

# **What is a period?**

## **Teacher Explanation Sheet**

**A practical guide for explaining periods  
clearly, calmly and age-appropriately**

# Periods

## WHO THIS RESOURCE IS FOR?

This resource is designed for teachers, school staff and wellbeing teams who are introducing periods, puberty or menstrual health to upper primary or lower high school students.

It can be used:

- before a puberty or menstrual health lesson
- as a teacher reference during classroom discussion
- after a Wellwise Woman school session
- when students ask questions about periods, blood, puberty or body changes

The goal is not for teachers to become menstrual health experts. The goal is to help students hear clear, calm and shame-free explanations about a normal body process.

## A TEACHER-FRIENDLY SCRIPT



During puberty, many girls and people with a uterus will start having periods. A period is when some blood and tissue from inside the uterus leaves the body through the vagina.

This happens because the body is starting to work in a new way. Each cycle, the uterus gets ready in case the body ever needs to grow a baby one day in the future. If that lining is not needed, it leaves the body. That is called a period.

# Periods

## WHAT ARE THEY?



A period is when blood and tissue from inside the uterus leaves the body through the vagina. Each cycle, the body prepares the uterus in case a pregnancy happens one day in the future. The lining of the uterus becomes thicker and softer. If the body does not need that lining, it leaves the body as a period.



Females are born with all of their eggs inside their ovaries

### Average bleed? What is flow? How much?

Can bleed 2-7 days, but usually up to 5 days.

Flow is the rate of bleeding – & can change from light to moderate to heavy throughout Period.

Roughly 2-6 tablespoons of blood for entire period (depends on flow rate)

Periods usually begin during puberty

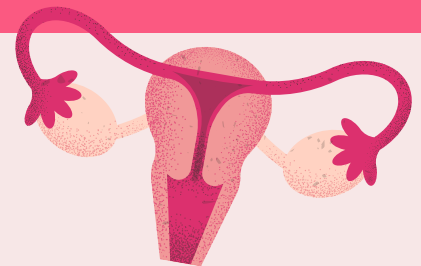
A period is part of the menstrual cycle

Period blood comes from the uterus and leaves through the vagina.

Periods are normal and should not be treated as embarrassing or dirty.

It is normal to need help, especially when periods are new.

Pain that stops someone from doing normal activities is not something to ignore



# Periods

## WHAT IS NORMAL?

In the first few years after periods begin, cycles may not come at exactly the same time each month. This is common while the body is still maturing.

Your period may feel different from month to month

### Looks like?

bright red, dark red or brownish

### How often?

Every 21-35 days but can be up to 45 days for teens

### Feel like?

come with cramps, tiredness, mood changes or bloating

### Does getting a period mean you are grown up?

Getting a period is one sign that your body is growing and changing, but it does not mean you are suddenly grown up. You are still a young person who deserves support, care and time to learn.

### Does it hurt?

It's not the blood itself which causes the pain, but the muscles contracting in the uterus to help shed the lining. You might feel this pain in your abdomen or lower back and it can feel crampy or sharp. Some people may not experience any pain, and for others it can be very bad

### Can you go to school when you have your period?

Yes, most students can go to school when they have their period. Having products, spare underwear, a plan for leaks and a trusted adult to ask for help can make it easier.

### Will I have my period forever?

Your period will come regularly until you reach menopause at age 45 to 55 when it will permanently stop. There are other circumstances which will stop your period from coming such as while on certain medications, hormonal contraceptives, and while pregnant.

### Can you play sport or swim with your period?

Yes, many people can play sport and swim during their period. Some students may need help choosing products that work for sport or swimming. If pain, heavy bleeding or fear of leaks is stopping participation, they may need extra support.

# Periods

## WHEN YOU NEED SUPPORT

A student should be encouraged to speak with a trusted adult and seek health advice if they experience any of the following

### PAIN

that stops them from school, sport, sleep or normal activities

### BLEEDING

that seems very heavy or hard to manage

### SYMPTOMS

dizziness, fainting or extreme tiredness

### NO PERIOD

no period by the later teen years

Teachers do not need to diagnose the problem.  
A teacher's role is to notice, respond calmly, and help the student connect with the right support

Periods are normal

Bodies change at different times

There is no "perfect" age to get your first period

Period products are practical, not embarrassing

Leaks can happen and can be handled calmly

Pain that stops you from doing normal things deserves support

Nobody should be teased about puberty, periods, body changes or leaks