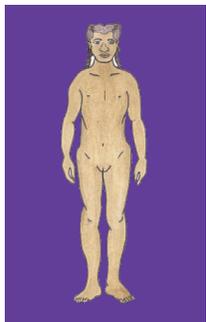


## Puberty and periods



Most girls go through puberty between the ages of 9 and 16.

During puberty your body changes. Your breasts get bigger and hair starts to grow around your vulva and under your arms.

During puberty most girls will start their period. Another word for period is menstruation.

## What is a period?

A period means that blood comes from inside your body through an opening between your legs. This opening is called a vagina.

Getting periods is healthy. The blood that comes out is healthy blood. You have not been hurt. Your period will last for a few days, sometimes up to a week. The bleeding is slow and the amount of blood lost during the whole period is only about 20-60ml (or 1-3 tablespoons).

When you have a period you will need to use a pad, tampon or menstrual cup. You can ask an older woman about these things.

## What will a period feel like?

Everybody is different. Many women feel fine. You might feel a bit sore in your tummy. Maybe you will get a bit cranky or tired before your period starts.

If you do feel sick or sore, or your periods seem very heavy, talk to someone you trust or see your doctor for help.

**Periods are natural and normal.  
Don't feel ashamed to talk to someone  
you can trust.**

## Other things about periods

You will have a period about once a month.

In the first year you might not get a period once a month. It will take time for your body to become used to having periods.

Most women stop having periods when they are about 45-55.

**Mark on a calendar when you start your period.**

This may help you know when your next period will come.



Washing around your vulva with water in the shower is enough to keep clean during your period. If the weather is hot, you may need to wash twice a day.

You don't need to do anything about keeping clean other than showering or bathing normally. In Australia, it is normal to keep doing everyday things when you have your period, like going to school, washing your hair, helping at home, playing sport or seeing friends.

[www.true.org.au](http://www.true.org.au)

### Disclaimer

True Relationships & Reproductive Health (True) has taken every care to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate and up-to-date at the time of being published. As information and knowledge is constantly changing, readers are strongly advised to confirm that the information complies with present research, legislation and policy guidelines. True accepts no responsibility for difficulties that may arise as a result of an individual acting on this information and any recommendations it contains.

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## About Periods

A guide to periods and what to expect



## Having periods at school

You will need to take spare pads to school and change them every couple of hours. Take them in a small bag that you can take to the toilet with you.



If you leak on your uniform at school, you could tie a shirt around your waist and ask a friend or a teacher to help.

Other people at school who could help are the admin staff, guidance counsellor, principal, EALD teacher or school nurse.

Most boys will know about periods, as they may have learned about them at school or from family members.

Periods mean that your body is getting ready for the possibility of getting pregnant, even though there are other changes happening in your body that mean it is best for you to be older before this happens. If you have questions about periods and your body's readiness to have a baby, you can ask an older woman, teacher or school nurse and they can talk to you about this.

## What is a pad?

A pad is put inside your underpants to keep your clothes clean while you have your period. Pads should be changed every 2 to 4 hours.

Check your pad when you go to the toilet to see if it needs to be changed.

Check your pad:

- when you wake up
- morning tea
- lunch time
- dinner time

## Changing your pad

Change your pad in a private place. The toilet, bathroom and bedroom are private places when the door is closed.

1. Wash your hands.



2. Remove your used pad.



3. Wrap it in toilet paper or put in a paper bag.



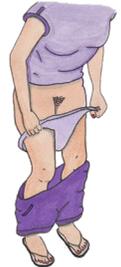
4. Peel strip off a new pad if disposable.



5. Stick or fasten pad on your underpants.



6. Pull your underpants back up and tidy your clothes.



7. Put the used pad into a bin or bag.



8. Wash your hands.

