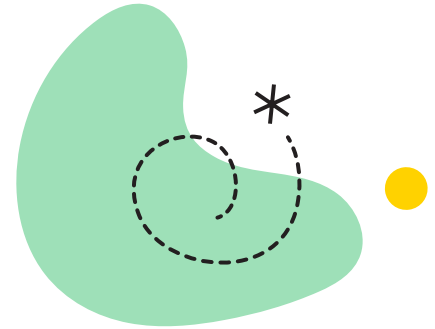


What you need to know. Period.



What about period pain?

Ways to learn more & get support



* *What you need to know. Period.* is for everybody: for people who get a period, people who will eventually get a period, and even people who will never get a period. Together, we can have open and honest conversations about **menstruation**.

Words you need to know. Period.



Menstruation is often called a period because it's the period of time each month when a person with a uterus bleeds. The uterus is a triangle-shaped area inside the body (below the belly button). This is where a baby can grow during pregnancy. Most periods last anywhere from 3-8 days and happen once a month.

What is "normal" period pain?

The way a period feels can be different for each person, because everybody is different. Many people who get their period will have uncomfortable physical and emotional symptoms before and during their period.

Some people will experience:

- Cramping in the area below the belly button
- Diarrhea, constipation, or nausea
- Sore breasts
- Feeling more sensitive emotionally
- Back pain
- Fatigue or tiredness
- Dizziness

Period pain is not normal if...

- Taking an over-the-counter painkiller like Advil, Tylenol, or Midol doesn't help
- The pain regularly keeps you from going to school and doing your regular activities
- You regularly vomit, have diarrhea, or are constipated during or around your period
- You regularly bleed through a pad, tampon, or period underwear in less than 2 hours



* If any of these are true for you, you may want to track your symptoms and speak to a trusted adult or caregiver about making an appointment to see a doctor, nurse, or elder in your community.

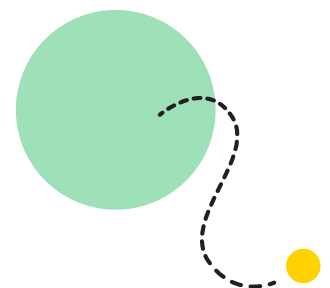
Some discomfort with a period is common, which is why it can be tricky to know when to ask for help. Some physical symptoms are normal, but some could be signs of a more serious health condition, like endometriosis.

What is endometriosis?

Endometriosis (en-doh-meetree-oh-sis), sometimes called endo, is one of the most common period-related conditions. Endo affects at least 1 in 10 girls and women. It also affects transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse people, but we don't yet know exactly how many people in these groups are affected by endo. Symptoms can be very painful, difficult, and can affect a person's quality of life by making it hard for them to go to school or work, to be social, active, and to enjoy their hobbies.

Endo is a life-altering condition. It's much worse and more serious than having a bad period.

Endometriosis is a chronic condition where tissue that's like the lining of the uterus (the endometrium) attaches to other parts of the body. Endometriosis is usually found in the pelvis (the area below the belly button), but it can happen in other parts of the body too. The endometriosis tissue can become inflamed (irritated) by hormones in the body. It can be very painful, and it can also create scarring inside the body, which may affect how a person's body functions.



Speak up for your health needs

Many people with endo experience a delay to diagnosis. This means that when they speak to a doctor about their symptoms, the doctor might not think that they have endo. Many of us are told that period pain is normal. Some people with extreme pain, like endo pain, might not recognize that what they're experiencing isn't normal. They might not try to get medical help. But, getting a diagnosis can lead to getting help. You may need to **advocate** for your own health or support someone you care about, to advocate for their health.

Words you need to know. Period.

To **advocate** means to publicly support something. When you advocate for your health, you're communicating an important need and you're making sure to get answers and help.

Preparing to speak with a health care professional

Here are some ways to prepare for an appointment:

- Track your symptoms - take notes on what you're experiencing and *when*
- Keep track of your menstrual cycle using an app or another method, like a calendar
- Write down your questions for the doctor
- Ask someone you trust to come to the appointment with you
- Bring a notebook and pen (or phone with app) to take notes on what the doctor says

July

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Let's talk. Period.

Unfortunately, we don't always get the help or answers we need when we go to the doctor. What can we do if we're worried about our health and leave a doctor's appointment without getting help or answers to our questions?

It's your right to ask for a second opinion. This means that you go to a different doctor, nurse, or health care professional about your health problem. If you think something's wrong, especially if it's keeping you from going to school and doing the things you love, keep asking for help. Keep looking for answers. You deserve to get help.

Here are some ways you may be able to continue your learning and access support in your community:

- Sexual health clinic
- Library
- Community or public health centre
- Youth group
- Doctor's office or hospital
- Learning centre
- Women's or 2SLGBTQIA+ centre

If you think something's wrong, ask for help

Some period pain symptoms can be embarrassing or difficult to talk about, but there's nothing to be ashamed of. Ask for help. You know your body best. If you're worried about your period pain, speak to a doctor, nurse, parent, or elder in your community.

Learn more about endometriosis and other period-related health conditions:

The Endometriosis Network Canada: endometriosisnetwork.com

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