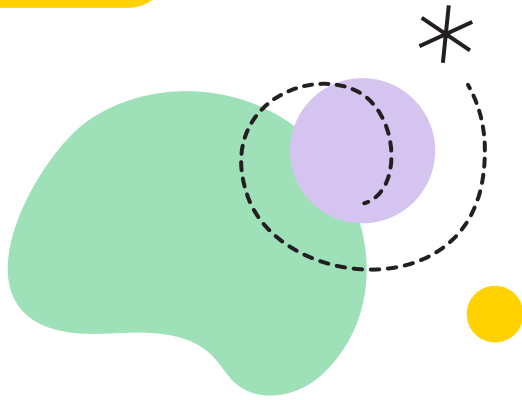




What you need to know. Period.

Menarche: The first
few years having a period



* *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**.

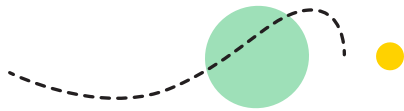
Words you need to know. Period.

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.

A young person's first-ever period is called menarche (MEN-ar-kee). It's an important milestone in a young person's life. Having a period means that a person may be **fertile** and could become pregnant from sex or sexual contact. A menstrual cycle doesn't last forever. This fertile phase in life can last around 40 years before a person becomes less fertile and their period stops. This is called menopause.

Words you need to know. Period.

When a person who gets a period is **fertile** it means that they can grow a baby inside their body.



When can a person get their first period?

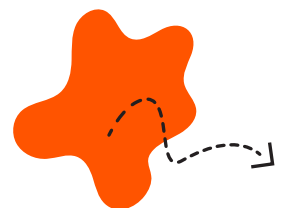
- Between ages 8-16
- You can't predict when a first period will come, but it usually happens around 2 years after the first signs of puberty (growing breasts and pubic hair)
- Everybody is different, some people will start to bleed earlier and some later, just like some people will start puberty earlier and others later

What if a young person never gets their period?

- Some young people with a uterus don't menstruate. They might have a hormone imbalance, an illness, eating disorder, or they might be very athletic or underweight
- People with a uterus who haven't had their period within 3 years of developing breasts may want to speak to a doctor, nurse, or trusted adult

What will the first few years of a period be like?

- During the first year of menstruating, periods can be unpredictable and can vary in duration, but a person's period will usually become more regular over time
- A person's first-ever period may not look like what we think of as a regular period. The blood might appear very dark (almost brown) and it might be thick, rather than liquid.
- A person's first period might be short (2-3 days) and it might be light (not much blood). For some people a first period can be heavy and long (5-7 days). Everyone's different.



Period perspectives

For many, a person's first period marks an important milestone and life transition. Getting a period can be seen as entering a new stage in life. It's a big part of puberty and marks a transition from childhood toward adulthood for people who get a period.

Puberty will be a little different for everyone because everybody's different. There are physical changes that happen during puberty, like getting a period, for example, but there are also changes that affect how we feel, including our mood and emotions.

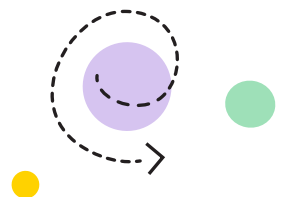
Puberty is a time of growth and change and for some people this time can be challenging. If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out for help. You can talk to a friend, an adult you trust, or a healthcare professional, like a doctor, nurse, or a therapist.



Let's talk. Period.

What are some other big life changes and milestones?

How do you think most young people feel about getting their first period? About going through puberty?



Period products: There's a lot to choose from

What period products do you need when you first get your period? Deciding which period products to use and when to use them is a very personal choice. And it can change over time. There are a lot of period products out there. It can be tricky to know which ones to use and when. It's a good idea to talk to people in your life who get their period to ask about what kinds of period products they use and what works for them.

When you first get a period, you might start by using pads or period underwear, but eventually you might find that using a tampon or a menstrual cup suits you best. Finding the right products might take a little trial and error, trying different things out in different situations, but eventually, you'll find the best fit for you.

	 Reusable menstrual cups	 Disposable pads	 Disposable panty liners	 Reusable period underwear & pads	 Disposable tampons
What are they?	A small cup made of flexible material, like silicon. It catches blood to prevent leaks. Menstrual cups come in different sizes and shapes to fit different bodies. The cup has a small grip at the end to help take it out.	A piece of disposable material made of plastics with a cotton lining that absorbs blood. They come in different sizes and shapes for heavier or lighter flows.	A piece of disposable material made of plastics with a cotton lining that absorbs very light flows, like spotting. They come in different sizes and shapes, but are thinner than pads.	Period underwear: look and feel much like regular underwear, but they're made to soak up blood. Many brands offer different styles, including boxers. Reusable pads: look and work like disposable pads, but they're made of fabric, are washable, and are made to be used again and again.	A tube of fabric (usually cotton) made to absorb blood. They come in different sizes for different flows and bodies, and can be inserted with or without an applicator. A tampon has a string on one end to help take it out.

