

Why do women have periods?

Every month the lining of a woman's uterus gets thicker to prepare for a fertilised egg if the woman becomes pregnant. If this egg doesn't get fertilised this lining is then released from the woman's body as a blood through the vagina.

This whole monthly process is called menstruation or a period.

Common questions:

When will I get my period? Periods usually start between the age of 10-16 years old.

What does a period feel like? You may feel some dampness in your underwear due to spots of blood but the actual flow of your period doesn't feel like much when it is happening.

Does having a period smell? It shouldn't smell. Menstrual odour happens when menstrual fluid come into contact with air. When it is absorbed within the vagina, like through a tampon it isn't exposed to the air. If you are worried, just ensure you change your period product frequently.

How much blood do I lose during my period? Most girls lose about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a cup throughout the whole cycle.

Will anyone know I have my period? Not unless you tell them!

Is there anything I can't do when I am on my period? No. You just need to make sure you use the correct type of protection depending on the activity you want to do e.g. to go swimming you need to use a tampon or moon cup.

Is it ok to have a bath or shower when I have a period? Absolutely. It is important to keep clean and fresh during your period. This includes changing your period product frequently.

Does having my period hurt? You might get some tummy cramps or other symptoms but not always. A hot water bottle and paracetamol normally help.

Support and help

Vocabulary builder:

Menstruation or period – A normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of a woman's monthly cycle.

Uterus – Also known as the womb. This is where the fertilised egg is implanted during pregnancy.

Types of products available in school

Tampon – A menstrual product designed to absorb blood by insertion into the vagina (from B316 and the main office).

Sanitary towel – A product that lies flat into your underwear to absorb blood (from B316 and the main office).

Reusable sanitary towel – As above but can be washed and reused to save on plastic (from B316).

Moon cup – A small foldable reusable device made from silicon, rubber or plastic that collects the blood rather than absorbing it (from B316).



Other products available outside of school

Period knickers – These look and feel like your normal underwear but are very absorbent. These are used instead of any of the products above and can be washed and reused.