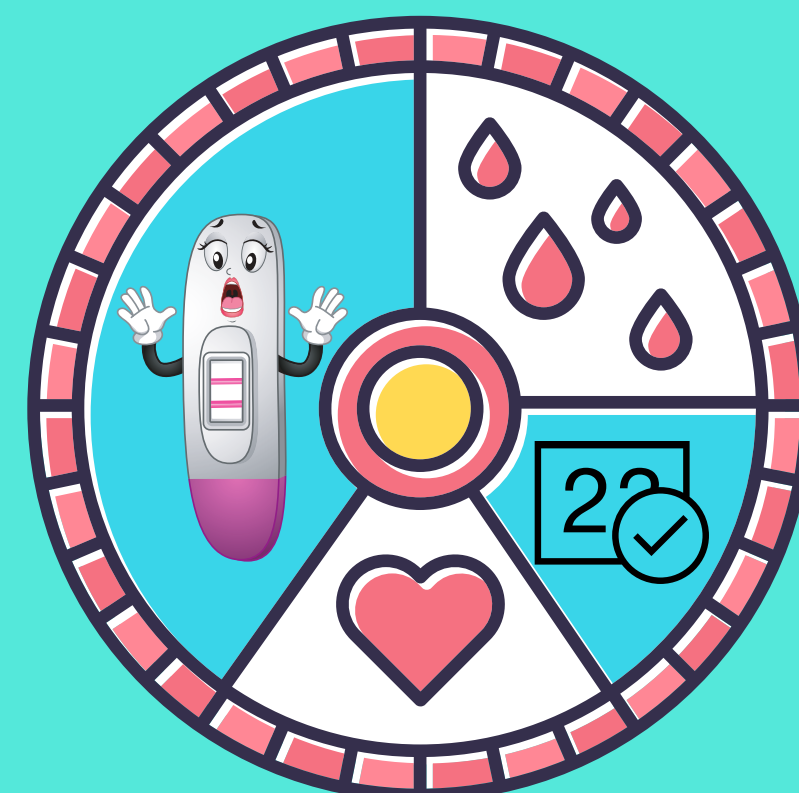




The Menstrual Cycle.

- A person's first menstruation (first period) marks the time when their body has grown enough that they can become pregnant
- A person's first period generally happens between the ages of 9-14 years old
- Most people with vulvas have menstrual cycles
- Periods are not the only thing that happen during the menstrual cycle. The menstrual phase only represents one of the phases of the menstrual cycle
- Menstrual cycles are typically 28 days long, but every person's body is different
- Pregnancy can happen at any stage during the menstrual cycle!

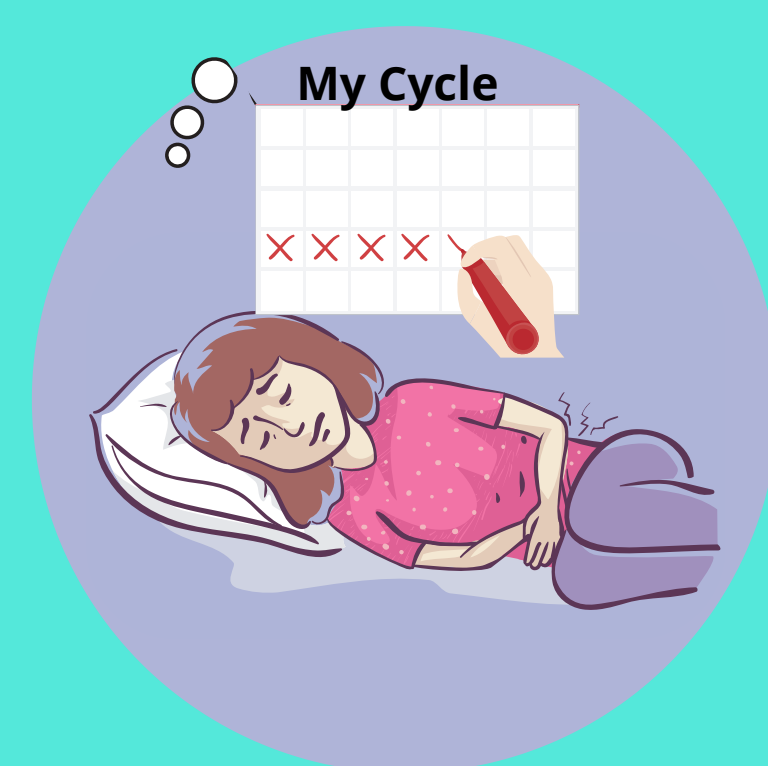


There are Four Phases of the Menstrual Cycle:

- Menstrual Phase
- Ovulation Phase
- Follicular Phase
- Luteal Phase

During the Menstrual Phase of the Menstrual Cycle:

- This phase is commonly called a period
- Lining of uterus is shed
- Blood, tissue, and secretions flow out of the vagina
- Periods can last anywhere from 2-8 days. However, some people may have shorter or longer periods
- Some people may experience pain or cramps, mood changes, and bloating during the period, but each person's experiences with these will be different!



During the Follicular Phase of the Menstrual Cycle:

- One egg becomes mature and becomes ready for fertilization by a sperm cell
- The uterine wall begins to thicken
- Occurs about one week after the period ends



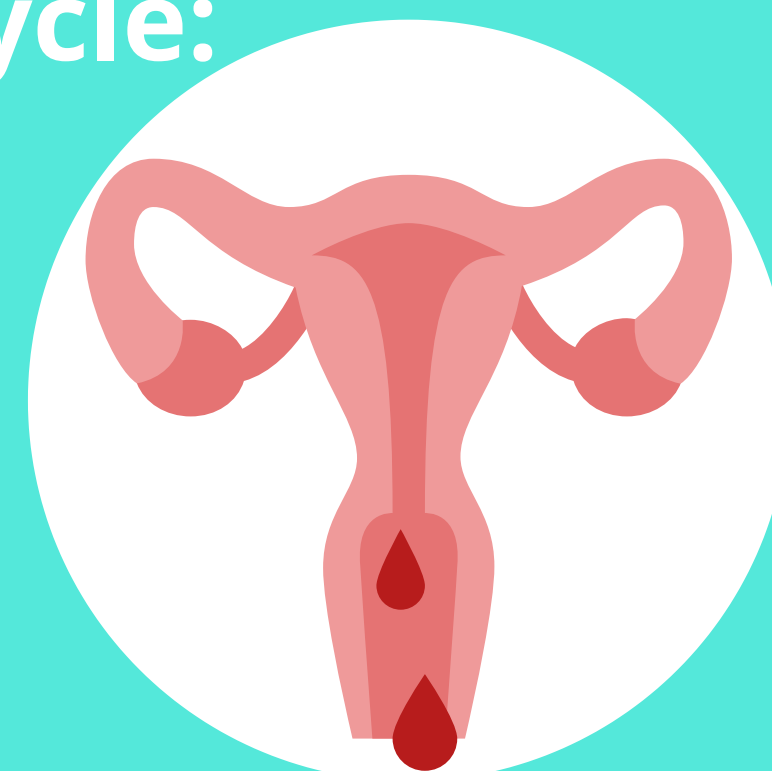
During the Ovulation Phase of the Menstrual Cycle

- Mature egg is released from ovary and moves through the fallopian tubes
- Egg moves through the fallopian tubes for about 24 hours before it dissolves (if it is not fertilized by a sperm cell)
- This is typically when people are most fertile, meaning a pregnancy is most likely to happen. But, pregnancy can happen at any stage during the menstrual cycle!



During the Luteal Phase of the Menstrual Cycle:

- If pregnancy does not happen, the body releases hormones that cause the uterine lining to break down
- The menstrual cycle begins again
- If a pregnancy does happen, the cycle stops for the duration of the pregnancy



Period Products/Menstrual Supplies

- Menstrual flow (blood, tissue, and secretions) is typically about 3 or 4 ounces of blood over the course of each period
- There are several products that can be used to catch the menstrual flow. These products are effective, safe, and healthy when used correctly
- The period products a person uses is a personal choice and is influenced by their values, culture, what products they like and feel comfortable with, and the availability of period product options





Some Type of Period Products/Menstrual Supplies:

Pads

- Are made of absorbent material and are worn inside underwear to catch and absorb period blood
- There are several types of pads, including disposable pads, washable reusable pads, and washable menstrual underwear with a pad built into the underwear



Tampons

- Are made of absorbent material and are inserted into the vagina to catch and absorb period blood
- Some tampons come with an applicator made of either plastic or cardboard to help insert them into the vagina, and some do not have an applicator
- Tampons have a string attached for easy removal from the vagina



Menstrual cups

- Are small reusable cups made of silicone that is inserted into the vagina to catch and collect period blood
- The cup is removed from vagina, emptied, cleaned, and reinserted



References

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