

ALL ABOUT YOUR PERIOD

Taking Care of Yourself



Department
of Health

Having your period is natural and healthy. For some, it affects their everyday life in physical, emotional, and social ways. When you take steps to feel your healthiest during your period, you're practicing good menstrual health.

How can my period affect me?

Some of us have **PHYSICAL** symptoms with our periods.

- Headaches
- Bloating (feeling swollen)
- Food cravings
- Cramps
- Lower back pain

Our **EMOTIONAL/MENTAL HEALTH** can suffer during our period, too – or right before it starts (premenstrual).

We may feel:

- Moody
- Irritable
- Tired
- Anxious
- Depressed

Academic (school) health

Some people find that their energy and focus are not at their best:

- They don't get as much done.
- They find it harder to concentrate in class.
- They're not comfortable sitting in class.
- Some are not up to doing activities like Physical "Phys" Ed/gym.
- Sometimes they need an absence from school.

When should you get help with your symptoms?

Some moodiness, pain, tiredness, and bleeding are normal – no need for concern. When should you get help for your symptoms? See a health care provider if you have:

Overwhelming or challenging feelings

- You often find yourself extra depressed, anxious, angry, or tired before or during your period.

Very difficult pain

- Your pain is hard to deal with and not relieved by over-the-counter medicine, like ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®) or naproxen (Aleve®).

Unusual bleeding

- You need one or more tampons or pads every 1 to 2 hours. Your period usually lasts longer than a week. You see clumps of blood (clots) that are larger than a quarter in your period blood. Note: It's normal to have smaller clots.

Interrupted routine

- You're missing out on things you usually do, such as school or hanging out with friends. Needing extra sleep and downtime is normal, but your period shouldn't prevent you from living your life!

How can you be your healthiest when you have your period?

Sleep

- Make sure you get enough sleep. For your best health, you need around 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night.

Exercise

- Set aside time for physical activity. Exercise can help calm feelings of anxiety and crankiness. It may also help relieve pain.

Diet

- Choose nutritious foods and drink a lot of water. Healthy eating can help reduce food cravings and ease bloating. Water and nutritious food can boost your mood.

Pain relief

- Heat can help with mild cramps. Try a heating pad or a hot bath. For cramps and back pain, you may want to try over-the-counter medicine, such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, etc.) or naproxen (Aleve®, etc.) for a day or two. Talk to a health care provider about the best medicine for you.

Period tracking

- Get to know what is normal for you by using a pen and paper, or a paper calendar.

Support

- Keep up a strong support network filled with friends, family, and people who can help. It is okay to talk about how you are feeling, ask questions, and ask for help! Take advantage of your school's resources. You may find a nurse, counselor, or teachers who can help you.

Need to find a health care provider?

Ask for help from a trusted adult, parent, guardian, or school nurse. If you or your family need health insurance, call New York State of Health at 1-855-355-5777.

This handout is part of the "All About Your Period" series on menstrual health. For more information and helpful resources, visit: <https://health.ny.gov/TeenHealth>.