

# End the Stigma

Due to societal and cultural norms, women and girls with periods are seen as dirty, untouchable, and a disgrace. They might be banned from going to school, stopped from cooking or entering the kitchen, or even sequestered to outside the main house.

It is important to know that the following are myths - are not based on facts, but from a lack of understanding passed on through generations

- if you look at people you'll make them sick
- if you cook or touch food, the food will rot
- if you swim sharks will attack
- if you use a tampon you will lose your virginity

## Impact

Period shaming, & discrimination affect women and girls'

- physical and mental well-being
- school attendance and performance
- employment and livelihood

# Periods & Health

Changing hormone levels throughout your cycle can cause health problems or make some health problems worse, such as:

- Anemia.
- Asthma
- Depression.
- Diabetes.
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Problems getting pregnant

*Information adapted from  
womenshealth.gov  
unesco.org  
unwomen.org*

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## Menstruation

...won't spoil the pickles  
...doesn't make you impure  
...shouldn't stop you from  
going to your place of worship  
...isn't a dirty word

## Menstruation

IS  
a natural cycle of the body

## Menstruation

CANNOT  
define or confine you

# Menstruation

Menstruation is a woman's monthly bleeding, often called your "period." During a woman's monthly menstrual cycle, your uterus lining builds up to prepare for pregnancy. If you do not get pregnant, your hormone levels (estrogen and progesterone) begin falling. Very low levels of estrogen and progesterone tell your body to begin menstruation. When you menstruate, your body discards the monthly buildup of the lining of your uterus (womb).

## Self-Care

- Take good care of your hygiene
- Change your pads every two-six hours. If using reusable pads made from cloth, wash them well with soap and dry them out completely.
- Eat healthy food rich in iron (spinach, bananas, leafy greens, quinoa, broccoli) and magnesium (avocados, nuts, legumes, tofu, whole grains)
- Stay hydrated
- Exercise as usual, exercise can help reduce pains from cramps.
- Get plenty of sleep/rest.

## Know the Options

- Pads - come in a variety of sizes to fit your flow & your body..
- Tampons - learn how to properly insert a tampon and when to remove to avoid infections.
- Period underwear - such as Thinx are becoming popular as there is less waste, less mess, and more comfort than a pad.
- Menstrual cups - such as Diva cup, another option for those wanting comfort and less noticeable periods.
- Birth Control - some forms of birth control may reduce period severity, reduce occurrences or completely eliminate periods. This may be an option for those suffering from very painful periods or hormonal issues.

## Ask for Help

*Talk to a doctor if you have the following symptoms*

- You get irregular periods (your period happens more often than every 24 days or less often than every 38 days, or lasts longer than 8 days).
- You feel dizzy, lightheaded, weak, or tired, or you have chest pain or trouble breathing during or after your period.
- You bleed through one or more pads or tampons every one to two hours.
- You suddenly get a fever and feel sick after using tampons.
- You have menstrual pain that doesn't get better with over-the-counter pain medicine, such as ibuprofen or naproxen.
- You have period pain, cramps, or heavy bleeding that makes you miss work, school, or other daily activities.
- You get a migraine around your period or your regular migraine treatment stops working.
- You have blood clots in your menstrual flow that are larger than a quarter.
- You have bleeding after sex, more than once.
- You have spotting or bleeding any time in the menstrual cycle other than during your period.
- You have bleeding after menopause.