

Conscious Menstruation



All you need to know about
periods

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Discussion Is Important

Periods are the most important part of a woman's life. These can be uncomfortable but talking about these should never be. We all know how we felt when we first got our periods, how scary it was, that's why discussing about this is so important. Schools are doing great job by including this as a part of curriculum to make young girls aware of this. And infact boys are included in these classes which is very much needed. In today's age, when we girls are working with boys in every domain, they should also be aware of what we deal with during these days. Also, there are so many myths associated with periods like girls should not take part in any kind of worshipping, should not enter their own kitchen and even should not touch pickle as it might go bad due to the touch. Basically, some people consider periods to be an impure part of us but that is not at all true. Period blood is as pure as the blood running around in any other part of our body. We can break these myths only if we talk about periods freely. Few girls are still not aware of different sanitary products that are available in the market and can be used, this leads to drop out from schools in early age and staying at home. Women in few places are still using clothes during periods either because they don't know about other safer products or the products are not available to them. Many NGOs are working on this and trying to reach women in distant places to provide them both knowledge and products.

On an average, every woman bleeds for 8.2 years in her lifespan and we are still not comfortable in talking about these. Why? A special day “ [Menstrual Hygiene Day](#)” is celebrated on 28th of May every year, so that people can talk about this subject and make more and more people aware of these things.

Sanitary Products Available



Sanitary Pad:

Everyone is familiar with Sanitary pads/napkins. This is the most used sanitary option during periods. These can be attached to inside of underwear to absorb blood during menstruation. These are made of super absorbent polymers and have a polyethylene back to prevent any leakage. Irrespective of the day of your menstruation cycle, pad needs to be changed every 4-5 hours otherwise it can cause bacterial growth near vagina.

The polymers in a pad are non-biodegradable but now we have more sustainable option in market – Reusable pads. These are not only chemical free and safe for you, but also safe for environment. Though some might feel a little disgusted in washing the used pad, but once you get used to it you will notice the difference in terms of hygiene (lesser irritation/rashes) and of course in terms of finances

These pads come in large variety and you can choose the best one for you based on your period flow and outfits:

- Night special – which is highly absorbent and help you in getting peaceful night without any tension of leakage.
- The thinner ones – which can be used if you need to wear some tight bottoms and it will be seamless.
- Scented – these come with deodorant but might cause irritation to some girls.



Tampons

Just like sanitary pad, [tampon](#) is also made of absorbent material, but it is inserted inside the vagina to absorb the blood during menstruation. So basically, blood is absorbed even before it comes out of your body. This decreases the risk of leakage by great amount. These are also available with different absorbency and option of with or without deodorant.

Risk:

- Toxic shock syndrome is associated with tampons. To avoid this try going for tampons with lower absorbency.

Best for:

- When you have to go for swimming or have an active routine full of physical work



How to use Tampon?

- Tampons often comes with an applicator to insert it into your vagina or you can simply use your finger to do the same. Wash your hands thoroughly to eliminate any risk of infection or irritation. The process of sliding it in will be easier if you are relaxed.
- It should be changed every 4-5 hours and should not be left inside your body for more than 8 hours.
- Tampon has a string attached to its end, pull this string gently when you need to remove it. Don't worry if you are not able to find the string, tampon is still there, and it cannot go further up in your body as the vaginal opening is very small compared to tampon size. look for the string with your fingers.



Menstrual Cups

These cups are made of silicone or latex rubber and instead of absorbing the blood during periods, they collect it. Just like a tampon, it is inserted inside your vagina and it prevents the blood from coming out of body by collecting it in the cup. Most of us think that using a tampon or menstrual cup can result in losing virginity but this is not true. It doesn't increase your pain or discomfort in any manner. There are also available in various sizes and you can choose the one which fits your requirement. Reusable cups are also available in the market but they are quite pricey. These cups can be emptied, washed and reused.

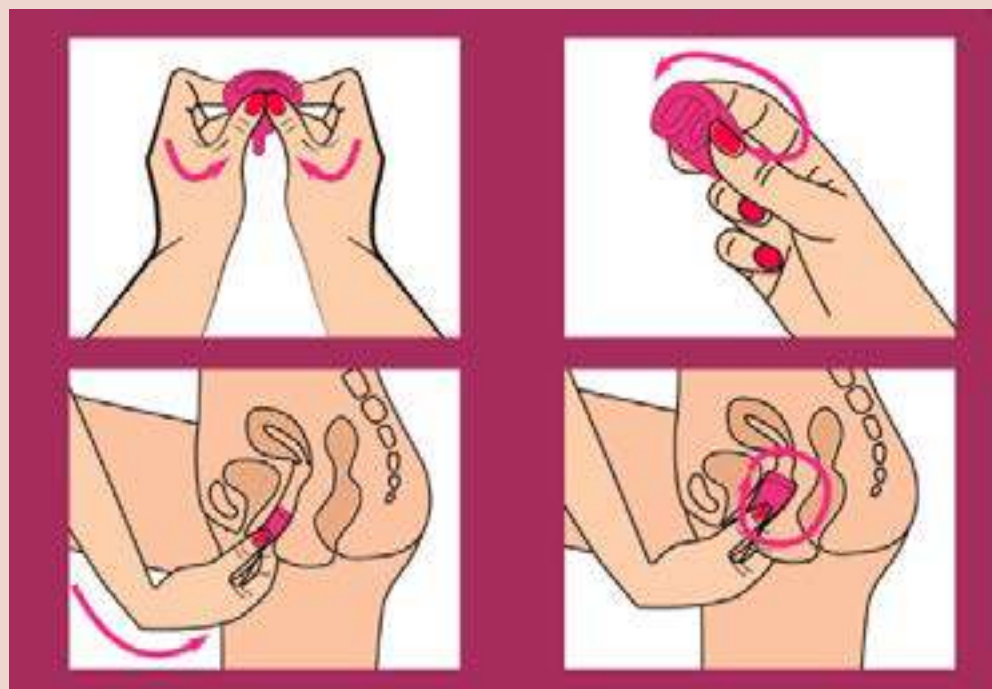
Pros:

- It collects blood rather than absorbing it, so no risk of bacterial infection or toxic shock syndrome.
- Hold more blood so you can spend more time outdoors.



How to use a Menstrual Cup?

- Fold the cup horizontally so that it can be easily inserted. Though It will easily slide up your vagina but if you are using it for the first time, try lubricating its rim with water or some other water-based lube. And once its there it will unfold and start collecting the blood.
- It can be used for 10-12 hours straight and hence is more useful when you have to go outdoors.
- Gently pull it out with your thumb and index finger, when you need to change.



Menstrual Disc

Just like [menstrual cups](#) these also collect the blood during periods but there is a difference in their placement inside your body. Menstrual cup rests in the vaginal canal below the cervix while the disc stays lengthwise to fit into the vaginal fornix (where canal meets the cervix). These are made up of plastic and are flexible, therefore, fits well inside your body and prevents any leakage.

How to use Menstrual Disc?

- Squeeze the rim of disc with your fingers and insert it up in your vagina.
- It can be worn for 10-12 hours.
- Go down with your fingers and grab the rim of the disc and pull it back to remove it from your body.



Cons:

- It can be messy to remove it. Cups have a stem like ending, so you can easily pinch and pull it but discs have no such thing.
- Reusable option is not available.

Pros:

- You can have sex during periods and your partner won't even feel that you are wearing it.
- Collects blood more effectively than cups.

Period Panties

Yes, you read it right. These are just like your regular panties but made of absorbent material to absorb the blood during periods. You can use them alone during menstruation or with tampons/cups for extra precaution. Nothing can be worse than getting caught off guard by periods. Panties come to your rescue here. You can wear it the whole day when your period is about to start and that too without being uncomfortable. Few panties come with a pocket in front where you keep a heating pad to relieve the stomach pain.

Cons:

- One time cost is higher than other sanitary options and you will have to buy a lot of them.
- Washing the used ones might not be comfortable for everyone.

Pros:

- These are super absorbent and few brands can even absorb blood that 4 tampons do together.
- Layer which is in contact with body is breathable and dries quickly. So, no tension of moisture and hence rashes.



Take Care Of These Things

Maintain Hygiene

Hygiene is very much necessary during periods mainly because you are more prone to getting infected. Hot water can reduce inflammation & [cramping](#) and it also minimizes the chances of infection. Changing your protection every 3-4 hours is a must, regardless of their claims of providing all day long protection. Keeping your pelvic area clean and dry can help you avoid a number of problems from rashes to urinary tract infections as well.



Eat Healthy Food

Just like faulty food habits can worsen the PMS symptoms, similarly the right food can help you overcome these symptoms as well. Foods rich in magnesium, calcium, [vitamin B6](#) and omega 3 fatty acids can alleviate a number of period related problems. Include green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds, fresh fruits, and wholegrain into your daily diet. Different varieties of teas like ginger tea or peppermint tea can also help to reduce inflammation, cramping, nausea, and irritability. Keep yourself hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Dark chocolates are also recommended during periods for their high magnesium content.

Exercise Regularly

Though rigorous exercises should be avoided in those days but that doesn't mean that you have to take complete rest. There are a few exercises that are recommended during menstrual days as they can provide relief from period-related anxiety, fatigue, backaches and [headaches](#). Brisk walking, aerobics, dancing all are good unless you don't push yourself hard. Aim at 30 minutes of work out each day. Yoga is also a good option as long as you are not trying any inverted asanas, that require you to stand on your head.



Take Proper Rest

One should take proper rest, more so during these days. If you aren't able to sleep properly snuggling up to a hot water bottle may ease the discomfort. Taking healthy diet at correct timings will enhance the quality of your sleep. Don't assume that you will have a lighter flow at night and take due precautions, so that you can get a sound sleep. Allow yourself to take breaks in between your work during the day so that you can stay energetic throughout.

Consult Your Gynecologist

You must consult your gynecologist at the right time, if required. There is no particular symptom to tell you if you need to see a doctor, but if you see sudden changes in your body regarding the PMS symptoms, then it is time to do so.

Avoid Doing This

Heavy Workouts or Physical Work

From stomach cramps to back ache; to the roller coaster of emotions, your body goes through a lot during those days. So you must take due care of our own self and give a miss to heavy workouts and physical work. Heavy physical activity can not only leave your body exhausted and dehydrated, but in extreme cases it can lead to loss of one's period.

Sad Or Romantic Movies

The much highlighted part of periods – “mood swings”; yes you might have observed yourself the flow of emotions is so different during those days. The hormonal imbalance in your body can increase your anger, irritability and anxiety attacks. Watching sad and romantic movies generally take you through a roller coaster ride of emotions. So it will be better if you can give it a miss to such kind of movies. You can, and in fact should go for a comedy movie and laugh your way through those painful days.



Using Vaginal Wash

Nature has endowed vagina with its own cleaning mechanism, which can work in a very fine balance of good and bad bacteria. Using a vaginal wash or soap near the vagina can disturb its natural ph levels and results in washing away of the good bacteria. Just warm water is enough to do the job. Try to keep the area clean and dry to avoid rashes and infections. Any medicated product should be used only on gynecologist's recommendation.

Painful Appointments

The reduced levels of Estrogen can make your body oversensitive. So all the procedures like waxing and shaving can make you feel more hurt and leave your skin red. It will be better if you can postpone them for a week or so. Dental appointments should also be scheduled accordingly



Unprotected Sex

It is one of the biggest myths that one can't get pregnant during period. You cannot only get pregnant but there also high chances of infections. Thus you must avoid intercourse, while you are on your periods.

Eat Healthy

Green Leafy Vegetables

Healthy diet of green leafy vegetables like broccoli, celery, spinach, beans, etc. brings relief as these vegetables offer strong resistance to lot of period related problems. They are rich in minerals like calcium, magnesium and potassium, which provide relief from menstrual cramps by reducing the contractions. They are also a [good source of iron](#) and hence are good at avoiding anemia. Their calming properties help well in dealing with emotional outburst, anxiety and irritability. Also their high fibre content makes them good enough in treating digestive issues, which are often associated with periods. Dark green vegetables are also a good source of vitamin K, which helps to overcome excessive bleeding by coagulating blood.



Fruits

During menstrual days strong sugar craving is a common problem. Fruits like apples, pear, berries and melons are [healthier substitutes](#) to sugar and their macro and micro nutrients help you to overcome period induced weakness. Pineapple and raw papaya are good options for those who suffer from irregular periods as they can induce menstruation. Pineapples also contain an enzyme called bromelain which is a great muscle relaxant. Bananas can also be good choice among fruits as they are a rich source of potassium. They can also regulate the bowel movements and their vitamin B6 can reduce cramping. The antioxidant properties of vitamin C in citrus fruits can also lead you to the better absorption of Iron, which is very necessary after significant blood loss during menstruation.

Nuts & Seeds

[Nuts and seeds](#) are highly recommended during periods. Nature has endowed them with lots of protein, omega 3 fatty acid, zinc, calcium, magnesium and essential vitamin & nutrients. They provide you energy endurance without spiking your blood sugar levels. Munching on nuts and seeds like almonds, walnuts, sesame seeds, flax seeds, carom seeds and pumpkin seeds may reduce cramping due to their muscle relaxant properties. So replacing junk food with nuts and seeds is not only a healthier option for your food cravings but it can also help you to combat many PMS symptoms as well. Dates are also beneficial as they are an excellent source of iron and can come handy.

Wholegrain Food

Eat whole grains like wholegrain bread, brown rice, and oats etc. They provide valuable amounts of iron, calcium and fibre without being too heavy on your stomach. They are also full of Complex carbohydrates which reduce water retention in your body and promote the production of serotonin — the feel-good brain chemical — which helps you to deal with your mood swings. These carbs can keep your energy levels up for longer duration. Whole grains are also rich in vitamin B6 which alleviates PMS.

Chocolates

You are going to love this part of your diet during periods. During these days it is recommended to have a small piece of dark chocolate (with 60 percent or



higher cacao bean) every day, as it has antioxidants and is good at increasing serotonin. They are also a good source of magnesium which is ideal to treat headaches, bloating, breast tenderness, fluid retention, and is also needed for adequate absorption of the calcium.

Ease Your Pain

Stay hydrated

Drinking lots of water prevents bloating which is both uncomfortable and painful. Though the hot/warm water is preferred as it increases blood flow to your skin and helps cramped muscles, you can go for fresh water as well. Try adding some mint leaves, orange slices or any other fruit you like to make it tasty. Vitamin C and calcium helps in reducing cramps. There are many recipes available on you tube for [Detox water](#) that are worth a try. Below is the one I have on regular basis:

- Take one jug of water and add few cucumber slices to it.
- Put in some mint leaves and a slice of lemon.
- Shake it well and its ready to drink after few minutes.



Hot water bottle

Well everybody knows this one, placing a heating pad on lower abdomen gives a great relief from muscular pain. It increases circulation and blood flow to the uterus, which reduces the menstrual pain. We all have seen our elders (mostly grandparents) using a pink colored hot water bottle when they had any body part aching. But nowadays there are many other variants available in market. Gel pad is one of them. Just plug it in, it will take few seconds to heat up and you are good to go. No tension of spilling or getting burnt. You can easily enjoy other thing while getting relief from pain. On my first day of period I prefer working from home with this heating pad on me rather than going to office and being in pain for the whole day.

Skip Caffeine

Many women find it helpful when it comes to relieving abdominal pain during periods. If you are used to having tea/coffee multiple times a day then try reducing it slowly as directly going to zero may have negative symptoms.

Smoothies For Menstrual Pain

These can really help in lowering the menstrual pain. since you should avoid caffeine you can try different smoothies during these days. And you can add ginger to these! Yay! You can make it with any fruit or even vegetable of your choice. Banana is rich in Vitamin D and potassium which also help with cramp. Here is the recipe to banana kiwi smoothie which I love to drink:



- Take half glass of orange juice (remember Vitamin C can help) and pour it in a blender jar.
- Add cut kiwi and banana pieces to it and blend it well.
- You can put mint leaves and honey on the top if you like.

Soothing Bath

A warm bath may be just the thing you need to soothe pain and relax tense muscles during periods. I can understand that on first 2 days of periods nobody wants to leave the bed and do anything. But this can really help with cramps (menstrual pain) and mood. Accept it or not, we all feel a little irritated with everything during those days, so play some good music and enjoy a long bath. This will definitely cheer you up. Avoid bathing with cold water even if weather is hot, use a little warm water during these days for normal bath as well.

Exercise/Yoga

Though it sounds a little uneasy to exercise during periods but trust me once you start doing it you will notice the change. Light walking/running and cardio will surely help in decreasing menstrual pain in long run. I personally find following yoga poses helpful:

- Child's pose: It helps in easing out the back pain. Place a pillow below your abdomen to hold the pose for longer time.
- Cat/cow pose: It targets both back and abdominal pain. It stretches muscles and helps in toning as well.



Cat/cow pose



Child's pose



Savasana pose

- Savasana: Lying down and concentrating on your breathe, takes away focus from all the pain you were feeling.

Good Sleep

Having adequate sleep is very much required during periods. Avoid too much of TV, laptop or mobile screens to get a sound sleep. Try managing your sleep pattern few days before periods so that your body is used to sleep at the same time without causing any problem to you. Different positions might help you to sleep better so monitor that as well. Which position makes you sleep comfortably and reduce menstrual pain.

Irregular Periods?

Menstrual problems in ladies (female) with the age ranging from 14 years till 50 are nothing but the problem of period. Periods problem in ladies is usually referred to infrequent periods with interval of more than 35 days. Regular cycles between 25 to 35 days are very common anything other this is irregular period that may involve heavy episodes of bleeding every 2-3 months or may involve spotting or extremely heavy flow. 11 to 13 periods in one year are quite usual and follows like periodic flow but anything less than this or more than this is abnormal and in order to stay away from this some home remedies will be helpful.

Problem of irregular periods are common among ladies and there is no need to worry about it because it can be easily tackled with help of some simple remedies at home.

There are a number of reasons that can be the root cause of this issue for you.

- It can be a hormonal disorder or can be food adulteration that may lead to this.
- Some kind of medication that you might be taking or can be because of lifestyle changes.
- Significant weight gain or [weight loss](#)
- Poor nutritional diet, eating carbohydrates rich food too much
- Bad habits such as smoking, drug use, taking too much caffeine or alcohol
- Stress and depression for prolonged periods
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome or Uterine abnormalities
- Chemotherapy
- Breastfeeding
- Recent [childbirth](#) or miscarriage

These reasons vary from person to person and so any of the above reason may have caused irregular periods for you. You need to figure out that and start taking early necessary steps to avoid other health issues.

The problem of missed or irregular periods causes other body issues as well

We have these 8 natural remedies which can help you to get out of this problem.

Ginger

Ginger, a natural herb that everyone uses, can help in dealing with menstrual pain and also regulating menstrual cycles. It is highly beneficial since it promotes menstruation and thus can help in dealing with irregular periods or missed periods. How to take advantage of the healthy [properties of ginger](#)? It is really simple to take. You just need to boil one-half teaspoon of fresh ginger in 250ml of water for 5 to 7 mins. Add a little sugar to it just to deal with the taste. Drink this at least 3 times a day after meals and continue this for about 1-2 months.

Green Papaya

What is green papaya? Unripe papaya is green in color and that one is really helpful in balancing your hormonal imbalance and thus normalizes irregular periods. It helps in proper contraction of muscles fibers of your uterus. Eat green papaya or have it in form of juice for couple of months and you will start noticing the difference. Avoid consuming the same when having your periods. It is beneficial for delayed periods which are associated with menopause.



Cinnamon

Cinnamon, a very common spices used in many dishes, has [warming effects on the body](#) and it helps in regulating menstrual cycles. The presence of hydroxychalcone helps in regulating insulin levels and also affects the menstrual regularity. It helps in reducing menstrual cramps.

To use this food, just add one-half teaspoon of cinnamon powder to a glass of milk or water. Drink this daily for few months to let get the required effect. Alternative to this is, you can drink cinnamon tea or chew cinnamon sticks regularly.

Sesame Seeds

They help in balancing your hormones and also they contain essential fatty acids that promote [optimal hormone production](#). Simply dry roast a handful of sesame seeds and grind them along with one teaspoon of jaggery into a fine powder and store it in a container. Take this one spoon daily on an empty stomach in the second half of your menstrual cycle i.e. 2 weeks before your daily period starts. Follow this for few months and find the difference.

Note: Do not use this remedy during your periods.

Aloe Vera

[Aloe Vera](#) can help you in regulating your menstrual cycles by regulating your hormones responsible for menstruation. Try out this simple remedy and you will surely start seeing positive results. But you need to follow this regularly. You can have aloe-vera in the form of pulp or juice whichever is easily available or whichever you feel comfortable with. You need to extract the gel from the leaves and mix this with 1 spoon of honey. Consume it daily first thing in the morning. Continue this for 3-4 months for best results.

Note: Do not use this remedy during your periods.



Parsley

Another useful herb that has the properties to treat menstrual related issues and it is considered the most effective remedies for the hormonal imbalances. You can have parsley juice every day, as a medicine to treat irregular period problem.

Turmeric

Another spice having multiple health benefits is also very beneficial in treating or regulating menstruation and balancing the hormones of the body.

You just need to consume $\frac{1}{4}$ of turmeric with milk and honey. Continue this for 3 months and see the improvement in your irregular periods.

Added advantage of turmeric is that, its [anti-inflammatory properties](#) help you in relieving menstrual pain.



Coriander Seeds Remedy


They help promote menstruation and can be very useful in getting your regular periods back.

Simply boil one teaspoon of coriander seeds in 500ml of water until the quantity of water reduces to 250ml. Strain the seeds from the liquid. Take this at least 3 times a day prior to your period. Do this for a few months to see better results.

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