

MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

A BASIC GUIDE



QUICK FACTS



- The average menstrual cycle is 28 days, but it varies for everyone.¹
- The cycle can range anywhere from 24-38 days.²
- The menstrual cycle allows for fertilization which can lead to pregnancy.¹
- The amount of menstrual flow is categorized as light, normal, or heavy.²
- Menstruation typically begins at the onset of puberty.²

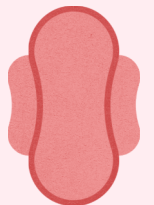
TAMPONS

- Inserted into the vagina to absorb menstrual flow.³
- Not to be worn longer than 8 hours.³
- Use the lowest absorbency possible.³
- Do not use the same tampon more than once, throw away after use.³



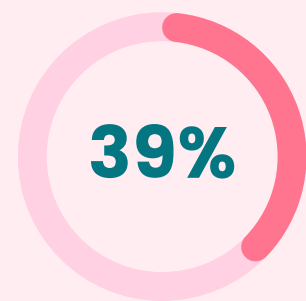
PADS

- Need to be changed every few hours even if they are empty.⁵
- Great option for beginners.⁵
- Does not require anything to be inserted vaginally.⁵



TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME (TSS)

- Rare.⁴
- A tampon being left in for too long can cause bacteria to multiply since the blood absorbed is a breeding ground for bacteria.⁴
- Tampons themselves do not cause TSS.⁴



Only 39% of schools globally provide menstrual health education.⁶

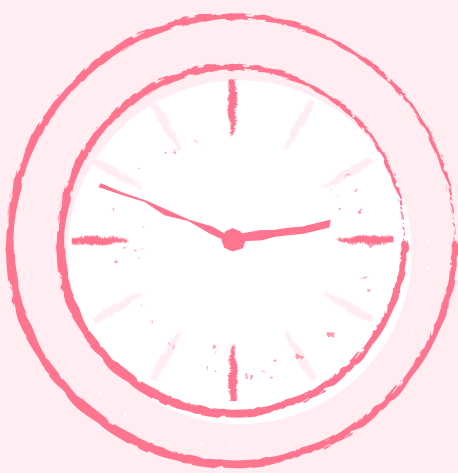
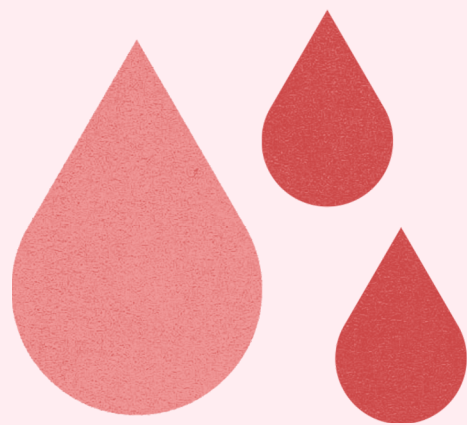
"MENSTRUATING STUDENTS REPORTED EMBARRASSMENT AND A NEED FOR SECRECY WHEN ACCESSING SCHOOL BATHROOMS SINCE THE SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS OF SCHOOLS BATHROOMS HEIGHTENED THEIR DISCOMFORT WHEN MENSTRUATING".⁷

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE BEGINS WITH THE FIRST DAY OF BLEEDING AND ENDS THE DAY BEFORE SUBSEQUENT BEGINS, OR THE FINAL DAY OF THE LUTEAL PHASE.¹

1. MENSTRUATION

- Marks the beginning of the menstrual cycle.⁵
- Average time period is 3-5 days.⁵
- A biological process where blood and tissue from the uterine lining is shed and exits the body vaginally.⁵

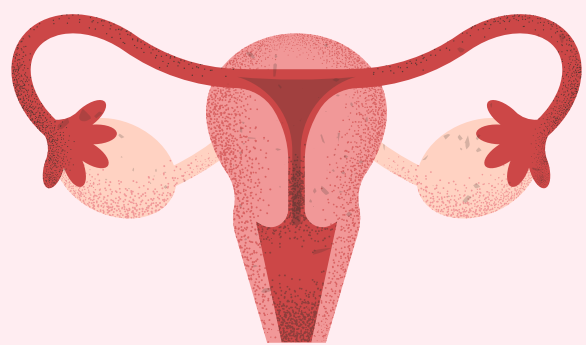


2. FOLLICULAR PHASE

- Begins at menstruation and ends the day ovulation occurs.¹
- Average length is 15.7 days.¹
- Lining of the uterus will thicken and follicles in the ovaries will grow.¹
- The developing follicle will form a mature egg.¹

3. OVULATION

- Occurs when the egg is released from the ovary.¹
- Typically marks the middle of the menstrual cycle.¹
- Lasts for one day.¹



4. LUTEAL PHASE

- Average length of this phase is 13.3 days.¹
- Begins immediately after ovulation and ends the day before the next menstruation occurs.¹
- The egg leaves the ovary and travels through the fallopian tubes into the uterus.¹
- When possible pregnancy can occur.¹



REFERENCES

1. SCHMALENBERGER KM, TAUSEEF HA, BARONE JC, ET AL. HOW TO STUDY THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE: PRACTICAL TOOLS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. PSYCHONEUROENDOCRINOLOGY. JAN 2021;123:104895. DOI:10.1016/J.PSYNEUEN.2020.104895
2. THIYAGARAJAN DK, BASIT H, JEANMONOD R. PHYSIOLOGY, MENSTRUAL CYCLE. STATPEARLS. STATPEARLS PUBLISHING COPYRIGHT © 2025, STATPEARLS PUBLISHING LLC.; 2025.
3. THE FACTS ON TAMPONS — AND HOW TO USE THEM SAFELY. ACCESSED MARCH 18, 2025. [HTTPS://WWW.FDA.GOV/CONSUMERS/CONSUMER-UPDATES/FACTS-TAMPONS-AND-HOW-USE-THEM-SAFELY](https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/facts-tampons-and-how-use-them-safely)
4. TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME. ACCESSED MARCH 27, 2025. [HTTPS://WWW.MAYOCLINIC.ORG/DISEASES-CONDITIONS/TOXIC-SHOCK-SYNDROME/SYMPTOMS-CAUSES/SYC-20355384](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/toxic-shock-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20355384).
5. HEALTHY HABITS: MENSTRUAL HYGIENE. ACCESSED MARCH 18, 2025. [HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/HYGIENE/ABOUT/MENSTRUAL-HYGIENE.HTML#:~:TEXT=SANITARY%20PADS%3A%20CHANGE%20SANITARY%20PADS,EVERY%204%20TO%208%20HOURS](https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/about/menstrual-hygiene.html#:~:text=Sanitary%20pads%3A%20change%20sanitary%20pads,every%204%20to%208%20hours)
6. GLOBAL REPORT REVEALS MAJOR GAPS IN MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE IN SCHOOL. ACCESSED APRIL 1, 2025. [HTTPS://WWW.WHO.INT/NEWS/ITEM/28-05-2024-GLOBAL-REPORT-REVEALS-MAJOR-GAPS-IN-MENSTRUAL-HEALTH-AND-HYGIENE-IN-SCHOOLS](https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2024-global-report-reveals-major-gaps-in-menstrual-health-and-hygiene-in-schools).
7. BHODA K, BURGOA S, ZERROUKI Y, ET AL. EXAMINING MENSTRUAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES FOR AMERICAN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL MENSTRUATING STUDENTS: A SCOPING REVIEW. JOURNAL OF PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT GYNECOLOGY. 2024/10/01/ 2024;37(5):465-476. DOI.ORG/10.1016/J.JPAG.2024.06.004