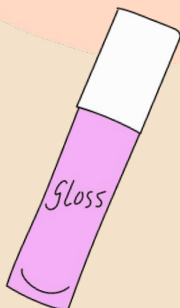
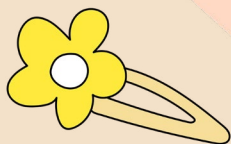
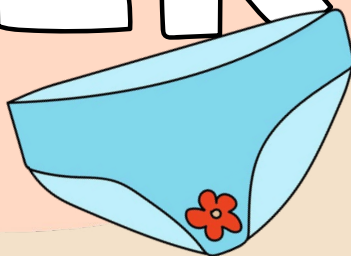
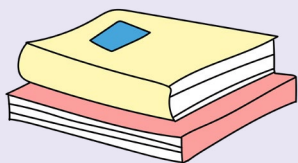


# GiRLS' TALK

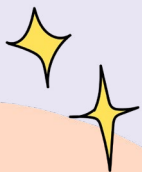


family  
planning nsw  
Reproductive & Sexual Health



In this booklet you will learn about:

Some of the changes that happen to girls as they grow up



What is a period?

Why girls get periods?

How to use period products

How girls can take care of themselves when they have their period



This booklet is for girls who want to know more about puberty and periods



# What is Puberty?

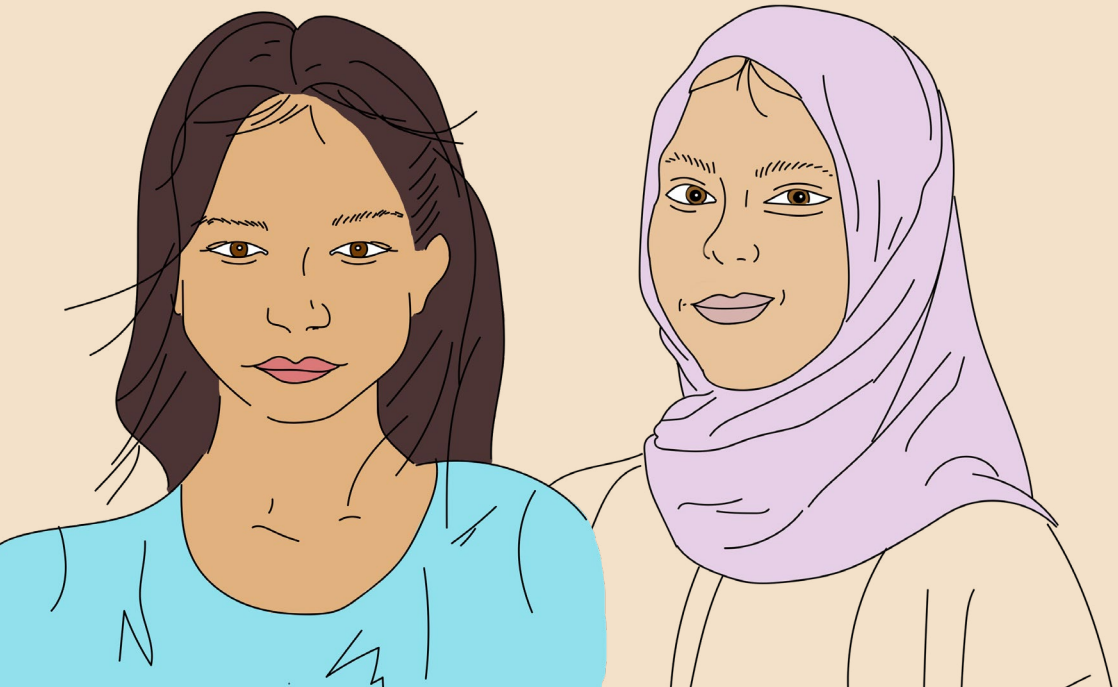
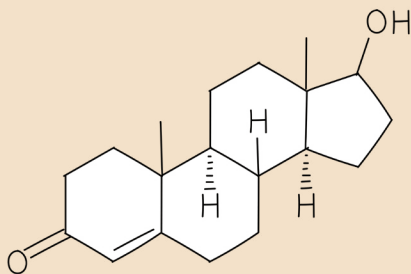
**Puberty** is the time when girls and boys grow into adults.

This is a time when lots of changes happen. These changes happen because of hormones.

Hormones are tiny chemicals made by our bodies.

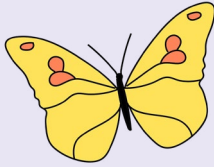
During puberty, hormones tell different body parts to:

- switch on
- switch off
- change what they do



# Why All The Changes?

When girls go through puberty they:



Start to become more independent. This means that girls might make more of their own choices



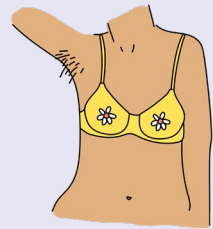
Might spend more time alone or with friends, and less time with their family



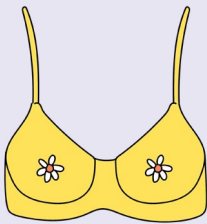
Might feel sad more often or get angry easily



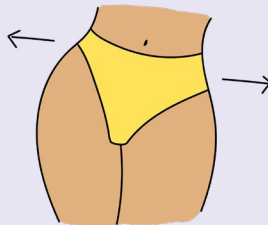
Might feel differently about other people and start to like someone more than a friend



Grow hair in new places, such as face, underarms, genitals



Grow breasts. Breasts are sometimes called boobs

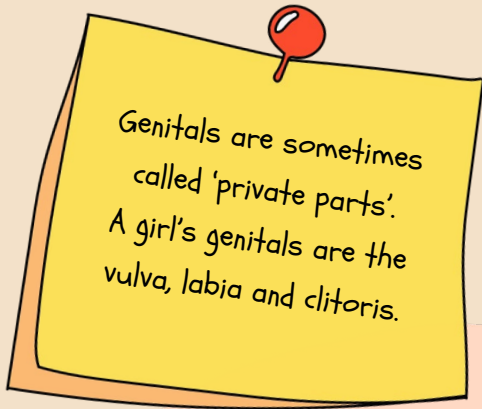


Grow taller and get wider hips



Start getting periods

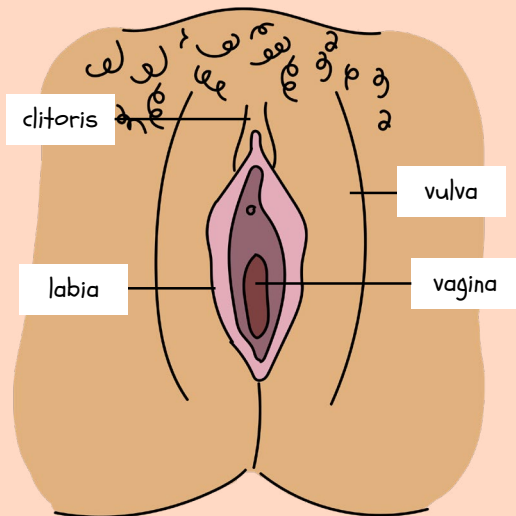
# Female Genitals



The **clitoris** is a small and sensitive organ at the top of the vulva

The **labia** are two large and two small lips of skin

The labia covers the vagina

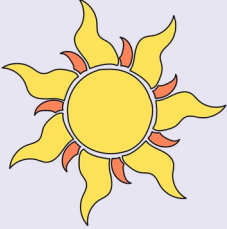


The **vulva** is the outside part of the female genitals

The **vagina** is the inside part of the female genitals

# What is a Period?

## Periods:



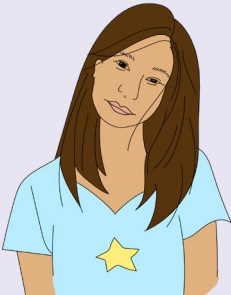
Are a normal part of life



Nothing to be ashamed of



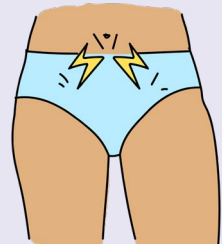
Are sometimes called menstruation or menstrual periods



Usually start when a girl is between 11-14 years old



Usually last for 3-7 days



Can be painful for some girls. It will be different for each girl

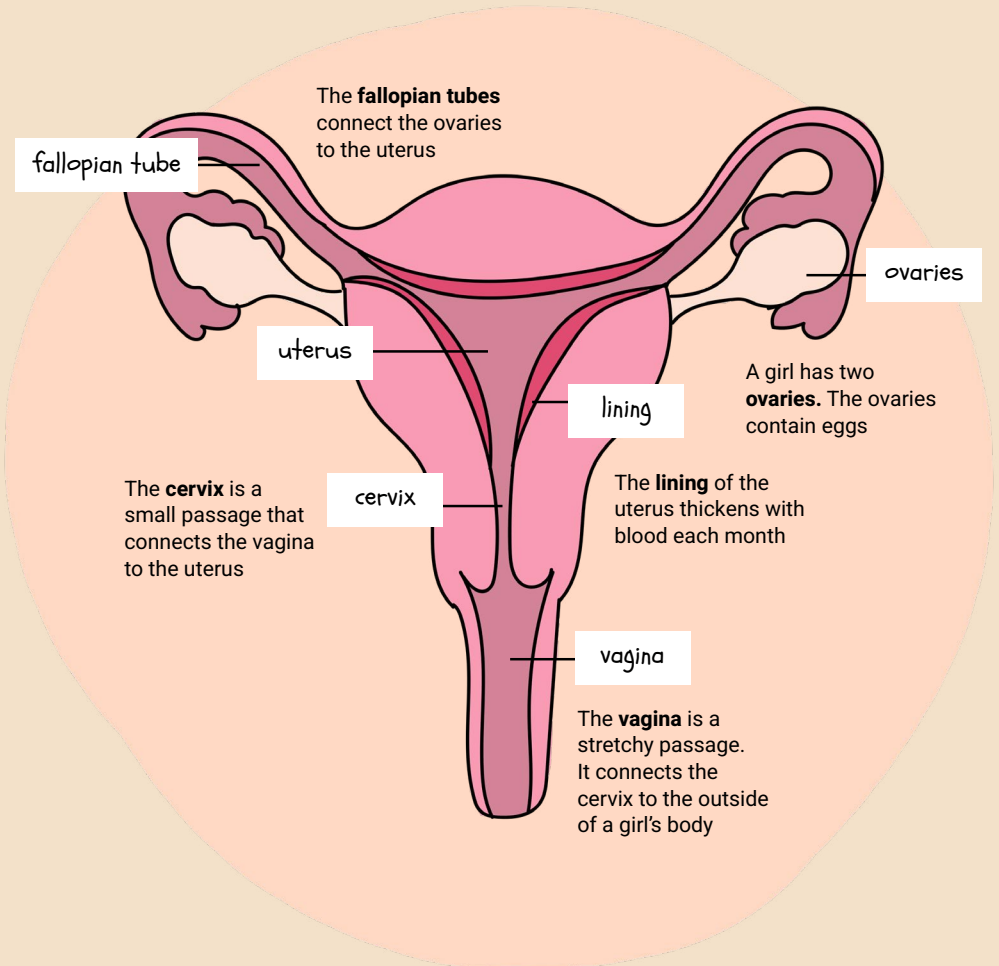
Periods are part of the **menstrual cycle**.

The menstrual cycle lasts for **about 28 days**. This means that girls will get their period about once a month.



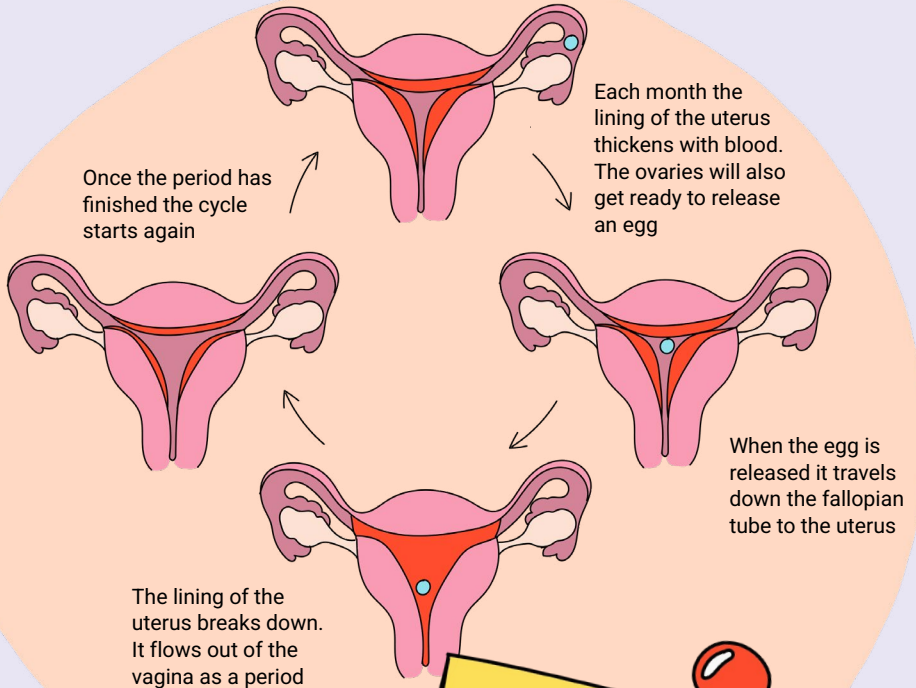
# Reproductive System

The female reproductive system has different parts:



# Menstrual Cycle

A lot of things are going on inside a girl's body during her menstrual cycle!



## Did you know?

When a girl gets her period, it means that she can get pregnant if she has sex. If a girl gets pregnant, the lining of the uterus will not break down. This means she will not get her period. The lining of the uterus will thicken more and help the baby to grow.

Some people think that period blood is dirty blood. This is not true. Period blood is healthy blood.



# Getting Your First Period



A girl will not know when her first period might start. Before the first period, some girls might:

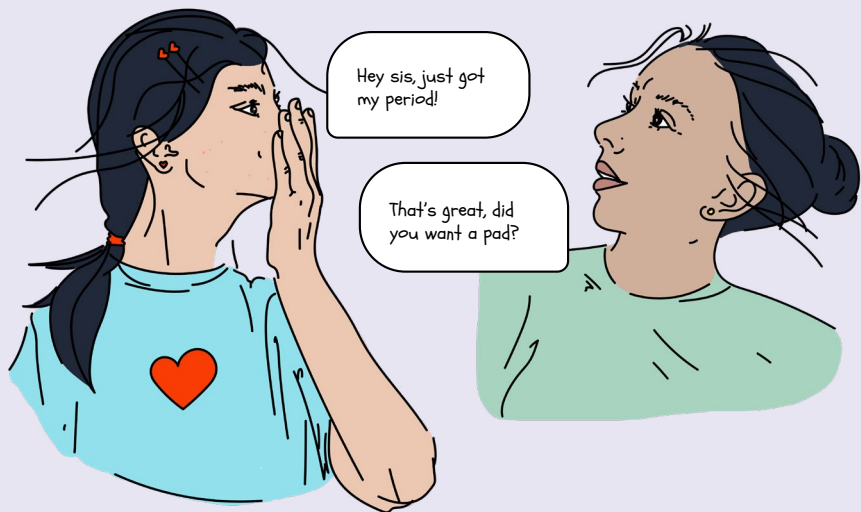
- feel pain in their tummy
- feel a bit sick
- feel no changes at all



The first period is usually light. This means that a girl may not bleed a lot or for a long time. The period may look like a red or brown mark in her underwear and feel like wetness between her legs.

Some girls might feel good when they get their first period. This means they are growing up! Some girls might feel scared.

This is OK, it is normal to feel this way.



### **If a girl feels nervous or scared she can talk to:**

- a friend, teacher or school counsellor
- a parent or family member
- a nurse by calling **Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886**. If a girl needs help to talk to the nurse, she can get help from someone who speaks her language. She can call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450**. She can tell them that she wants to talk to Family Planning NSW.



Did you know?

When a girl first gets her period, it might not be regular. This means that she might:

- not get her period every month
- bleed a lot
- not bleed much at all
- bleed for a long time
- bleed for a short time
- bleed in between periods

Over time, her period will become more regular.



Did you know?

Period blood can vary. Sometimes blood can be:

- bright red
- dark red
- brown
- watery
- thick or lumpy

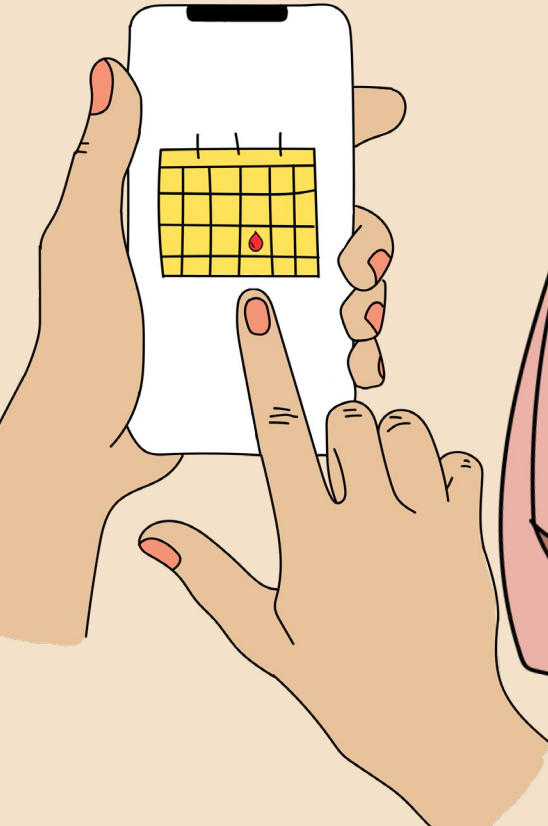
The flow and colour of the blood may be different from one period to the next. This is all normal.



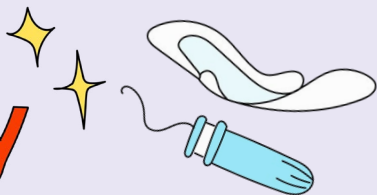
Tip!

Girls can track their menstrual cycle.

Girls can use a period tracking app on their phone to do this. This will help girls to know when they will get their next period. Girls can search for 'period tracking apps' wherever they download their apps.



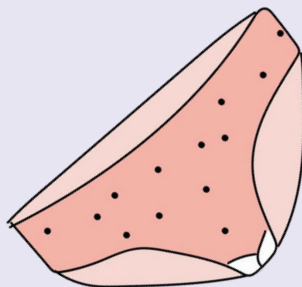
# Getting Ready



Girls might not know when their first period will come, but they can be ready for when it does. There are different ways that girls can get ready for their first period.

## Girls can:

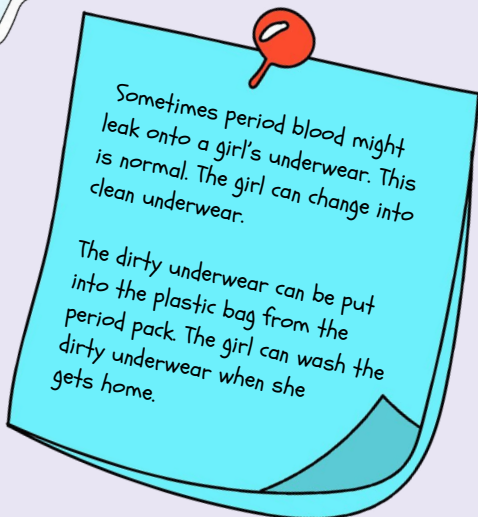
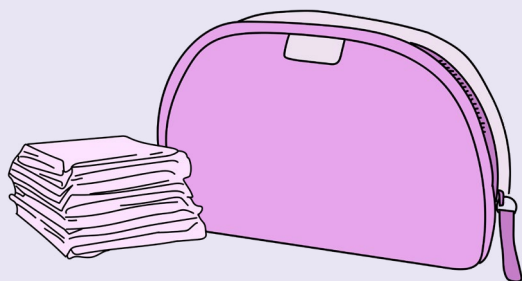
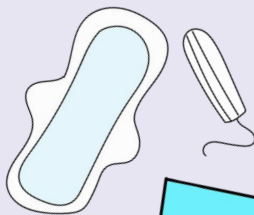
- learn about the different period products that are available
- decide what product they want to use
- learn how to use it
- make a period pack and carry it with them



A **period pack** is a small bag. This might be a small pencil case or pouch.

## Inside the bag a girl can put:

- period products
- a clean pair of underwear
- a plastic or paper bag
- pain medication like paracetamol



Sometimes period blood might leak onto a girl's underwear. This is normal. The girl can change into clean underwear.

The dirty underwear can be put into the plastic bag from the period pack. The girl can wash the dirty underwear when she gets home.

# Period Products

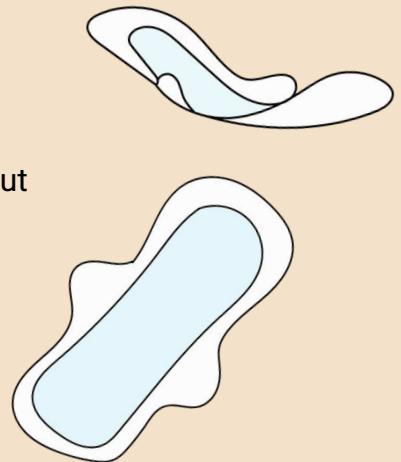
There are **different types** of period products. There are different reasons that girls use different period products. Some of these reasons might be:

- what makes a girl feel most comfortable. Girl's bodies are all different. This means that some girls will feel more comfortable using some types of period products and less comfortable using other types.
- environmental reasons
- cost
- cultural or religious beliefs or practices

All of these reasons are OK. What period product a girl chooses to use is up to her.

## Pads

Pads are worn inside a girl's underwear. Pads have a sticky strip on the bottom. The strip sticks to the underwear to hold the pad in place. As period blood comes out of the vagina it is soaked up by the pad.

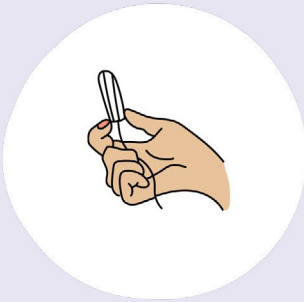
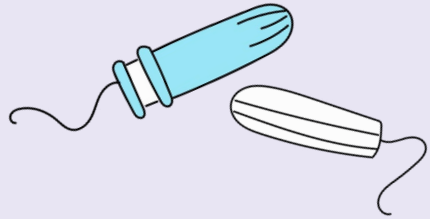


## Tampons

Tampons are small tubes made of cotton. They are put inside the vagina to soak up period blood. A girl can use her finger to push the tampon into her vagina.

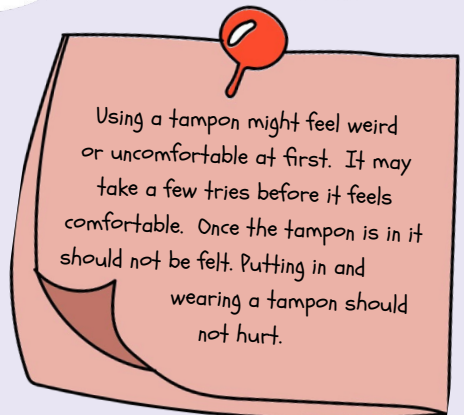
### Steps for using a tampon:

1. wash hands
2. unwrap the tampon
3. hold the tampon at the end with the string
4. get into a comfortable position:
  - sit on the toilet
  - squat or
  - stand with one foot on the toilet seat
5. using one finger or an applicator, push the tampon into the vagina
6. push it as far as it will go
7. leave the string on the outside of the vagina

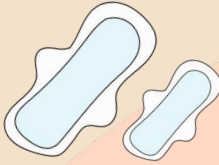


### Taking a tampon out:

1. pull the string down and forward
2. wrap tampon in toilet paper
3. put the tampon in a sanitary bin



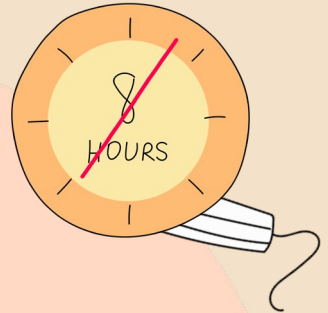
# Did You Know?



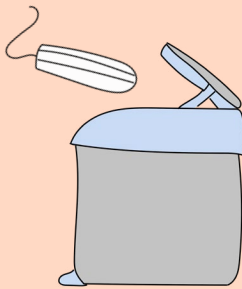
There are different size pads and tampons. Super-sized products are for when a girl is bleeding more. Regular sized products are for when she is bleeding less



Pads should be changed every 3-4 hours



Tampons need to be changed every few hours. They should be left in for no more than 8 hours



Pads and tampons should be wrapped in toilet paper and put into a sanitary bin. If there is no sanitary bin, they can be put into a normal bin



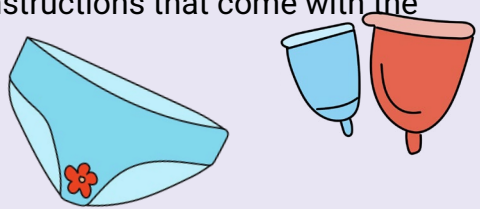
Pads and tampons can be bought from the chemist or supermarket

## Menstrual cups

A menstrual cup is a small cup made of silicone. It is put in the vagina where it collects period blood. Girls can put the cup in themselves. Girls should wash their hands before and after using a menstrual cup.

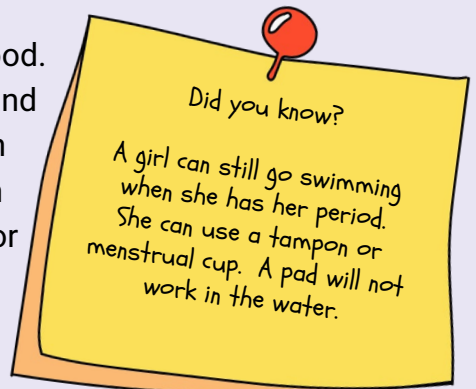
Menstrual cups can be bought from some online stores.

Girls should always follow the instructions that come with the menstrual cup.



## Period Underwear

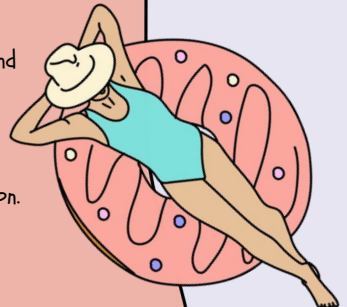
Period underwear is a type of underwear that has a thick lining. The underwear soaks up period blood. Period underwear can be washed and reused. Period underwear comes in different sizes and styles. They can be bought at some supermarkets, or from online stores.




### Tip!

if a girl gets her period when she is at school or not at home and does not have any period products, she can:

- ask a friend if they have a spare pad or tampon
- ask a female teacher or the school nurse for a pad or tampon. Most schools have extra period products
- fold up some toilet paper and put it into her underwear. This should work until she can find a period product, but it's always best to be prepared!







The hymen is a thin piece of skin tissue. It partly covers the opening of the vagina. The hymen can be stretched when a girl plays sport, runs or rides a bike. When pushed inside of the vagina, a tampon can also stretch the hymen.

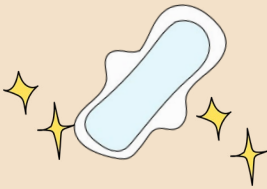
If a girl's hymen is stretched it may mean that she will not bleed the first time she has sex. This is why some girls might not want to use a tampon until they have had sex. That is OK. It is up to each girl to choose which period product suits them.

# Staying Fresh

**When girls start going through puberty and getting their period it's important they:**



Shower or wash everyday. It is OK for a girl to shower and wash her hair when she has her period. Some girls like to shower even more when they have their period.



Change period products regularly. This can help to stop blood from leaking onto a girl's underwear and stop any smell



Wear clean clothes and underwear



Wash hands before and after using period products

# PMS and Period Pain

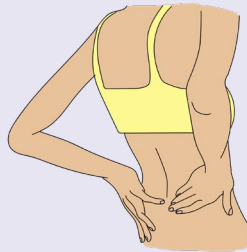
Premenstrual syndrome is sometimes called PMS.

PMS is a group of symptoms. Girls sometimes get PMS symptoms before they get their period. PMS usually goes away when a girl gets her period. Getting PMS is normal, but PMS will be different for everyone. Some girls may get lots of PMS symptoms. Some girls might not get any at all. This is normal.

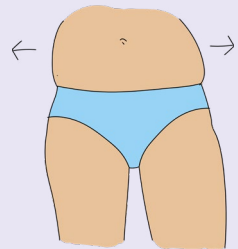
**If a girl gets PMS, she might:**



Feel tired or sick



Have pain in her stomach or lower back



Have bloating in her tummy



Feel sad or get angry easily



Feel extra hungry or crave some types of food

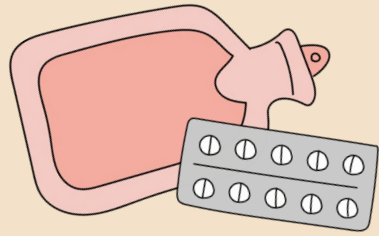


Have sore breasts

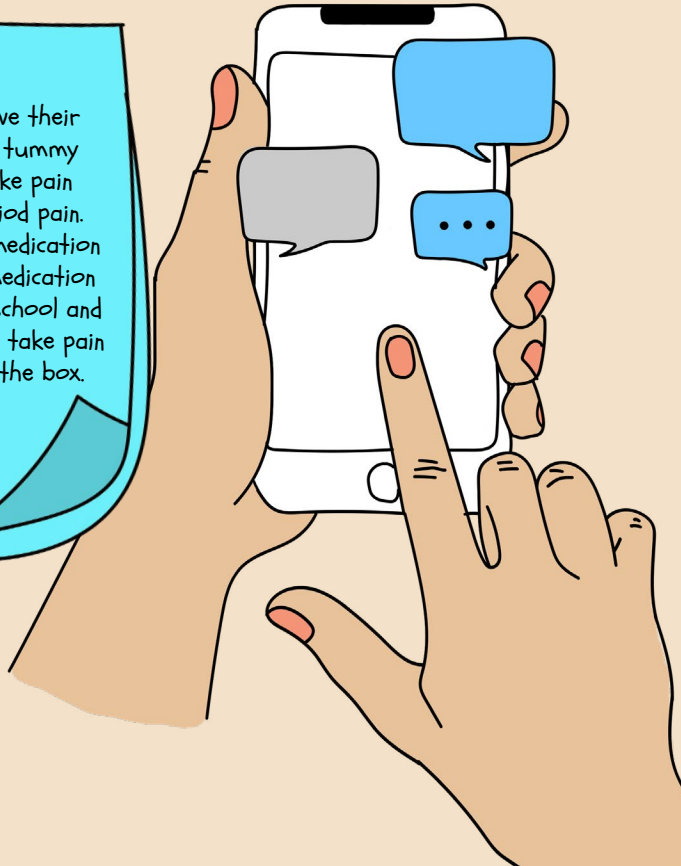
There are some things that girls can do to help with PMS.

**Girls can:**

- talk to friends or exercise if they are feeling sad
- listen to calming music or do some meditation if they are feeling angry
- have a warm shower to help with period pain
- use a heat pack on their tummy or back to help with period pain
- take pain medication like paracetamol to help with period pain



Period pain is when girls have their period and get pain in their tummy or lower back. Girls can take pain medication to help with period pain. It is very safe to take pain medication for period pain. Taking pain medication will make it easier to go to school and to do other activities. Always take pain medication as described on the box.



# When To Get Help

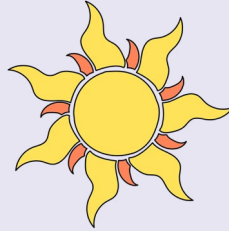
It's important for girls to go to school even if they have period pain. Girls should talk to their **G.P** or visit a **Family Planning NSW** clinic if their period pain is so bad that it stops them from:



Going to school



Going to work



Doing everyday things in their life



Being able to concentrate

**Girls should talk to their G.P or visit a Family Planning NSW clinic if they are:**

- bleeding through pads and clothing even when they are changing their pads regularly
- passing blood clots larger than a 50-cent coin
- having to change pads and tampons throughout the night
- having to change their pad or tampon every hour
- unable to leave home because they are bleeding too much
- bleeding for more than 7 days
- getting lots of pain
- having irregular periods

When girls first get their periods they are often irregular. If after 6 months they are still irregular, it can be good to see a doctor.

For more information about periods, girls can:

Talk to a nurse by calling the **Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886**.  
If a girl needs help to talk to the nurse, she can get help from someone who speaks her language. She can call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450**. She can tell them that she wants to talk to Family Planning NSW.

Visit the Know Your Health website at  
**<https://www.fpnsw.org.au/know-your-health>**

Click on the periods tab.

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