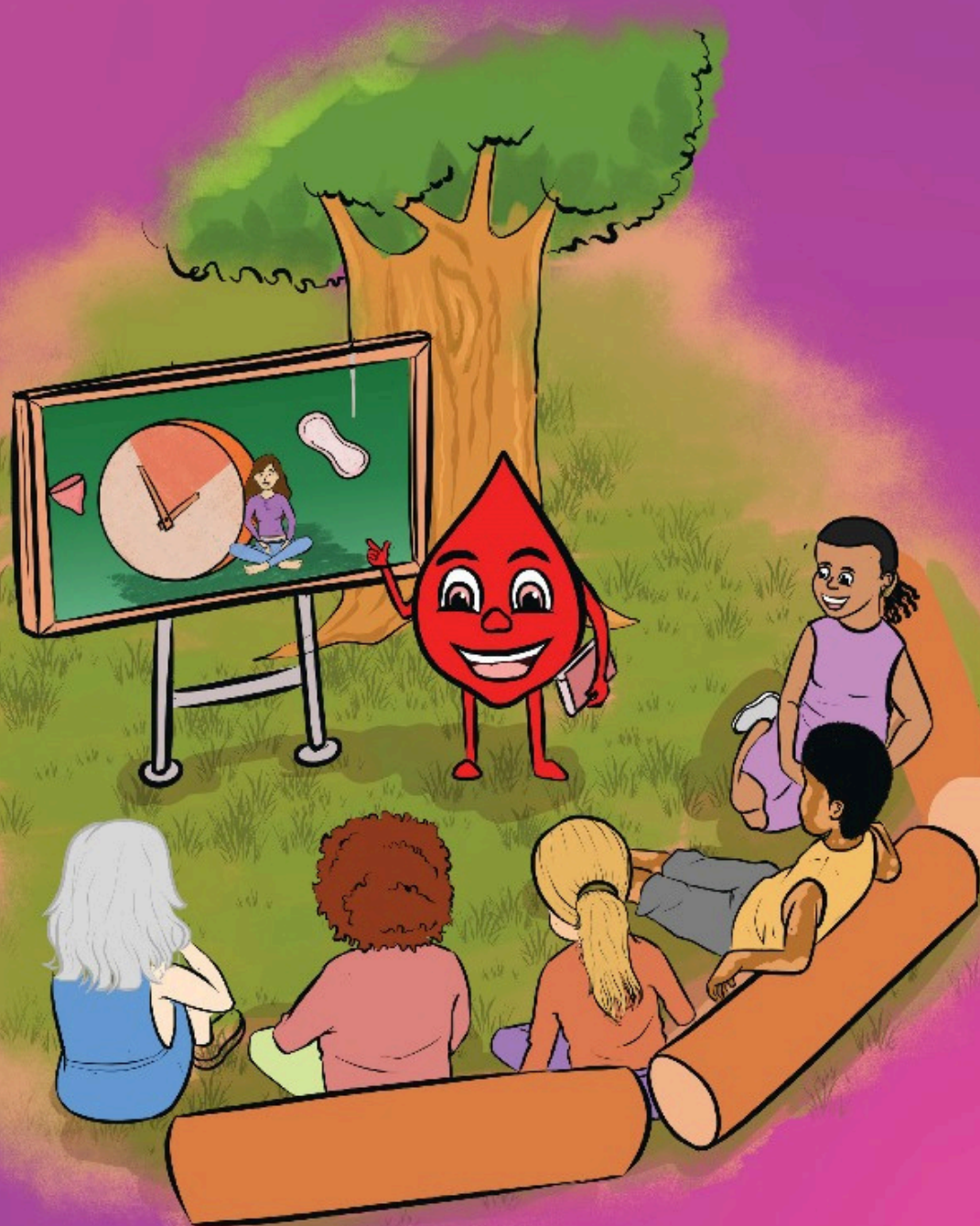


FLOWING WISDOM

A FUN GUIDE TO GROWING UP AND
MENSTRUAL HEALTH



WRITTEN BY
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&
LETICIA BRITO'

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About the Book.

Flowing Wisdom is an engaging and inclusive guide that demystifies menstruation for adolescents of all genders. Created by Njeri Kamau, a menstrual health champion and educator and Leticia Brito a health educator, this book is more than just a guide on menstrual health, it's a celebration of growth, self-esteem, and gender equality

Join Bodi, your friendly guide, on a journey through the wonders of the human body. This book covers everything from the basics of the menstrual cycle to practical tips on managing periods with confidence. But Flowing Wisdom goes beyond biology, addressing important topics like self-esteem, leadership, and the vital role boys play in supporting menstrual health.

Inspired by Njeri's own experiences with her school club, also named Flowing Wisdom, this guide aims to break down stereotypes and end the stigma surrounding menstruation. Packed with fun activities, interactive elements, it empowers young readers with knowledge, promotes equality, and encourages active participation in creating a supportive community.

Flowing Wisdom is a sustainable effort to combat the poverty of menstrual education in Kenya and beyond, offering evidence-based information that is accessible and engaging. Whether you're a girl or a boy, this guide is your companion in understanding, embracing, and supporting menstrual health with pride and empathy.

Ready to gain some wisdom and become a menstrual health champion? Dive into Flowing Wisdom and let the learning flow!



About the author.

Njeri Kamau is a dedicated menstrual health champion committed to advancing menstrual equity in underserved schools and communities. She leads the Flowing Wisdom initiative, focusing on educating and empowering adolescent boys and girls with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health. Through this initiative, Njeri also provides girls with the necessary resources to manage their periods safely, hygienically, and with dignity, enabling them to fully participate in their education without any menstrual limitations.



Acknowledgement.

Creating the Flowing Wisdom guide has been a journey filled with inspiration, support, and immense gratitude. First, I thank God for His faithfulness, guiding me from the early ideas of this project to its completion.

I am incredibly grateful to my family, whose encouragement and belief in my potential have pushed me to pursue excellence every step of the way.

A special thanks to Leticia, who saw my abilities and supported me in bringing this guide to life. Her mentorship has been invaluable.

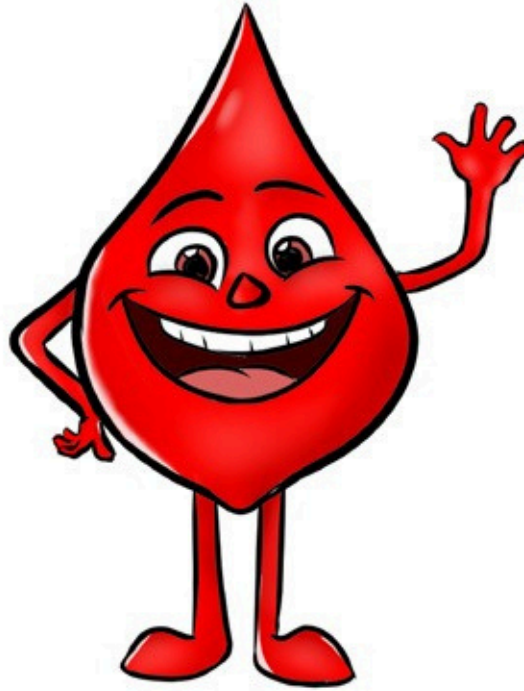
My learners have been the heart of this project, each of their questions, challenges, and growth inspired the content within these pages.

Lastly, my sincere gratitude to Teach for Kenya for providing the platform and support to explore and share my passion for menstrual health education.

I hope Flowing Wisdom becomes a resource that enlightens, empowers, and enhances understanding in classrooms and communities, encouraging open conversations and confidence in navigating life's natural changes.



WELCOME!



Hello, amazing friends! I'm Bodi, your guide through this exciting journey of growing up. Whether you're a girl or a boy, this guide is for you. We'll learn about our bodies, especially a natural process called menstruation. Don't worry if some words sound new, we'll explore everything together!

Growing up is just like learning a new skill, like riding a bike. It might take some time, but with patience and support, you'll get there! After you finish each section of this guide, try sharing what you've learned with a friend or family member. You're in for a fun adventure!

Remember, everyone grows
and learns at their own pace.
That's what makes you
special!



Parents and Caregiver Guide



Here are some tips for discussing these topics with your child,

1. Create an open judgement-free environment for questions and discussions.
2. Use correct anatomical terms to reduce stigma and confusion.
3. Emphasise that everyone develops at their own pace.
4. Discuss the importance of respect, consent, and bodily autonomy.
5. Share your own experiences if you're comfortable doing so.
6. Encourage your child to come to you with any concerns or questions.

Dear Parents and Caregivers, This guide aims to provide age-appropriate information about menstrual health and growing up. We encourage you to read through it with your child, answer their questions openly, and use this as an opportunity to start important discussions about body awareness and health.

Remember, these conversations are ongoing. Keep the dialogue open as your child grows and develops

Activity:

Sit with your child and draw or write a list of affirmations about their body! You could write things like, "Every body grows in its own way," or "You are amazing, just as you are."

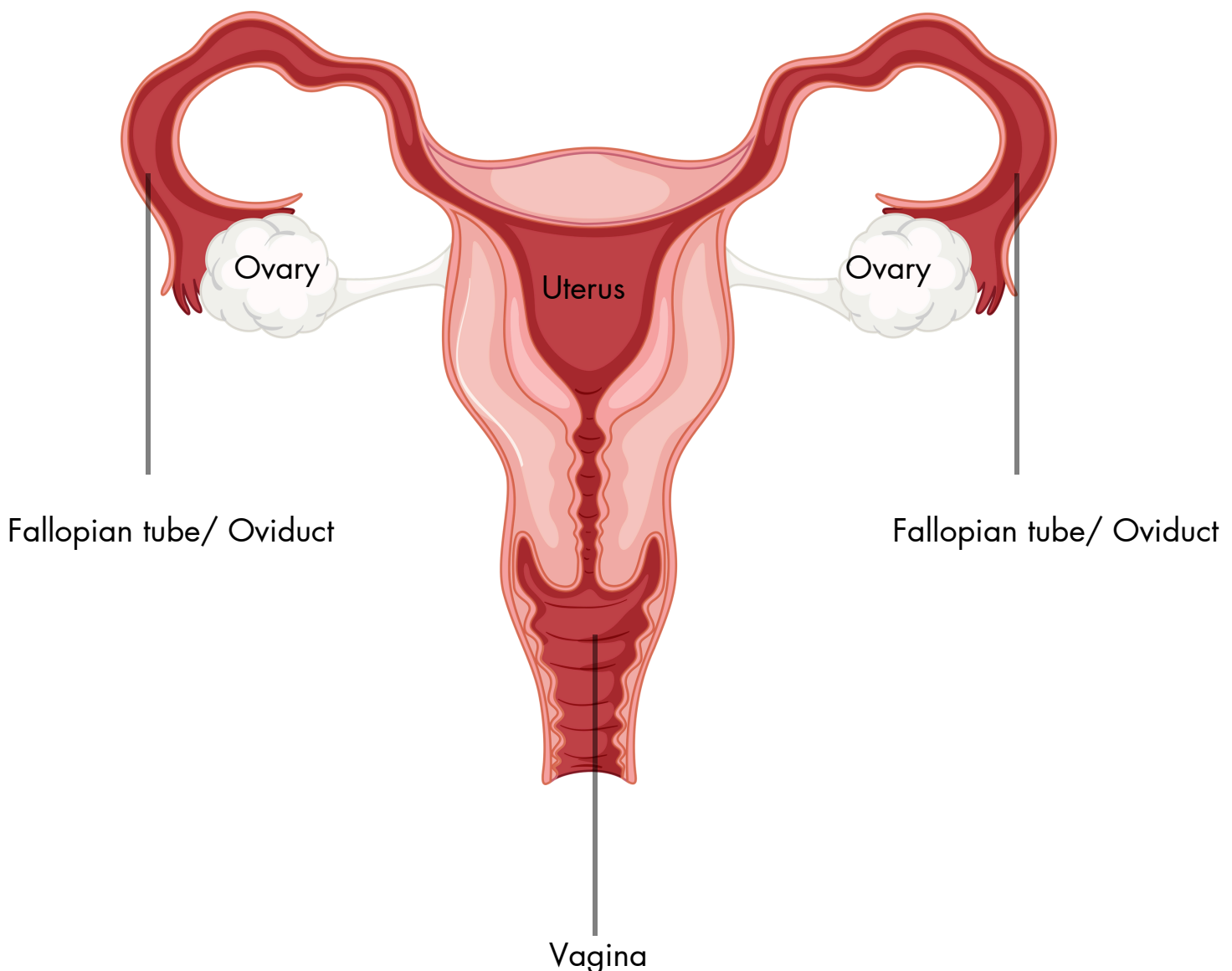


Understanding Our Bodies

Growing up means getting to know and understand the unique and amazing parts of our bodies. This section is all about helping you learn about the parts that make up male and female bodies, especially those related to growth, development, and reproduction.

Whether you are male or female, understanding these parts can help you take better care of yourself and appreciate the changes your body goes through as you grow. *Here are some important parts of the female body that play a role in growth, development, and reproduction*

Female Body Parts



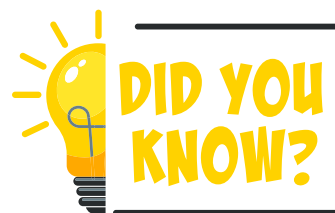
Ovaries Girls have two small, oval-shaped organs called ovaries. These ovaries produce eggs (or ova), which are tiny cells that are important for reproduction. Every month, an egg matures and is released from one of the ovaries—this is called ovulation.

Fallopian tube The fallopian tubes (also called oviducts) are like small pathways that connect the ovaries to the uterus. Every month, when an egg is released from the ovary, it travels through the fallopian tube. If it meets a sperm there, it might start the process of making a baby. If not, the egg will eventually leave the body during the menstrual cycle.

Uterus The uterus is a pear-shaped organ where a baby can grow if the egg is fertilized by sperm. Each month, the lining of the uterus thickens to prepare for a possible pregnancy. If the egg is not fertilized, the uterus sheds this lining, and that's what causes a period (menstruation).

Vagina The vagina is the muscular tube that connects the uterus to the outside of the body. It's where menstrual blood leaves the body during a period, and it plays an important role in the reproductive system.

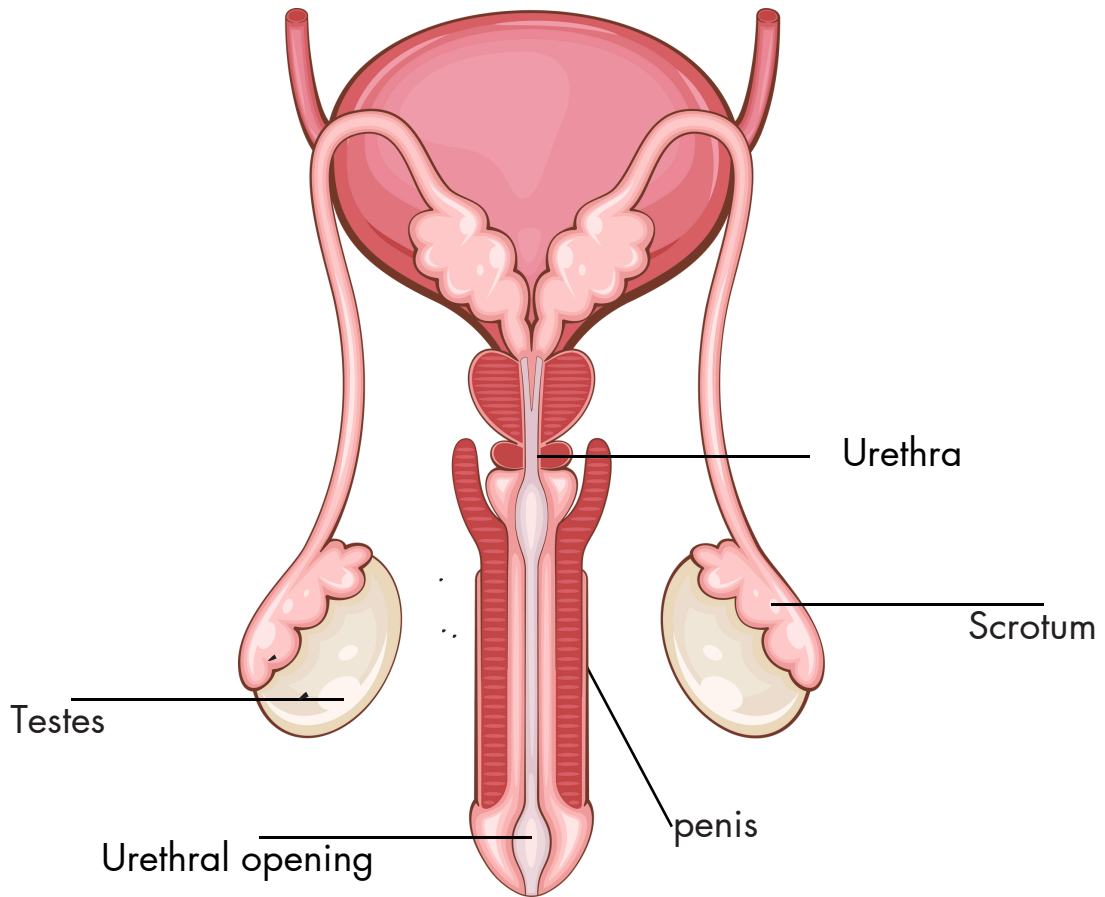
Vulva The vulva is the outer part of the female genitals that you can see. It includes the labia (the lips around the opening) and clitoris, which are visible from the outside.



Girls are born with all the eggs they'll ever have—about one million eggs! But only about 300 to 500 eggs will mature over the course of their lives, usually one each month once they start having periods

Male Body Parts

Here are some key parts of the male body that are involved in growth, development, and reproduction:



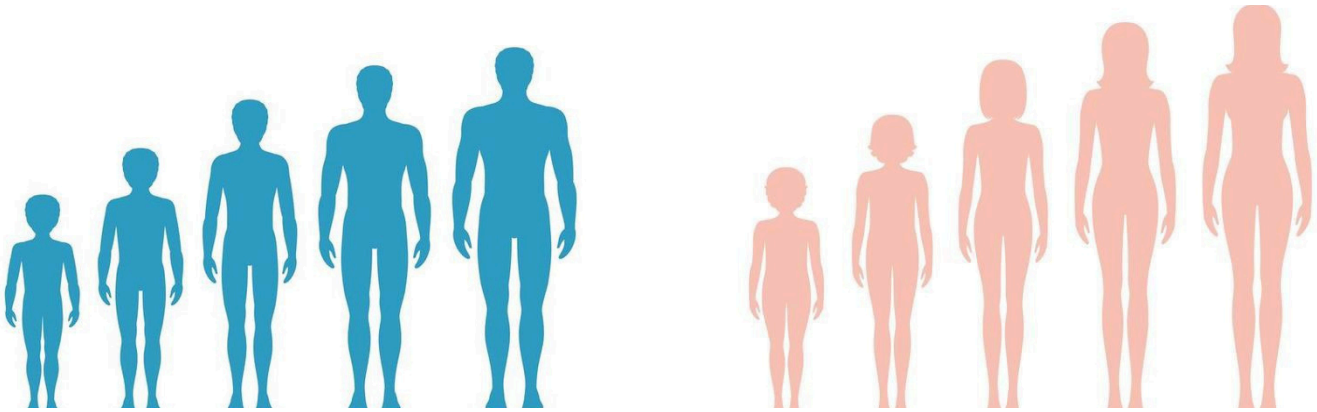
Testicles (or Testes): Boys have two oval-shaped organs called testicles. These produce sperm, which are tiny cells that are important for reproduction. Sperm cells are much smaller than eggs, but they play a huge role in making a baby when they meet and fertilize the egg.

Scrotum: The scrotum is the pouch of skin that holds the testicles. It helps keep the testicles at the right temperature, which is important for sperm production. The scrotum can move up or down to keep the testicles cool or warm, depending on the environment.

Penis: The penis is the organ used for both urination and reproduction. During puberty, the penis grows larger, and boys might notice that it becomes erect (or hard) sometimes, which is completely normal.

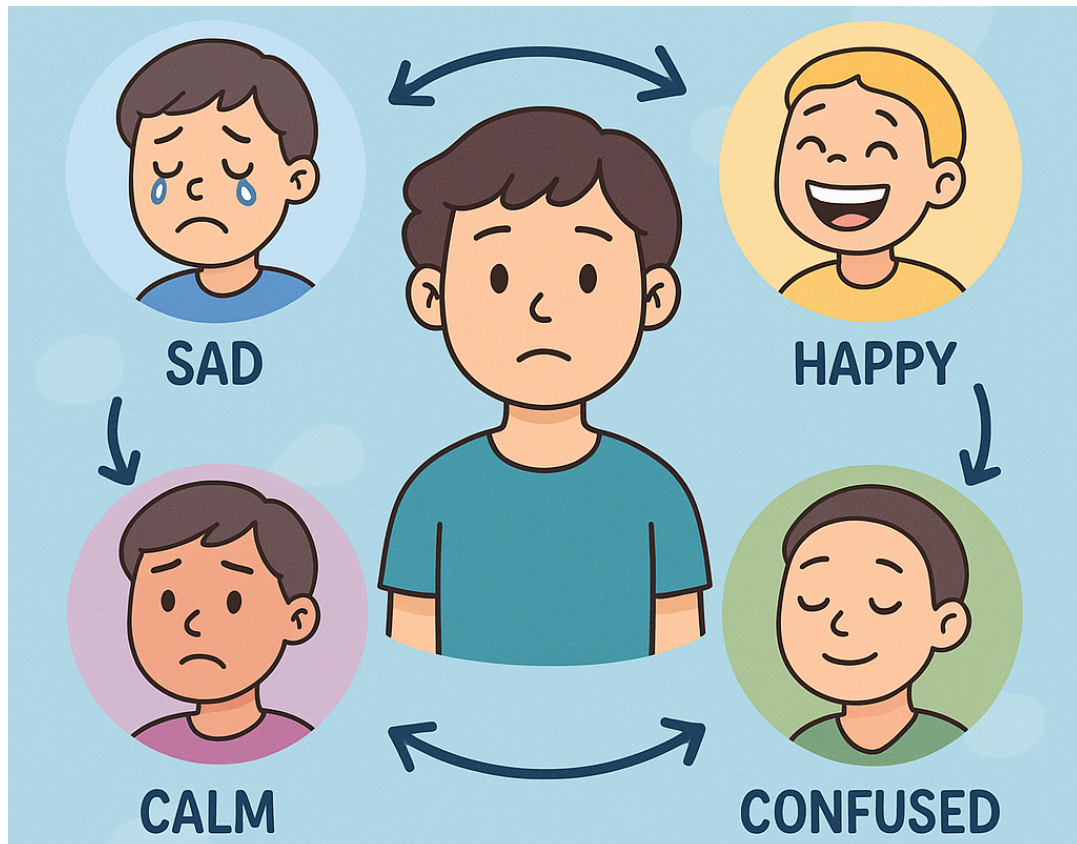
What is puberty?

Puberty is the time when your body starts to change and prepare for adulthood. Here are some things that happen for both boys and girls:



- 1. Growth Spurts:** Both boys and girls get taller during puberty. You might feel like you're growing quickly all of a sudden, that's called a growth spurt!
- 2. Body Hair:** You'll start to notice hair growing in new places, like under your arms, around your genitals (pubic hair), and even on your face if you're a boy.
- 3. Acne:** Your skin might produce more oil, and you could get pimples or acne. This is normal and part of the changes happening in your body.
- 4. Sweating:** You'll start to sweat more, especially when you're active. This is a good time to start wearing deodorant and practicing good hygiene to stay fresh.
- 5. Breast Development (for girls):** Girls will notice their breasts starting to grow. This can happen at different times for everyone, and it's completely normal for one breast to grow faster than the other.
- 6. Voice Changes (for boys):** Boys will notice that their voices get deeper. This happens because the voice box, or larynx, grows bigger during puberty, which makes the voice sound lower.

Emotional changes



Puberty isn't just about physical changes, it's also a time when your emotions might change. You might feel happy one moment and sad the next, or get frustrated more easily than before.

This is because your body is producing hormones that help with growth and development, but also affect your mood.

Remember, it's okay to feel different emotions during this time, and talking to someone you trust can help.

How Boys and Girls Change Differently

Girls: Girls usually begin puberty earlier than boys, often between the ages of 8-13. During puberty, their breasts begin to develop, they grow taller, and they eventually start menstruating (having periods). They might also notice wider hips and more body fat around their thighs and stomach as their bodies prepare for adulthood.

Boys: Boys typically begin puberty a little later than girls, usually between the ages of 9-14. They may notice their muscles getting bigger, their shoulders broadening, and their voice getting deeper.

Boys also experience something called nocturnal emissions (or "wet dreams"), where they ejaculate sperm while they're sleeping. This is completely normal and just another sign that the body is growing up.

Everyone Develops at Their Own Pace

It's important to remember that everyone's body develops at a different pace. Some people might notice changes earlier, while others might develop later—and that's okay! There's no "right" time for your body to change, and it's important to be kind to yourself and others as everyone grows at their own pace. Celebrate your growth and remember that you're special just the way you are.

Respecting your body and others' bodies



Every body is different and grows in its own way. It's important to be kind to yourself as your body changes and to treat others with respect, too. Here are some tips for respecting your body and the bodies of others,

Ask for Consent: Whether it's giving someone a hug or borrowing something, always ask for consent. And remember, it's okay for someone to say no, and it's okay for you to say no too if something makes you uncomfortable.

Respect Boundaries: Just like you have your own boundaries, so do others. If someone tells you they don't like something, listen and respect their wishes. It's also okay to say "no" if something makes you uncomfortable

Reflection: How do you feel about your body?

Take a moment to think about how you feel as your body grows and changes. Maybe you're excited, maybe you're unsure, or maybe it feels a little confusing, and that's okay!



Write down one thing you're proud of about your body!

Now, write one thing you want to learn more about your body!

What is Menstruation?



Menstruation, often called "having a period," is a natural monthly process that happens in most girls' and women's bodies.

It usually starts between ages 9-15 – this starting point is called "menarche" (say: MEN-ar-kee).

During menstruation, the uterus (a special organ in girls' bodies) releases a mix of blood and tissue.

This usually happens about once a month and lasts for 3-7 days. It's a healthy sign that your body is growing up!

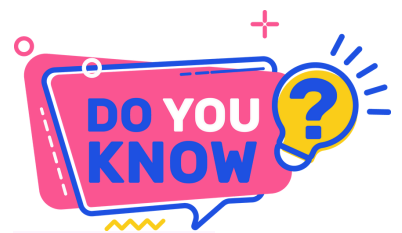
Activity

Circle the emojis that describe how you feel learning about menstruation:



Why do you think you feel this way about menstruation?

Write your thoughts below or discuss with a friend or trusted adult. Remember, there are no right or wrong feelings, and it's okay to have questions.



The word "menstruation" comes from the Latin word "mensis" which means month!

What to Expect During Your Period

Periods can be different for everyone, but here are some things you might experience:

1. Flow (How much blood you'll see)

Light Flow: Some people have a light flow, with only a small amount of blood being released. You might notice spotting or a few drops of blood, especially on the first and last days of your period.

Medium Flow: A medium flow means you'll see more blood, but not too much. You'll probably need to change your pad every 4-6 hours.

Heavy Flow: Some people experience heavier bleeding, especially on the second or third day. You might need to change your pad every 3-4 hours. Heavy flow is normal for many people.

Tissues: Sometimes you might see small pieces of soft tissue mixed with the blood. This is normal and part of the lining of your uterus



2. How Long Will It Last?

Periods usually last between 3-7 days, but this can be different for everyone. Here's what you might notice over the course of your period:

Day 1-2: The flow might be lighter at first as your body begins to shed the uterine lining.

Day 3-4: For many people, the flow is heaviest on these days as the body continues shedding the lining.

Day 5-7: Toward the end of your period, the flow usually becomes lighter again.

3. How Often Will I Get My Period?

Your period usually comes once a month, but it's normal for periods to be a little irregular, especially in the first few years.

Your cycle length (the time from the start of one period to the start of the next) is typically about 28 days, but it can be anywhere between 21 and 35 days.

Irregular periods are common, especially in the beginning. Your body is still adjusting! If you're concerned, it's always okay to talk to a trusted adult or healthcare provider.

4. How Much Blood Will I Lose?

Even though it may seem like a lot, the average person only loses about 2-3 tablespoons of blood during their entire period.

5. What Else to Expect

Color Changes

The color of period blood can vary. It might be bright red on heavier days and dark brown or pink when the flow is lighter. This is completely normal.

Cramps

You might feel cramps in your lower belly or lower back during your period. This happens because the uterus is contracting (squeezing) to help shed its lining. For some people, cramps are mild, while others might find them more painful.

Mood Changes

You might feel more emotional or sensitive before and during your period. This is called PMS(Premenstrual Syndrome), and it's completely normal. Hormones affect not only your body but also your emotions, and it's okay to feel different during this time.

Bloating and Gas

Some people feel bloated or gassy before or during their periods. This happens because your body holds onto extra water, but it usually goes away after your period ends.

When to worry and ask for help

Most periods are normal and healthy, but sometimes things might feel a little off. Here's when you should talk to a trusted adult or doctor:

Heavy Bleeding: If you're soaking through a pad or tampon every 1-2 hours for several hours in a row, that might be a sign your flow is too heavy. It's important to let someone know if this happens.

Periods Lasting Too Long: If your period lasts more than 7 days, or if it suddenly becomes much longer than usual, talk to a trusted adult.

Severe Cramps: Cramps are normal, but if you have very painful cramps that don't get better with rest, heat, or over-the-counter pain relievers, it's a good idea to ask for help. No one should have to suffer through intense pain every month.

Feeling Dizzy or Weak: If you ever feel lightheaded, dizzy, or weak during your period, it could be a sign that you're losing too much blood. Let an adult know how you're feeling so they can help you.

No Period After 16: If you haven't gotten your first period by age 16, or have been getting periods but it suddenly stops for more than 3 months. It's worth checking with a doctor to make sure everything is okay.

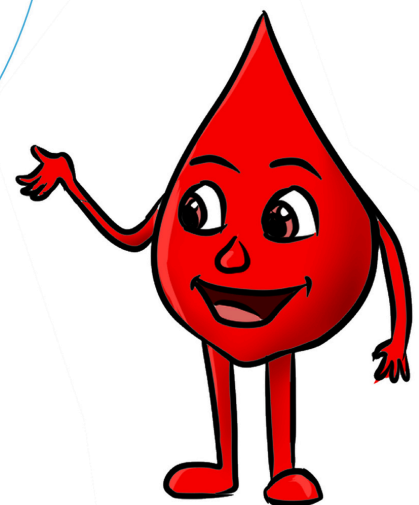
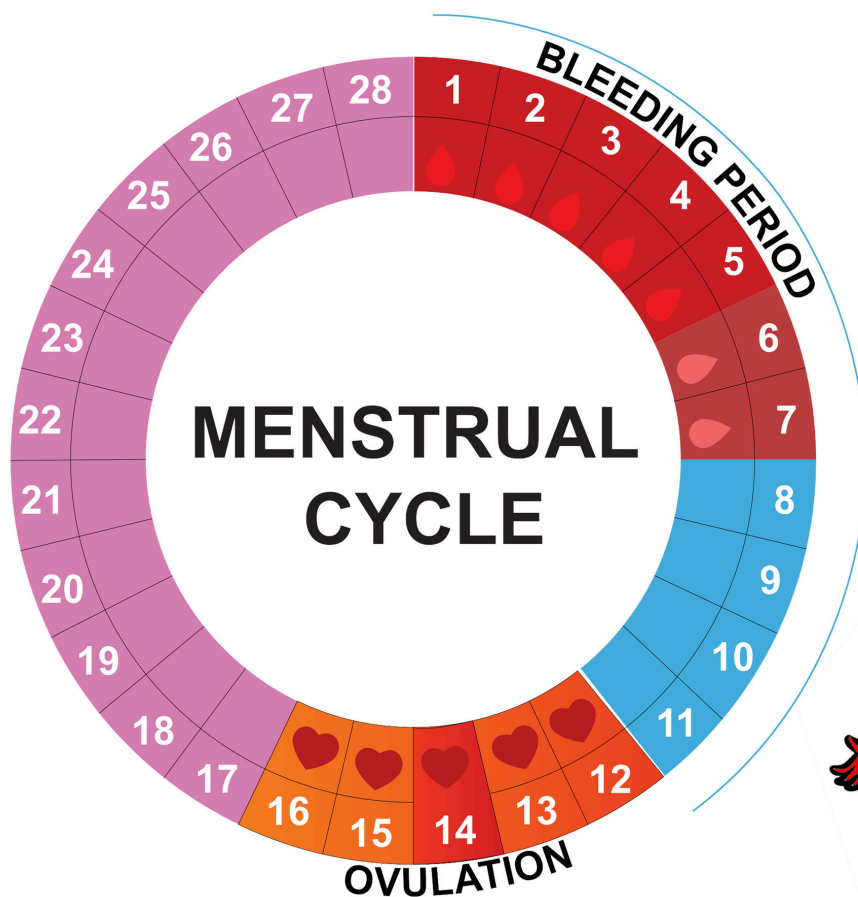
Irregular Periods After 2-3 Years: If your periods are still irregular after 2-3 years, it's a good idea to get advice from a healthcare provider.



What is the Menstrual Cycle?

The menstrual cycle is the time from the first day of one period to the first day of the next. It's like a monthly pattern that your body follows to prepare for the possibility of pregnancy.

Even though periods are part of this cycle, it's important to know that the menstrual cycle isn't just about your period, there's a lot going on in your body throughout the month! Let's break it down:



The Four Phases of The Menstrual Cycle

1. Menstruation (Days 1-7) : This is the time when the uterus sheds its lining, which leaves the body as your period (blood and soft tissue). This part of the cycle usually lasts 3-7 days.
2. Follicular Phase (Days 8-13) : After your period ends, the body starts preparing a new lining in the uterus. This is because your body is getting ready in case a fertilized egg needs to grow there. At the same time, an egg starts to mature in one of your ovaries.
3. Ovulation (Around Day 14): Ovulation happens when the mature egg is released from the ovary. This is the time when pregnancy could happen if the egg meets sperm. If it doesn't, the egg will dissolve, and your body will move on to the next phase of the cycle.
4. Luteal Phase (Days 15-28): If the egg isn't fertilized, your hormone levels drop, which signals your body to prepare for the next period. Some people experience PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome) during this time, which means you might feel more tired, bloated, or emotional..

Tracking Your Periods



Tracking your period helps you understand your cycle better, so you can be prepared for your next period. Here's how you can do it:

- 1. Mark the First Day:** Write down the first day of your period on a calendar. This is called Day 1 of your cycle.
- 2. Count the Days:** Count the number of days from the start of one period to the start of the next. This is the length of your cycle. **Example:** If your period starts on November 1st and your next period starts on November 29th, your cycle is 28 days long.
- 3. Note Symptoms:** Keep track of how you feel during your period and throughout your cycle. Do you have cramps? Do you feel more tired? Noticing patterns can help you understand your body better.

Activity:

Create a mini calendar or a period bracelet to track your period. Add colorful stickers/ doodles or beads to make it your own! Refer to the sample provided 😊

Period Tracker

YEAR _____

NOTES

☐ HEAVY

☐ REGULAR

☐ LIGHT

CYCLE LENGTH

DEC	NOV	OCT	SEP	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	APR	MAR	FEB	JAN

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
JAN																															
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How the Menstrual Cycle Affects How You Feel

Your menstrual cycle can affect more than just your period. You might notice changes in your mood, energy levels, or even your skin during different parts of the cycle. Some people feel more energetic around ovulation, while others might feel more tired during the luteal phase.

When to Expect Changes in Your Cycle

It's normal for your menstrual cycle to change sometimes. Here are a few things that can affect your cycle:

Stress: If you're feeling stressed or anxious, your period might come earlier or later than usual.

Diet and Exercise: Eating well and staying active are important for your health. But if you exercise a lot or aren't getting enough nutrients, it could make your period lighter or delayed.

Hormonal Changes: Especially in the first few years, your hormones might fluctuate, which can make your cycle irregular.

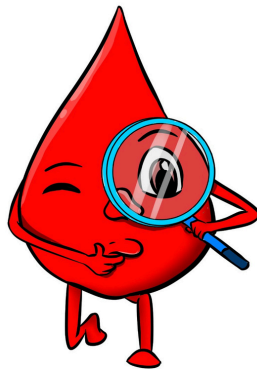


Menstruation Myths and Fact

There are a lot of things people might say about periods that aren't true. These are called myths. Sometimes, myths can make people feel embarrassed, confused, or even scared about having their period.

It's important to understand the facts so that you know the truth about menstruation and feel confident talking about it!

Let's bust some of the most common myths!



Myth 1: You can't swim during your period.

Fact: Yes, you can swim during your period! There's no reason why you should avoid swimming just because you have your period. You can use a tampon or menstrual cup while swimming to help keep things comfortable.

Why this myth exists: Some people believe that period blood will leak into the water or that it's unhealthy to swim while menstruating, but this isn't true.

The truth: Period blood doesn't flow out more just because you're in the water, and using the right menstrual product means you can swim just like you normally would

Myth 2: It's okay to miss school because of your period.

Fact: While it's not necessary to miss school just because of your period, if you're feeling unwell, it's okay to take care of yourself. Some girls experience discomfort during their period, like cramps or tiredness, and it's important to manage those feelings in a healthy way.

Why this myth exists: Some people believe that periods are so uncomfortable or embarrassing that girls should stay home. Others think it's okay to use periods as an excuse to skip school.

The truth: Having your period doesn't mean you should miss out on school or activities. However, if you're experiencing a lot of pain or discomfort, talk to a trusted adult. They can help you find ways to manage the pain so you don't have to miss school.

Myth 3: Period blood is dirty.

Fact: Period blood is NOT dirty. It's just like the blood that flows through the rest of your body, mixed with soft tissue from the lining of the uterus. It's completely normal and healthy!

Why this myth exists: Some people think that period blood is somehow "bad" or "unclean" because it's coming from a private part of the body, but that's simply not true.

The truth: Period blood is a natural part of how the body works, and there's nothing dirty or shameful about it. It's just your body doing its job!

Myth 4: Only girls need to learn about periods.

Fact: Boys should learn about periods too! Even though boys don't get periods, understanding menstruation helps them be more supportive and respectful of girls who do. It also helps break down the stigma around periods.

Why this myth exists: Sometimes people think that because boys don't have periods, they don't need to know anything about them. But this can lead to misunderstanding and teasing.

The truth: Boys play an important role in making sure that periods aren't treated like a secret or something to make fun of. When boys know about periods, they can be better friends, brothers, and future partners.

Myth 5: Period pain is always normal, no matter how bad it gets.

Fact: While it's normal to have mild cramps during your period, severe pain isn't something you should ignore. If you have very strong cramps or pain that stops you from doing everyday activities, it's important to talk to a doctor.

Why this myth exists: Some people think that all pain during periods is normal and that you should just deal with it, but that's not always the case.

The truth: Mild cramps can be normal, but severe pain could be a sign that something else is going on. Always let a trusted adult know if your period pain feels too intense.

Myth 6: You can't exercise during your period.

Fact: You can absolutely exercise during your period, and it can actually help you feel better! Gentle exercises like walking, stretching, or yoga can help reduce cramps and improve your mood.

Why this myth exists: Some people believe that exercise will make periods worse or that you should rest completely during your period.

The truth: While it's important to listen to your body, light exercise can actually help relieve period discomfort. It can also boost your energy and help you feel more relaxed.

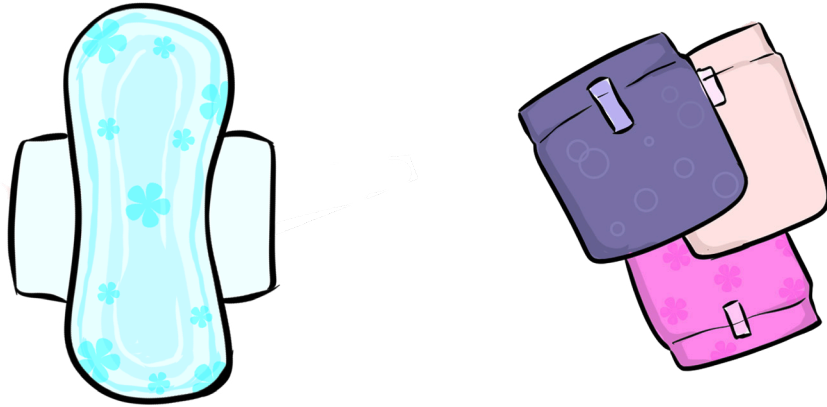
Understanding the truth about periods helps you feel more confident and in control. The more you know, the easier it is to talk about menstruation without feeling embarrassed. Remember, periods are a natural part of life, and there's nothing weird or scary about them. Whenever you hear a myth about periods, you can use what you've learned to help spread the truth!

[illegible]

There are different products you can use, and everyone has their own preference for what feels best. Let's meet the Period Pals and learn how to take care of yourself during your period!

There are many products designed to help manage menstrual flow, and they're all a little different. It's good to try out different products to see which one works best for you.

1. *Patty the Pad:*

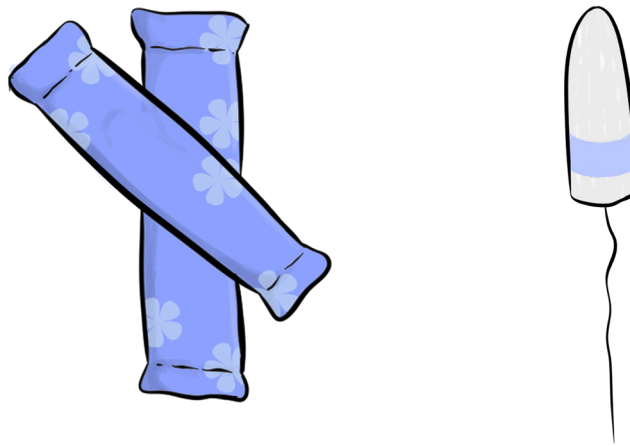


Pads are soft, absorbent products that stick to your underwear and soak up menstrual blood. They come in different sizes and shapes for light, medium, or heavy flow.

How to Use: Peel off the sticky backing and press the pad onto your underwear. You should change your pad every 4-6 hours or sooner if it feels full.

Why Some People Like Pads: They're easy to use, comfortable, and good for people who aren't ready for tampons or menstrual cups yet.

2. *Tammy the Tampon:*



Tampons are small, absorbent products that you insert inside your vagina to absorb menstrual flow. They're great for activities like swimming and sports because they stay in place inside your body.

How to Use: Gently insert the tampon into your vagina, leaving the string hanging out. Tampons should be changed every 4-8 hours.

Why Some People Like Tampons: They're small, discreet, and great for active people. You can wear them while swimming or playing sports without worrying about leaks.

3. Cuppy the Menstrual Cup:

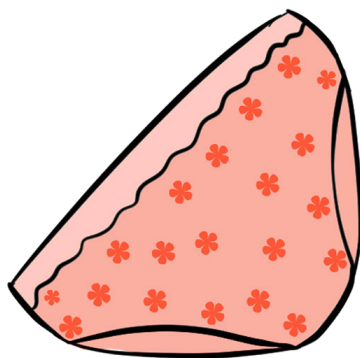


A menstrual cup is a small, flexible cup that you insert into your vagina to collect menstrual flow. It's reusable, which makes it eco-friendly.

How to Use: Gently fold the cup and insert it into your vagina. It will open up inside and collect the blood. You should empty and rinse the cup every 8-12 hours.

Why Some People Like Menstrual Cups: They're eco-friendly and can be worn for longer periods of time than pads or tampons. They also save money since they can be reused for several years.

4. Panty the Period Underwear:

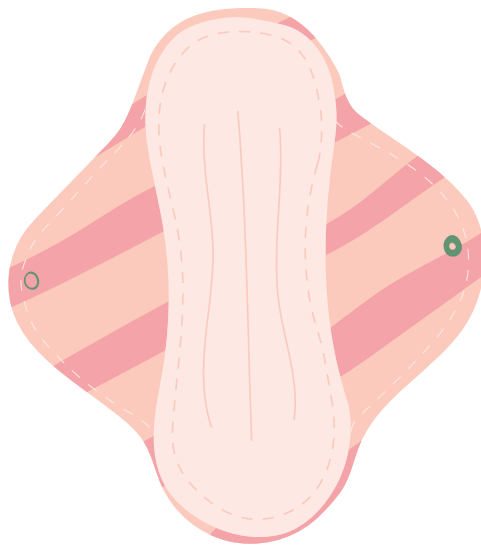


Period underwear looks like regular underwear but has a special layer that absorbs menstrual flow, just like a pad.

How to Use: Just wear them like normal underwear! You can wash and reuse them after each period.

Why Some People Like Period Underwear: They're reusable, comfortable, and easy to wear. They're great for light days or as backup with other products.

5. Rita the Reusable Pad:



Reusable pads are cloth pads that you can wash and use again. They work just like disposable pads but are more eco-friendly.

How to Use: Place the pad on your underwear and use the buttons or snaps to hold it in place. After using it, wash it with mild soap and water, dry it, and use it again!

Why Some People Like Reusable Pads: They're environmentally friendly, cost-effective, and comfortable. Plus, they come in fun colors and patterns!

How to Stay Clean During Your Period

Keeping clean is a big part of feeling comfortable during your period. Here are some tips to help you stay fresh and healthy:

- Change your pad or tampon regularly—every 4-8 hours or sooner if needed.
- For menstrual cups, empty and clean them at least twice a day.
- For reusable pads or period underwear, wash them with mild soap and water after use, dry them in the sun if possible, and store them in a clean, dry place.
- Wash your hands before and after changing your period product to avoid spreading germs.
- Dispose of used products properly.
- Don't flush pads, tampons, or other menstrual products down the toilet. Use a sanitary bin or trash can.
- Bathe or shower daily to stay fresh and clean throughout your period. This helps prevent any odors or discomfort.

Dealing with Leaks



Sometimes, period leaks can happen, especially if your flow is heavy or if your pad, tampon, or cup isn't positioned correctly. Don't worry, leaks happen to everyone at some point! Here's what you can do:

- Use backup protection, like wearing period underwear with a tampon or cup, or using a pad with your regular underwear.
- wear darker clothes if you are worried about leaks.
- Carry extra pads or tampons with you in case you need to change during the day.
- Ask for help if you're at school and experience a leak. Teachers, nurses, or trusted.
- Friends can help you get what you need to feel comfortable again.

Choosing the right product



Everyone's body is different, so it's important to choose the period product that feels best for you. You might want to try a few different options before finding the one you're most comfortable with.

And remember, it's okay if you like different products for different situations, for example, using pads at night and tampons during sports.

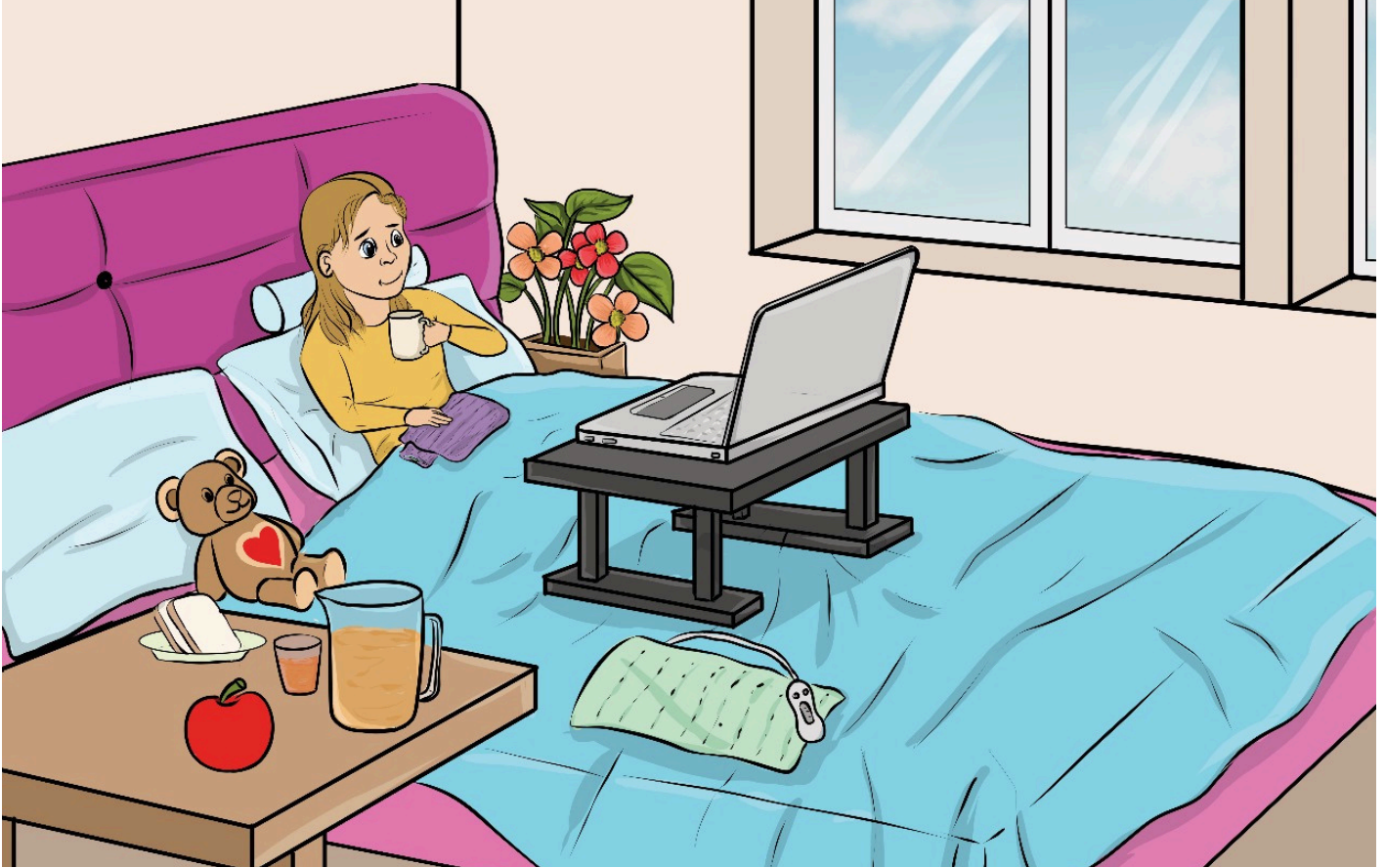
Managing your period is all about finding what works best for you and feeling comfortable throughout your cycle. It's important to keep yourself clean, change your products regularly, and take care of your body.

Remember, there's no one "right" way to manage your period, what matters is finding what makes you feel confident and healthy.

If you ever have questions about managing your period, don't be afraid to ask a parent, a trusted adult, or a healthcare provider for advice. They can help you figure out what works best for your body.

Feeling Good During Your Period

Having your period can sometimes come with discomfort, whether it's cramps, fatigue, or mood changes. But there are many ways to help yourself feel better during this time! Let's explore some strategies to make your period more comfortable and enjoyable.



Managing Physical Discomfort

1. Cramps:

Many people experience cramps during their period, which can feel like a tightness or pain in the lower belly. Here are some ways to help ease those cramps:

Use a Heating Pad: Applying heat to your belly can help relax the muscles and reduce pain. You can use a hot water bottle, a heating pad, or even a warm towel.

Gentle Exercise: Light activities, like walking, stretching, or yoga, can help reduce cramping. Moving your body encourages blood flow, which can ease discomfort.

Take Deep Breaths: Practice deep breathing exercises to help relax your body and reduce pain. Try taking slow, deep breaths for a few minutes to help calm your mind and body.

Over-the-Counter Pain Relief: If you're comfortable, you can talk to a trusted adult about taking over-the-counter pain relievers, like ibuprofen or acetaminophen, to help with cramps.



2. Tiredness:

Feeling tired or fatigued during your period is common, especially if you're experiencing cramps or heavy flow. Here's how to boost your energy:

Rest: Give your body time to relax and recharge. Taking short naps or simply lying down for a while can help you feel better.

Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water! Staying hydrated can help reduce bloating and fatigue. Herbal teas can also be soothing and hydrating.

Eat Healthy Foods: Eating nutritious foods can help fuel your body. Focus on meals that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins. Foods rich in iron, like leafy greens and lean meats, are especially good during your period.

3. Headaches:

Some people may experience headaches during their period due to hormonal changes. Here's what you can do to feel better:

Rest in a Quiet Space: If you have a headache, find a calm and dark place to relax. Sometimes, resting can help relieve the pain.

Apply a Cool Compress: Place a cool cloth or ice pack on your forehead for 10-15 minutes to help reduce headaches.

Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water throughout the day, as dehydration can contribute to headaches.

Emotional Wellbeing

It's completely normal to feel a bit more emotional or sensitive during your period. Hormonal changes can affect your mood, and many people experience ups and downs. Here's how to take care of your emotional health:

Practice Self-Care: Take time to do things that make you feel good. This could be reading a book, drawing, listening to music, or watching a favorite movie. Find activities that bring you joy!

Talk About How You Feel: If you're feeling sad or overwhelmed, don't hesitate to talk to someone you trust. Sharing your feelings can help you feel lighter and more supported.

Write It Out: Keeping a journal can be a great way to express your feelings. Write down what you're experiencing, how you feel, and what helps you feel better. This can help you process your emotions.

Engage in Mindfulness: Mindfulness exercises, such as meditation or deep breathing, can help calm your mind and reduce stress. Take a few minutes each day to focus on your breath or listen to calming music.

Staying Healthy During Your Period

Here are some additional tips to help you feel good and stay healthy during your period:

Keep a Period Tracker: Tracking your period can help you understand your cycle better and prepare for how you might feel at different times of the month.

Get Enough Sleep: Aim for a good night's sleep to help your body recover and feel energized. Sleep is important for your overall health!

Exercise Regularly: Regular physical activity helps boost your mood and energy levels. You don't have to do intense workouts; even light activities like walking or stretching can help!

Remember, it's perfectly okay to feel a bit different during your period. Taking care of your physical and emotional health is important, and everyone deserves to feel good during this time. Experiment with different self-care techniques to see what works best for you! If you ever feel overwhelmed or need more support, don't hesitate to reach out to someone you trust. You're not alone in this journey!

Activity: Create Your Period Comfort Kit!

What items make you feel better during your period? Let's put together your own Period Comfort Kit! Here are some ideas to include:

1. Snacks: Your favorite healthy snacks or comfort foods.
2. Comfort Items: A cozy blanket, soft pillow, or stuffed animal.
3. Self-Care Products: Scented lotions, bath bombs, or calming tea.
4. Fun Activities: A book, drawing materials, or a playlist of your favorite songs.

What will you include in your kit?



Building self esteem

As you grow and navigate the changes in your body and life, it's important to feel good about yourself. Building self-esteem means recognizing your worth, celebrating your unique qualities, and being kind to yourself, especially during times of change like menstruation.



Why is Self-Esteem Important?

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself and your abilities. When you have healthy self-esteem, you're more likely to:

Take on challenges: You believe in your ability to try new things and face challenges head-on.

Form positive relationships: You're more likely to connect with others and build friendships based on mutual respect.

Handle criticism: When you feel good about yourself, it's easier to manage feedback and not take it personally.

How to Build Self-Esteem:

Here are some tips to help you nurture your self-esteem:

1. **Focus on Your Strengths:** Think about the things you're good at or the qualities you like about yourself. Are you a great artist? A good friend? A quick learner? Celebrating your strengths helps you recognize your value.
2. **Practice Positive Self-Talk:** The way you talk to yourself matters! Instead of saying, "I can't do this," try saying, "I'll give it my best shot." Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations. Here are some examples: "I am strong." "I am unique." "I can learn from my mistakes."
3. **Be Your Own Best Friend:** Treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend. If a friend is feeling down, you'd encourage them and lift them up. Do the same for yourself!

Activity

Take a moment to think about what makes you special. Write down five things you love about who you are—this could be about your personality, your talents, or even how you treat others.

Write a Letter to Your Future Self

Imagine yourself in the future. Write a letter to remind your future self of all the things that make you amazing. Include advice for when things get tough and things you hope to achieve.

Embracing Your Unique Journey

Every person is different, and that's what makes each of us special. Remember that it's okay to feel unsure sometimes, especially during puberty and with all the changes in your body. Everyone goes through it!

1. Celebrate Your Achievements: No matter how big or small, celebrate your accomplishments. Did you learn something new? Did you help a friend? Acknowledge those wins!

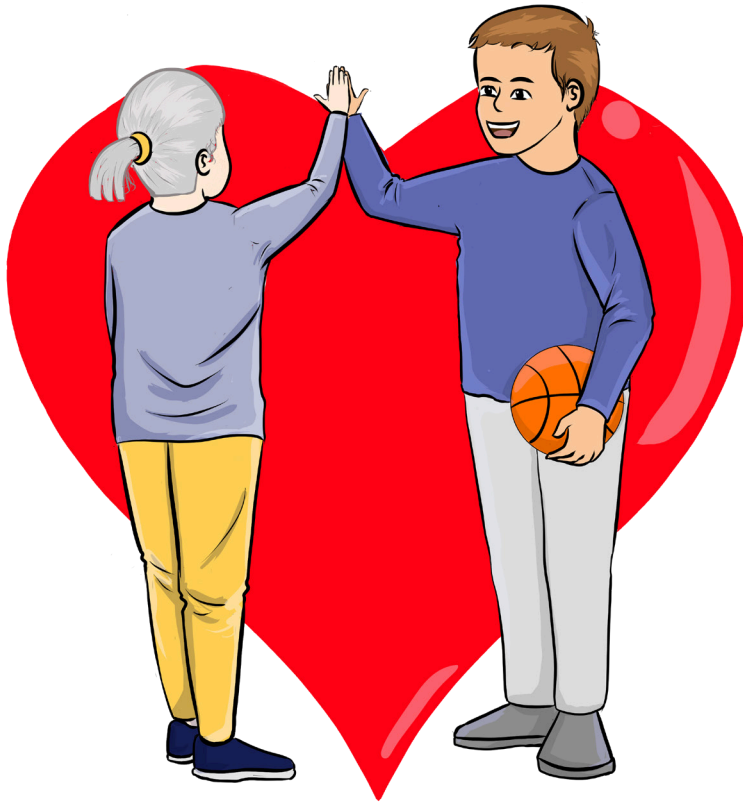
2. Surround Yourself with Positivity: Spend time with people who lift you up and support you. Avoid those who bring you down or make you feel bad about yourself.

Building self-esteem is a journey, not a destination. It takes time and practice, but you can do it! Be patient with yourself and keep reminding yourself of your worth. The more you nurture your self-esteem, the more confident and resilient you will become.

Remember, you are incredible just as you are, and you have so much to offer the world!



Boys and Menstruation



Understanding menstruation is important for everyone, not just girls. Boys can play a vital role in creating a supportive environment for their friends, sisters, and classmates. By learning about periods, boys can help break down stigma, promote respect, and promote empathy. Let's explore why boys should learn about menstruation and how they can support girls during their periods.

Why should boys learn about menstruation ?

1. Promote Understanding

Learning about menstruation helps boys understand what girls experience during their periods. This knowledge can reduce misconceptions and promote empathy

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2. Break the Stigma

Periods have often been treated as a taboo subject, but this should change! Boys who understand menstruation can help challenge myths and encourage open conversations. When boys speak positively about periods, it helps everyone feel more comfortable discussing it.

3. Be Supportive Friends

When boys understand menstruation, they can be more supportive of their friends and family. They'll know how to respond if someone is feeling unwell or needs extra care during their period.

How Can Boys Support Girls During Their Periods?

1. *Be Respectful:* If a friend or sister is on her period, offer your support. You can simply say, "I hope you're feeling okay," or ask if she needs anything. Respect her space and understand if she needs to take more bathroom breaks or feels tired.

2. *Stand Up Against Teasing:* If you hear someone making jokes or teasing about periods, speak up! Let them know that periods are a normal part of life and shouldn't be made fun of. Being an ally means standing up for others and promoting respect.

3. *Share Knowledge:* Help educate your friends about menstruation. If you hear someone say something untrue or disrespectful about periods, share what you know. This can help others learn and change their views.

4. *Help Reduce Stigma:* Normalize conversations about periods by talking about them openly. When you discuss periods casually, it makes it easier for everyone to feel comfortable discussing them.

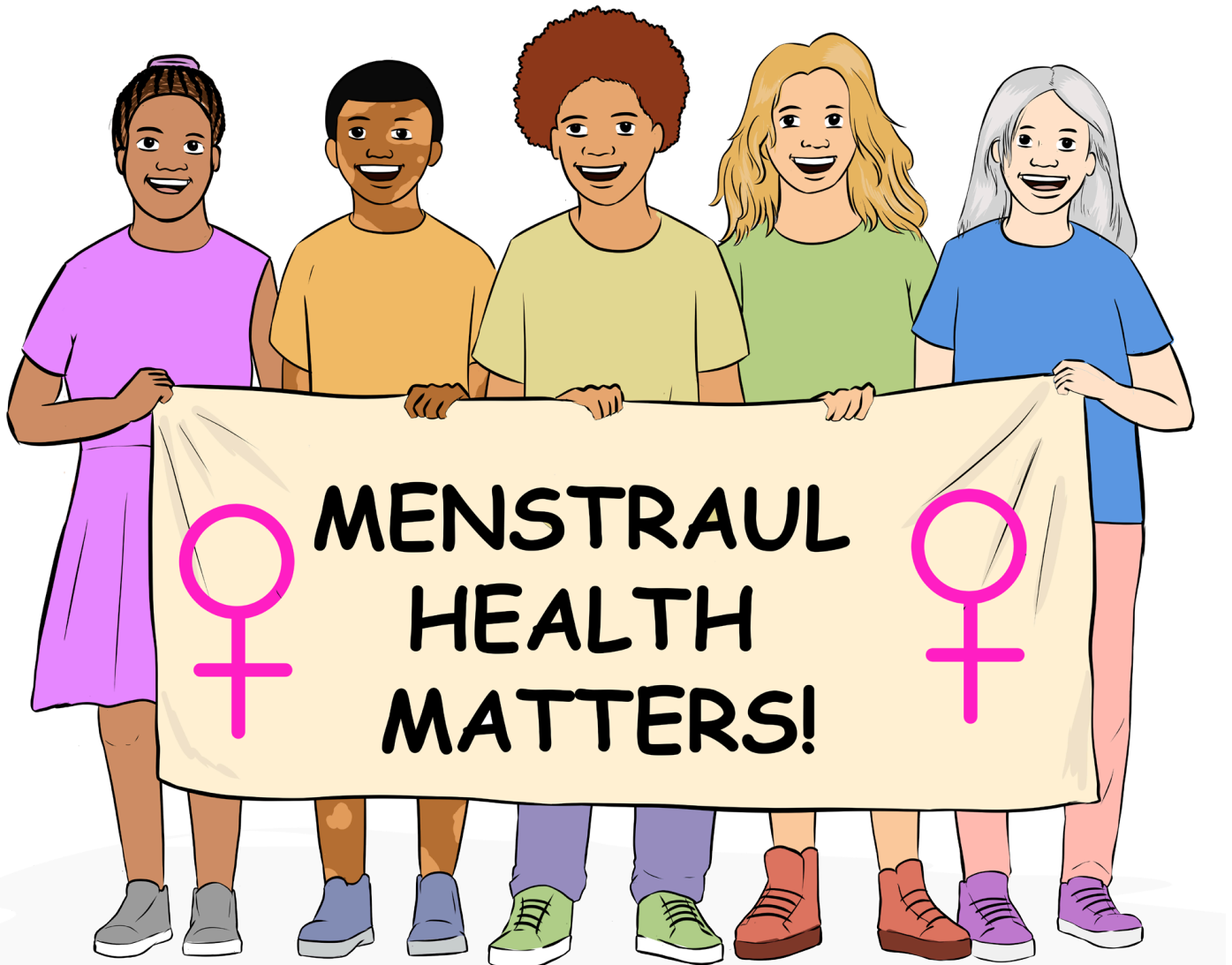
Understanding menstruation is a key part of growing up for boys as well. It helps create a world where everyone feels comfortable talking about their bodies, and where everyone supports each other through life's changes.

Boys, remember that being informed and respectful can make a big difference in someone's experience. By showing empathy and understanding, you contribute to a more positive environment for everyone!

Becoming a Menstrual Health Advocate

As you learn more about menstruation and its importance, you have the power to become a menstrual health advocate! This means using your voice and actions to promote awareness, understanding, and support for menstrual health in your community.

Everyone can be an advocate, and it's a great way to make a positive difference!



Why Advocacy Matters

Advocacy is important because it helps: *Break Down Stigma:* Many people feel embarrassed or ashamed about periods. Advocating for menstrual health helps normalize these conversations and encourages everyone to feel more comfortable.

Raise Awareness: By talking about menstruation, you can educate others about the realities of periods and help dispel myths. The more people know, the less confusion there will be.

Support Those in Need: Some people, especially those in lower-income communities, may not have access to menstrual products. Advocating can help ensure everyone has what they need to manage their periods with dignity.

Ways to Advocate for Menstrual Health

1. Start Conversations

Talk about menstruation with friends, family, and classmates. Share what you've learned and encourage others to ask questions. When we talk openly, it helps everyone feel more comfortable.

2. Challenge Myths

If you hear someone spreading false information or making jokes about periods, stand up and correct them. Use facts to explain the truth about menstruation.

3. Organize a Product Drive

Help collect menstrual products for those in need. You can work with your school, local community center, or friends to gather pads, tampons, and other menstrual products. This helps ensure everyone has access to what they need.

4. Create Awareness Campaigns:

You can create posters, social media posts, or even presentations to raise awareness about menstrual health. Share information on how to manage periods, the importance of menstrual hygiene, and ways to support those who menstruate.

5. Participate in Events:

Join or organize events related to menstrual health, like workshops or seminars at your school or community. This can help educate others and promote dialogue about menstruation.

Activity:

Design a poster or create a social media post about menstrual health. What message do you want to share with your community?

Here are some ideas to include: Facts about menstruation, Information on how to manage periods, Encouragement to support friends during their periods.

What will your poster or post say?



Inspiring Young Leaders

Many young people are already making a difference in the world of menstrual health. Here are a few examples of inspiring advocates:

Nadya Okamoto started a nonprofit organization at age 16 to provide menstrual products to those in need and educate others about menstrual health.

Marvan Bibi created a comic book in India that teaches girls about menstruation, helping them feel more confident and informed.

Activity: Research a Menstrual Health Practice from Another Country

Pick a country and research how they handle menstruation. What did you learn about their practices? Write down your findings.

Being a menstrual health advocate means standing up for yourself and others. You have the power to make a positive impact in your community, and every small action counts. By educating yourself and those around you, you're helping to create a world where periods are understood, respected, and celebrated.

Remember, you are not alone in this journey. Together, we can make menstruation a topic of conversation that everyone feels comfortable discussing!

Personal Reflection

Now that you've learned so much about menstruation, managing your period, and being an advocate, it's time to pause and reflect on your journey.

Reflecting helps you understand your feelings, recognize your growth, and think about how you can use your knowledge moving forward.



Why Reflection Matters

Taking time to reflect allows you to:

Understand Your Feelings: Reflecting on your experiences helps you recognize your emotions, which is especially important during times of change like puberty and menstruation.

Recognize Your Growth: By looking back at what you've learned, you can see how far you've come and what you want to achieve in the future.

Set Personal Goals: Reflection can help you identify areas where you want to grow, whether it's becoming a better advocate, building self-esteem, or simply feeling more confident about your body.

Let's Reflect Together! Take a deep breath and think about everything you've learned from this guide. You've explored how the body works, busted myths about menstruation, and learned how to care for yourself during your period. Now, let's dive deeper into your thoughts and feelings.

1. What's the most interesting thing you've discovered?

Think about the things that surprised or fascinated you the most while reading this guide. Maybe it was learning how periods work, understanding myths, or finding out how to track your cycle. Write or draw what you found most interesting

2. How do you feel about menstruation now?

Before reading this guide, you may have had questions or even felt uncertain about menstruation. Now that you've learned more, how do you feel about it? Write down your thoughts below, or draw an image that reflects your feelings.



3. What's one way you can support menstrual health in your community?

You're now ready to take what you've learned and share it with others. How can you be a leader in spreading awareness or helping others feel more comfortable about periods? Maybe you'll start conversations, help organize product drives, or stand up against teasing.

4. How can you use what you've learned to be kinder to yourself and others?

Learning about menstruation isn't just about the body—it's about understanding emotions, respecting ourselves, and being kind to others. How can you show more kindness to yourself during your period, or how can you support a friend going through theirs? Write down one or two ways to practice kindness, either to yourself or someone else:

Take some time to write down your thoughts and feelings about the questions above. You can create a short paragraph for each question or even draw images that represent your reflections. This can help you process your emotions and solidify what you've learned.

Reflection is an important tool for personal growth. By taking the time to think about what you've learned, you're not only solidifying your knowledge but also preparing yourself for future experiences. Remember, it's okay to feel a mix of emotions during your period and as you navigate changes in your life.

Keep this reflection with you, and come back to it whenever you need a reminder of how far you've come and the incredible person you are!



Congratulations!



Woohoo! You've completed the Flowing Wisdom Guide to Growing Up and Menstrual Health! This is a fantastic accomplishment, and you should feel incredibly proud of yourself.

Not only have you gained valuable knowledge about menstruation and how to manage your period, but you've also learned how to support others and advocate for menstrual health in your community.

What Does it Mean to Be a Menstrual Health Champion?

1. You Understand Your Body

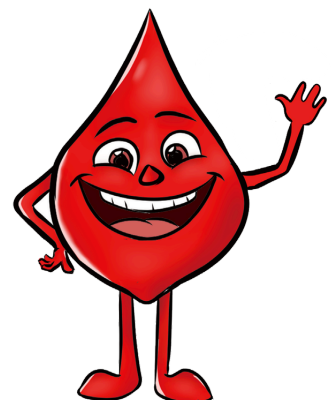
You now have a deeper understanding of how your body works and what to expect during your menstrual cycle. You're equipped to take care of yourself and feel confident during your period!

2. You're Ready to Share Your Knowledge

You can help break down myths and encourage open conversations about menstruation with friends, family, and classmates. Sharing what you've learned helps others feel more comfortable and informed.

3. You're a Leader in Your Community

As a Menstrual Health Champion, you're part of a group of young leaders who are changing how people think about periods. Whether it's advocating for access to period products or supporting your peers, you're helping make the world a more understanding and respectful place.



What Comes Next?

Your journey doesn't end here! Here are some ideas for what you can do next,

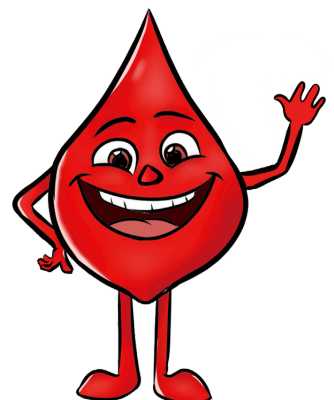
Continue Learning: Keep exploring more about your body, health, and wellbeing. The more you know, the better you can take care of yourself!

Engage with Others: Talk to friends, family, or peers about what you've learned.

Start discussions, create awareness, and encourage others to be advocates for menstrual health too.

Take Action: Organize events, product drives, or awareness campaigns in your school or community. Every small action can lead to big changes.

Celebrate Yourself: Remember to celebrate your achievements, both big and small. You've taken important steps in understanding your body and becoming a confident advocate.



You are incredible just the way you are! Taking care of your body and understanding menstruation are important steps in your journey. Keep learning, keep growing, and always be kind to yourself and others. The world is a better place with you in it!



Glossary and Resources

Glossary: Understanding the words related to menstruation and growing up is essential! Here are some key terms defined simply:

Menstruation: The monthly process where the uterus sheds its lining, resulting in menstrual flow, also known as a “period.”

Menarche: The first time a girl gets her period, marking the beginning of menstruation.

Hormones: Special chemicals in the body that help control growth and development, including changes that happen during puberty.

Ovulation: When an ovary releases a mature egg, which can happen around the middle of your menstrual cycle.

Puberty: The time in life when your body changes from childhood to adulthood, including physical and emotional changes.

Cramps: Painful sensations in the lower belly that many people feel during their period.

PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome): Physical and emotional changes some people experience in the days leading up to their period, such as mood swings, bloating, and fatigue.

Self-Esteem: How you feel about yourself and your abilities.

Bodily Autonomy: The right to make decisions about your own body, including understanding and managing your menstruation.

Ally: Someone who supports and stands up for others, especially regarding issues like menstrual health.

Consent: Permission for something to happen or agreement to do something, especially in the context of personal boundaries.

Resources for Further Learning:

If you want to learn more about your body, periods, and health, here are some helpful resources:

Kids Health: www.kidshealth.org/kid A great resource for kids to learn about health, including puberty and menstruation.

Amaze.org: www.amaze.org Fun videos about puberty, health, and growing up, designed for young people.

Menstrual Hygiene Day: www.menstrualhygieneday.org Learn more about global menstrual health initiatives and how to get involved.

Body Positive Kids: www.bodypositivekids.org Resources for building self-esteem and confidence in kids, focusing on body positivity.

Teen Talk: www.teentalk.ca Information for older kids about puberty, relationships, and health.

Knowledge is power! By using these resources, you can continue to learn and grow, empowering yourself and those around you. Don't hesitate to reach out to trusted adults or healthcare providers if you have questions or need more support.