

Why learn more?

Learning about the body and the experiences of women helps to create a more supportive, informed, and equal world for us all, and gives girls the tools to stay healthy throughout life.

There's a lot more to know about women's health. And it doesn't have to be embarrassing or scary.



Learn more about menstrual health and how it affects the women in your life

Scan or search



What's women's health Wales?



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Cymraeg. Gofynnwch i'ch nyrs ysgol.
This leaflet is also available in Welsh. Ask your school nurse.

What's menstrual health?

Understanding menstrual health and periods helps you to support yourself, or women who have them.



What's menstrual health?

Half the population will experience a period at some point in their lives, so you will likely know someone who has had or is going to have one.

Anyone with a uterus (female reproductive system) will likely have them. This could be you, your friend, sister, mother, girlfriend, next-door neighbour, the person who sits next to you in lessons...you get the idea.

Whether you're going to have a period or not, it's great to learn more. By understanding the facts, you'll be better equipped to support them or yourself, making the whole thing less intimidating.

From knowing how the menstrual cycle works, recognising what's normal, and being aware that symptoms such as cramps, mood changes, pain, and tiredness can happen, there's a lot to learn about.



What's a period?

A period (or menstruation, as it's sometimes called) is when the lining of the womb comes away, and blood is released from the body through the vagina.

This happens each month, usually every 28 days, but can range from 21 days to 35 days. Periods normally last between 2 and 7 days and are usually heaviest in the first few days.

Periods usually start around the age of 12, although some girls may start earlier or later. Periods stop when you reach the Menopause, usually between the ages of 45-55 years. In the UK, the average age of Menopause is 51 years.

What is PMS (premenstrual syndrome)?

Throughout the menstrual cycle, the body changes in its hormone levels, resulting in a variety of symptoms.

Around a period, there are both physical and emotional changes that happen, known as PMS. Not all women with periods will experience PMS, but most people will have their own 'normal' pattern.

Typical symptoms of PMS include:

- Tummy cramps and pain
- Back pain
- Greasy skin and hair
- Spots
- Difficulties sleeping
- Mood swings, like feeling grumpy, upset or anxious
- Cravings
- Bloating
- Tiredness
- Headaches

PMS symptoms usually happen before your period starts and then get better when you start to bleed.



What are period products?

Women, girls and people who have periods use different products to absorb their flow (that's another name for a period).

These include:

- Tampons
- Pads
- Menstrual cups
- Period pants



What's normal?

While periods are a normal, manageable part of life for many women, some women experience heavy or very painful periods.

This can mean there are additional things at play, so if that's you, it's worth speaking to a school nurse, doctor, or trusted adult about your experiences.

Learning about the body and the experiences of women helps create a more supportive, informed, and equal world for all, and gives girls the tools to stay healthy throughout life.

There's a lot more to know about women's health and menstrual health. And it doesn't have to be embarrassing or scary.

