

What you always wanted to know about



GIRLS GROWING UP

What are the changes a girl's body will undergo during adolescence?

When a girl enters into the period of adolescence, she experiences bodily changes externally and internally. The changes take place when the endocrine glands release hormones. These changes usually happen during 9 - 16 years old.

The external changes are:

- Height increases
- Breasts develop
- Armpit and pubic hair start to grow
- Hips widen
- Pimples and acne appear

Inside her body, the reproductive organs are also changing. There are 400 to 600 eggs inside the ovaries. At the onset of puberty, one egg will mature each month and enter the fallopian tube and travel to the uterus. This is called ovulation.

In the uterus, a thick lining of blood and tissue builds up. This lining provides a suitable environment in which a fertilized egg can become embedded and grow into a baby. If there is no fertilization, the lining will not be needed and will be discarded. The flow of blood which happens every month is called menstruation, or commonly called "period".

What is a menstrual cycle?

A menstrual cycle begins from the first day of menstruation to the day before the next

menstruation. A normal cycle is usually 28 days. The cycle could also last between 20 days or 35 days. This varies from person to person. Ovulation tends to occur 14 days before the next menstrual blood flow. This is mid-way of the menstrual cycle. If you mark down the dates of your menstruation, you will know the length of your menstrual cycle after a period of time. It is also a good idea to keep a record of these cycles as you will know when you next period is due and be prepared with sanitary pads or tampons.

Why do some girls have late or skipped period?

One's emotional state or a change in one's routine may affect the menstrual cycle. The menstrual period comes regularly when one's body adjusts to its cycle. It is advisable to see a doctor if one's period continues to be irregular two years after onset.

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Does a girl menstruate all her life?

No, she will menstruate till she is in her mid-40s or 50s. After that her period stops. This is called menopause. It marks the end of a woman's reproductive years.

What causes pain during menstruation and how can it be reduced?

The pain is due to strong contractions of the uterine wall muscles. A girl may get painful cramps in her lower abdomen and back when this happens. She may feel tired, depressed or irritable. The best thing to do is to lie down and rest.

How to keep clean during menstruation?

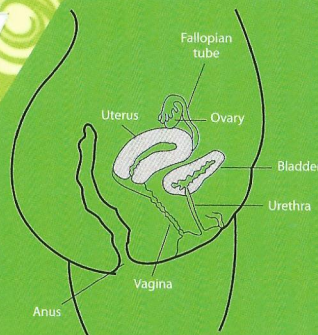
During menstruation it is important to maintain a high standard of personal hygiene by washing the genitals thoroughly with soap and water. Sanitary pads or tampons must be changed regularly in order to keep clean.

Is there anything a girl should not do during menstruation?

A girl can continue her normal activities during menstruation. Exercise helps to ease the tension and pain during menstruation. It is important to continue eating a healthy balanced diet during menstruation.

All these changes that occur are perfectly a normal part of growing up. It is important to be aware of these changes and be prepared for them. If you have worries about them do not hesitate to write, call or see us.

Cross-section
of the female genital organs



Produced by



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