

- Other Symptoms:
 - pain when going to the toilet;
 - diarrhoea-type symptoms;
 - blood in either your urine or excrement;
 - feeling really tired all the time;
 - feeling sick;
 - feeling really down and depressed for more than a day or so (some girls experience pre-menstrual mood swings but these should be temporary)

If you have some of these symptoms, then you might have a number of conditions, including endometriosis or irritable bowel syndrome. However it is important that you get checked out.

We are a charity called Endometriosis UK set up to help those living with endometriosis. Donations to maintain our services are always needed.

Visit our website at: www.endometriosis-uk.org

Or our discussion group: <https://healthunlocked.com/endometriosis-uk>

Facebook page: www.facebook.com/endometriosis.uk.org

Twitter: @EndometriosisUK

*If you are really worried and want to talk to someone, then use our free Helpline: **0808 808 2227***

Please note: We aim to open our Helpline every day. Volunteers give their time when they can so if no-one is available when you call please listen to the message and ring back another time.

This information has been written by Endometriosis UK. Thanks must be given to the following people for their help:

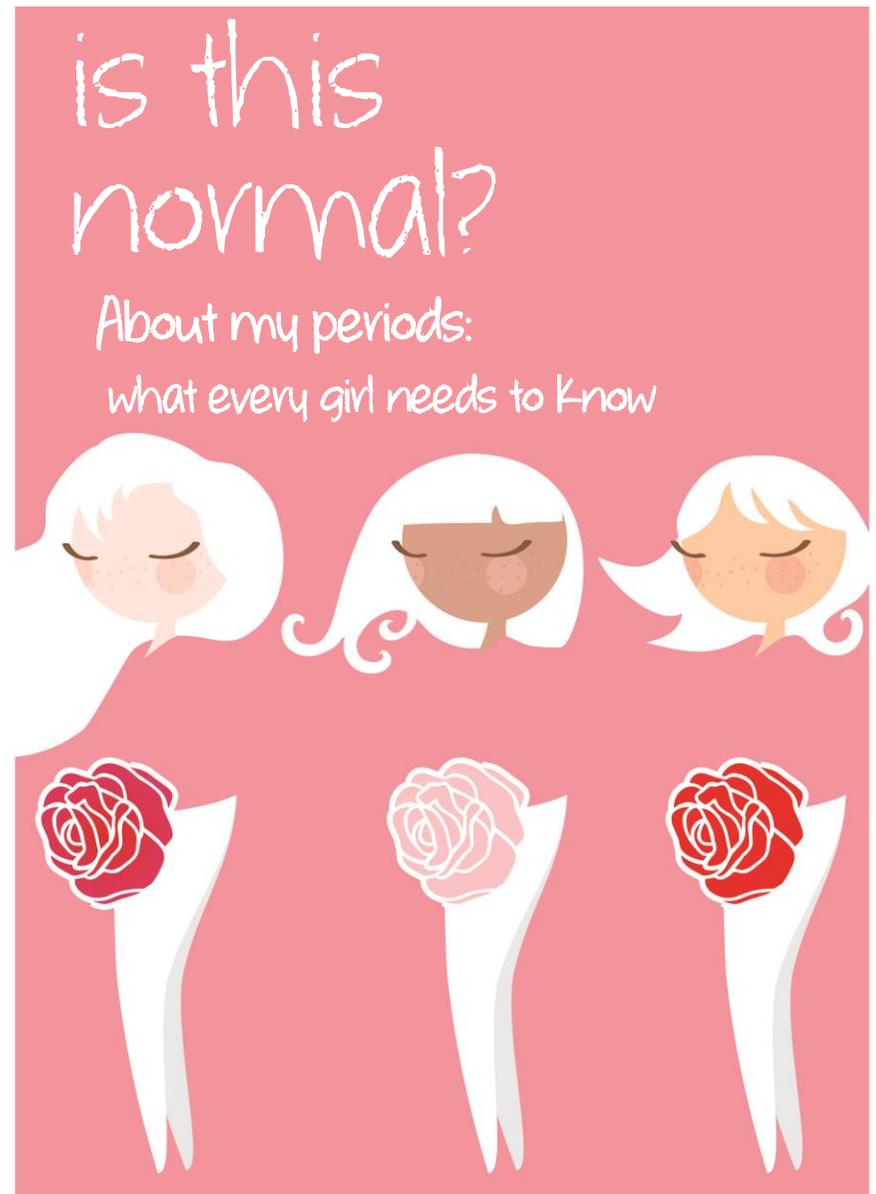
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Registered Charity 1035810

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www.endometriosis-uk.org

What is a period?

Every woman goes through something called the menstrual cycle, every month. It can be scary and confusing as your body changes but don't worry... you are not on your own.

Puberty starts in most girls at about the age of 10 and means that you start to develop breasts and grow hair in your armpits and pubic area. Periods start towards the end of puberty when breast and hair growth is almost finished. A period is when a girl bleeds from her vagina for a few days. This usually happens once a month. The most common age for periods to start is between the age of 12 and 13. However anywhere between 10 and 16 can be normal.

A 'normal period' lasts anywhere from a couple of days to a week. Every girl will bleed different amounts. During the heaviest part of your period, you will probably need to change your tampon or towel every 3 to 4 hours.

I'm feeling moody & emotional?

You're not the only one! Most girls feel moody or emotional on the run-up to their periods. This is to do with your hormone levels changing.

My periods are really heavy & lasting longer than a few days

For the first few years your period might last a bit longer than a few days. And it might happen more or less often than once a month. As your hormones settle down and your body gets used to it, it will start to get into more of a pattern.

I don't think I'm having a 'normal' period

Most girls have some pain and discomfort, leading up to, during and after their period. This is normal. In fact, the NHS says that 3 in 4 women of young women experience strong period pains. But the pain should not be so intense that you cannot still get up, go to school or college and carry on with your normal life. If it is then you should speak to somebody.

You might also experience what's known as 'heavy bleeding'. This is normal as your body gets used to the menstrual cycle. But it is not normal for periods to ALWAYS be really, really heavy. If they are then speak to somebody.

How can I help myself?

Simple measures can help with period pains. This includes gentle exercise, drinking plenty of water and eating a healthy diet. A hot water bottle or a warm bath can also help. Over-the-counter pain remedies such as Paracetamol and Ibuprofen are also very useful.

Every woman has been through the same, so ask your mum, sister, aunty, cousin or friend: they might be able to help.

If you think your periods are not normal though... ask to speak to your school or college nurse or your doctor.

DON'T BE SCARED! The sooner you speak to somebody, the sooner you will be able to get everything sorted and you might be able to stop the pain.

What might I get told?

The first thing you will get told is that what you're going through is normal. Don't worry... a lot of the time, it will be. Some girls take a short time to get into a regular period, others take a longer time.

Your family and friends might not fully understand what you are going through. This happens a lot! Remember, different girls suffer in different ways. We all have different pain levels and we all bleed differently.

But remember... sometimes, what you're going through is not normal. Trust your body. You know better than anybody how you feel.

Most girls get told that their periods will calm down in a couple of years as hormone levels become more settled. That's right... for most girls.

But some girls' periods won't settle down. If they don't then keep speaking to people about it. Go back to your doctor, or speak to your nurse.

I have other problems as well as my period

If you have any of the following symptoms, then you may need to see your doctor or talk to your nurse:

- Pain:
 - especially during your period or sometimes half-way through your cycle (during ovulation);
 - you find using tampons really painful;
 - you have leg or back pain.
- Bleeding:
 - if you bleed lots ('a heavy period') for more than three days regularly;
 - if you have to change your pad/tampon more than every two hours;
 - or find that even using double protection you leak regularly (also known as 'flooding');
 - periods that last longer than a few days;
 - 'spotting' when bits of blood appear at times not during your period;
 - periods that don't happen regularly;
 - lots of darker blood at the beginning and end of your period.