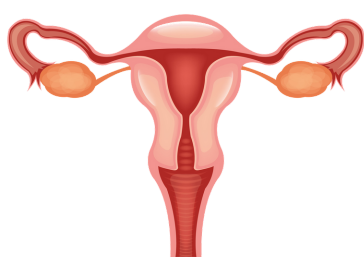


LET'S TALK ABOUT...

MENSTRUATION

WHAT IS MENSTRUATION?



If you have a period you should know about the menstrual cycle! Menstruation is the discharging of the uterine lining within the uterus.

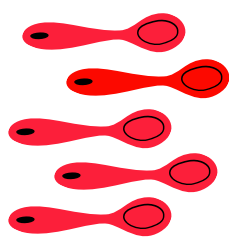
The menstrual cycle is different for every person, an average cycle is 28 days. Menstruation is also known as a person's 'period'.

HOW LONG DOES A PERSONS PERIOD LAST?

A persons period, or menstruation will typically last between 4-8 days. Though this is all dependent on the person, and can vary significantly! Tracking your length and time between menstruation can be extremely helpful in knowing what is regular for you.



WHAT IS A NORMAL AMOUNT OF BLEEDING?



The amount of discharged lining (bleeding) differs from person to person. On average people bleed 2-5 tablespoons. If you are concerned about the amount of bleeding occurring you should track the flow level and book an appointment with a health care professional.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I CHANGE MY SANITARY PRODUCT?

Most people with uteruses will change their pads every few hours.

A tampon should **not** be worn for **more than 8 hours** because of the risk of infection.

Menstrual cups may only need to be rinsed once or twice a day depending on the person.

Period panties (underwear with washable menstrual pads sewn in) can usually last about a day, depending on the style and your typical flow.



WHAT ARE SOME ADDITIONAL SYMPTOMS OF MENSTRUATION?



Some people may also experience a few other effects due to menstruation. Be aware that these effects are normal, and may happen to you.

Some symptoms are: abdominal or pelvic cramping, development of acne, lower back pain, bloating and sore breasts, food cravings, mood swings and irritability, headache, and fatigue.

LET'S TALK ABOUT...

MENSTRUATION

HOW DO I TRACK MY PERIOD?

Some people with uteruses will use a separate calendar to mark an X on the days they have their period. Others people simply note it in their everyday calendar. Along with the dates of your period you may also want to keep note of flow quantity (heavy, medium, light), the symptoms you experience and the strength of the symptoms.

By tracking your period for multiple cycles you can figure out the typical length of your cycle and patterns. You can then bring your period tracking calendar with you if you ever see a doctor regarding menstruation. It would also be important to track mood and symptoms you have on the days you are not on your period, such as energy, acne levels, bloating. Tracking these things can help you know more about, and feel more comfortable with your menstrual cycle and assist if you have to go to a doctor regarding menstrual health.

In the example below you see multiple ways to keep track of the cycle. You can use words, symbols, or a mixture there of. The way you track will all depend on your own preferences.



If you're not into paper and pen tracking, you could also download period tracking apps that aid you in recording important information about your menstrual cycle. There are a lot of different applications out there, try one or two until you find one that's best for you!

WHAT IF I THINK MY PERIOD IS IRREGULAR, OR I HAVE LOTS OF SYMPTOMS?

Some life activities can effect the way your body menstruates. Factors like exercise, diet, medical history, all play a part in the way your periods flow and symptoms will occur and effect you.

Though periods differ from person to person there are some very important things you need to be aware of.



You should contact a healthcare provider if you experience the following symptoms:

- Your periods suddenly stop for more than 90 days (and you're not pregnant)
- Your periods become erratic after having been regular
- You bleed for more than seven days
- You bleed more heavily than usual or soak through more than one pad or tampon every hour or two
- Your periods are less than 21 days or more than 35 days apart
- You bleed between periods
- You develop severe pain during your period
- You suddenly get a fever and feel sick after using tampons

Your health care provider may give you a physical exam and/or other tests to rule out pregnancy or health problem.

Info sheet created and distributed by The Red Door.

The Red Door is a non-judgemental sexual health clinic located in Kentville, for more information on the Red Door go to our website

www.thereddoor.ca