

Keeping a record of symptoms

Keeping a symptom diary can help. You may want to record:

- The date your period starts and when it finishes
- Physical symptoms such as bloating, tender breasts, headaches, and tiredness
- Mood symptoms such as irritability, mood swings, anxiety, and finding it hard to think clearly
- How heavy your period is, for example, how often you need to change your period products
- How bad the pain is, when it happens, and whether pain relief helps



You can keep this record in a notebook, in your phone notes, or by using a period tracker app.



Who can I talk to?

If you're worried about your health, or anything else that's affecting you, it's important to talk to someone you trust. You do not have to deal with this on your own.

You could speak to:

- Your parent, carer, or another family member
- A trusted adult, such as a teacher, coach, youth worker, or family friend
- Your school nurse, if you have one
- Your GP, doctor, or nurse



Where can I get more support?

If you need extra help or advice, these trusted organisations can help. They offer free, private services for young people.

- **The Mix** – free, confidential support for young people under 25 (themix.org.uk)
- **YoungMinds** – mental health and wellbeing support for young people (youngminds.org.uk)
- **Brook** – free, confidential sexual health and wellbeing advice (brook.org.uk)
- **Childline** – free counselling for anyone under 19 (childline.org.uk)
- **Your GP, doctor, or nurse**

ENDOMETRIOSISUK

Is This Normal? A Guide to Periods and Menstrual Health

If you're reading this, you may be worried about your periods. This booklet explains what is normal, what might not be normal, and where to get help.

Are my periods normal?

Periods are different for everyone. They can last from a couple of days to about a week, and the amount of bleeding can vary. On the heaviest days, you may need to change your period products every three to four hours.

Periods usually happen about once a month. A cycle of 21 to 35 days can still be normal. When you first start having periods, they may take a couple of years to settle into a more regular pattern.

If you've had periods for a while, you may already have a sense of how they affect you. If your periods have only started more recently, these are some symptoms that can happen before or during your period:

- Mood swings
- Cramps or pain in your tummy or lower back
- A swollen or bloated tummy
- Headaches
- Feeling hungrier
- Spotty skin or acne
- Vaginal discharge – wet or sticky marks in your underwear

Most symptoms can be managed at home with:

- A heat pad or mini hot water bottle
- Over-the-counter pain relief such as ibuprofen or paracetamol
- Comfortable period products that suit your needs and preferences, such as pads, period pants, menstrual cups or tampons



What isn't normal?

Your period should not stop you from doing everyday things such as going to school or college, seeing friends, working, or taking part in activities you enjoy.

Things to look out for are:

- Period pain that affects your daily life, lasts more than two to three days each cycle, or requires regular medication
- You bleed heavily, such as needing to change period products (pads, tampons, menstrual cups, period pants) every one to two hours or needing to use two period products at the same time
- You have very irregular periods or missed periods, where you do not have a bleed for several months at a time
- You have pain when doing a poo or a wee
- You get extremely upset around your period



This sounds like my period, what should I do?

If this sounds like what you're going through, it's a good idea to speak to a doctor. In most cases, this means making an appointment with your GP.

How can my GP help?

Your GP can listen to what's been happening, check for infections, and arrange tests or scans if needed.

They may also check for other health problems that can affect periods. These are some medical names your doctor might mention:

- **Endometriosis**
- **Polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome or PMOS (previously known as PCOS)**
- **Heavy menstrual bleeding (HMB)**
- **Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)**
- **Fibroids**

If things are not getting better, or if they are getting worse, your GP can refer you to a doctor at the hospital for more help and further checks.

