. They can often stereotype girls & boys. You might have started to notice that people expect you to look, or act in a certain way just because you're a girl. We call this stereotyping.

## Don't let society limit you!

Your biological sex shouldn't define what you can or can't do – and stereotyping someone because of their gender, or thinking that someone is better or worse because of their gender, can be very harmful. Remember – you don't have to let these norms limit you. Girls can be strong, play the sports they want and speak up. Stay strong and believe that you can achieve anything!

## You're great, just the way you are

We are all different and that's what makes us beautiful. Imagine if we all looked the same – how boring would that be? If someone teases you about how you look, try and ignore it. There is no right or wrong way to look. Instead, try and focus on staying healthy & happy, be proud of your uniqueness and be supportive of those around you.

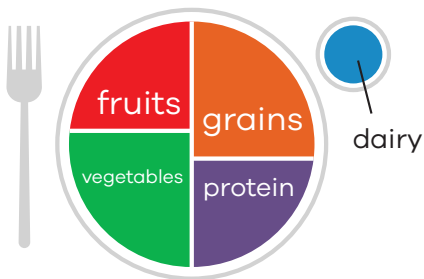


# Healthy Choices

## Eat well

Taking care of yourself also means supplying your body with the energy and nutrients it needs. Growing like you do during puberty needs a lot of energy and most of it comes from the food you eat. This is why it's very important to make sure you eat a healthy, well-balanced diet.

**Here is what a healthy meal looks like:**



## Be Active

Being physically active through sports or other physical activities helps keep your body healthy and boost your energy levels! The key to enjoying it is to pick something you like, such as – dancing like crazy to your favorite song, playing goalie on a soccer team, or challenging your brother or sister to a jump rope competition.

## Sleep well

Getting enough sleep is an essential part of staying healthy and happy. On average you'll need between 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night.



### Tips to getting enough sleep:

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule
- Avoid watching and using screens (e.g. TV, phone) one hour before going to bed
- Use a comfortable mattress and pillow
- Exercise daily

### Visit the doctor

Regular healthcare is important, so be sure to visit your doctor and dentist on a regular basis. As you get older and start your period, you may also want to start seeing an OB-GYN—a doctor that specializes in women’s health. Talk to your parents about getting routine exams.

### Stay safe

During puberty, you’re going through so many changes that everything seems possible, and this is great. Just remember to stay safe too.

- **Say no to drugs**—whether or not they’re illegal, they can affect your brain and cause long term damage.
- **Treat everyone with respect**—nobody should be mean to others.
  - Stop and think before you say or do something hurtful.
  - If you are being bullied try to speak up and ask the bully to stop. If speaking up seems too hard, walk away and find an adult to help.
  - Talk to an adult you trust. Don’t keep your feelings inside; they can help you make a plan to improve your situation.
  - If you think you have bullied someone in the past, apologize. Everyone feels better.

# Healthy Relationships

## Taking care of others around you

During puberty, everyone is going through changes that can be hard to deal with. Look out for others and share with a trusted adult if you're worried about any of your friends.

## Discovering new feelings

At this particular moment of your life when your body is producing a lot more of hormones, you will start to experience new feelings. Some of these feelings may cause you to be more curious about your sexuality and it's good to remember that this curiosity is totally normal.

## Personal intimacy

As these hormones can make people feel more curious about their new feelings, some may begin to explore intimate parts of their body, especially the genital area. This is not right or wrong, but it's personal and should be done in private.

## Intimate feelings towards others

You might also begin to see others as more than just friends, and start having new feelings and crushes. This is completely normal!

Just remember to keep in mind that others may not feel the same as you, and it's important to respect other's personal choices.



# Continue the Conversation

Talking to your friends and family about your feelings and questions during puberty can help them better understand and support you.

Don't feel like you need to cope with everything on your own. Ask your parents or a trusted adult for their advice and to help answer your questions. They've experienced it, too, so they'll have lots of good advice and tips.

**To help start the conversation, follow these tips:**

**Keep it casual:** Find a time when you typically talk with your parents, and use it to discuss the things you've learned in this guide. You might want to ask them what it was like when they were younger and experienced puberty.

**Write it down:** Sometimes it helps to write down your questions, so you can make sure you get all the answers.

**Be direct:** Take a deep breath and just share how you're feeling. Chances are they've experienced similar feelings at some point in their life, too!

**Celebrate it:** Getting your first period can be a great moment to celebrate with those around you! Why not share the news with your parents or best friends and use it as an opportunity to do something nice.



# Want to Learn More?



Start a conversation with your parents, teachers or other trusted adults.



Watch and subscribe to the **Always** and **Tampax** YouTube channels for more information and advice.



Check out **Always.com** and **Tampax.com** for more information.

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These materials have been reviewed by the American Association for Health Education and accepted as educationally appropriate.

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