



Your Period

What is a normal period?

It is common to have irregular cycles when a person first begins to have periods. Usually periods become more regular within 2-3 years. Cycles that are regular from the very beginning should stay regular. When cycles start, it is helpful to keep track on a calendar or a period tracking app on your phone to determine how often they are taking place and how long they last. Typically, periods occur every 21-45 days (from the first day of the period until the first day of the next period) during the first year, and every 21-34 days by the third year. Normal periods last 7 days or less. It is normal to change your pad or tampon 3-6 times per day.

What is an abnormal period?

- Periods that stay irregular past the first 2-3 years (less than 3 weeks apart or more than 45 days apart)
- Periods that only come every 3 months, or less often
- Periods that used to be regular but are now irregular
- Periods that last longer than 7 days
- Periods that are so painful you can't go to school or participate in activities
- Periods that are very heavy (need more than 6 pads or tampons per day or have frequent accidents)

When will my first period happen?

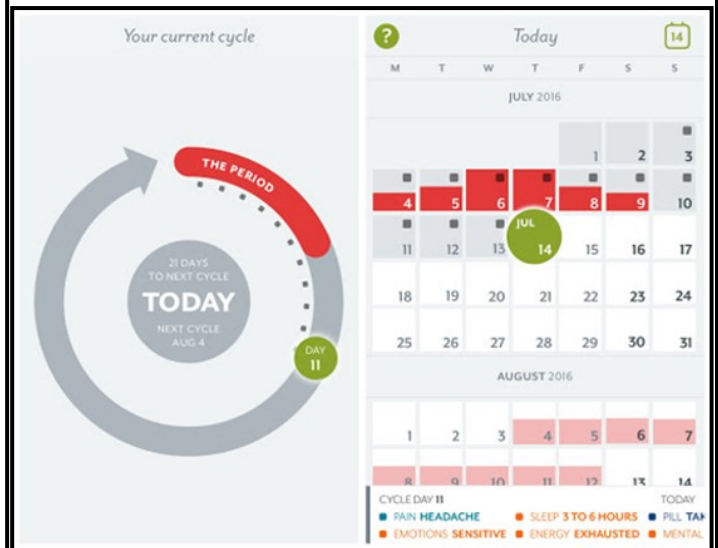
The time of the first period can be a time of excitement and anxiety. The average age of the first period is 12 ½ years but may occur as early as age 10. Before periods occur, there are other signs of puberty to indicate that a body is changing. Usually breast development begins 2 years before the first period. Other signs include underarm hair, pubic hair and body odor.

How should I track my periods?

Menstrual calendars and period tracking apps are helpful to see what type of cycle pattern you have. It is important to keep track of your periods and review with your healthcare provider.

There are many free apps for your smartphone that will track your periods. Some options are:

- Sisterhood (Hemophilia Federation of America)
- Clue Period & Cycle Tracker (pictured below)



What will the healthcare provider do if my periods are not normal?

Usually your healthcare provider can determine your cycles are abnormal if they are not becoming more regular, if they are occurring too often or may be too heavy. An exam in the clinic may be needed, but an exam on the inside of the vagina is usually not necessary. Blood tests may be ordered to check hormones and blood counts. In addition, a pelvic ultrasound can sometimes be done to make sure the uterus looks normal.

How are abnormal periods treated?

Sometimes your periods will become regular naturally. If your period is not becoming regular over time, happens too frequently, is too heavy, or too painful there are medications that can help control your cycles. There are hormonal and non-hormonal medications available and these can be discussed with your healthcare provider.