

Adolescent Girls' Puberty & Period

A Friendly Guideline for Dads



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From a very young age, girls grow up thinking their dads are superheroes. They wander around clasping dads' fingers. He is always there to shine lights on thousands of unknown questions, indulges all of their whims during upsetting times, a shelter of full confidence. Dad is everything to them!

Research shows that a good father-daughter bonding from an early age has a huge influence on girls' self-confidence, self-esteem and plays a big role in achieving good academic results. However, during adolescence, many dads don't always understand all the changes their daughters are going through. They can't fathom when, with what or even how to bring up important topics like girl's puberty and menstruation in friendly discussions.

This incomprehension, consciously or subconsciously creates a distance between the father-daughter relation. 'My dad is a superhero', this role gradually fades away from daughters minds and the fathers also accept it thinking this is normal.

But, if the fathers are a little more aware, then the whole backdrop transforms! Our booklet is for those dads who want to change this scenario.

May all dads and daughters have beautiful relationships!

May the Dad become a superhero for every daughter!

Umme Sharmin Kabir
Founder, Wreetu
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Shreya and her dad



“Every month on her special days, I never forget to hug her, remind her that it's perfectly safe to fly in strong wind because I am always with her.”

The bond between a daughter and her Dad is very significant in their relationship. How a daughter forms her ideologies to life, in many cases, depends on the relationship she has with her dad. The daughters take her Dad as a representative role of male and thus she learns how to interact with the other gender vastly.

Studies have shown,

- ✿ A beautiful bond between a dad and daughter has a lasting and positive effect on the emotional development of the daughter.
- ✿ The presence of a dad in a daughter's life protects her from falling into the prey of loneliness during childhood.
- ✿ Daughters become less clinically frustrated or anxious if they have healthy relationships with their dads.
- ✿ Girls have less problems such as eating disorders, body dysmorphia or dissatisfaction with their appearance or body weight which help them maintain a good emotional and mental health.
- ✿ The stress management skills of a daughter also depend on what kind of relationship they have with their fathers during their childhood.

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Some negative effects of distant relationship between dad and daughters:

The data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control show that the children (before puberty) who don't have good relationship with their father or if their fathers were absent when they were growing up, most of them drop out of schools, behavioral problems are observed in them, they are in severe depression and they tend to commit suicide at a young age.

When to Talk About Puberty and Menstruation?

Gently talk about puberty and menstruation to a daughter when she is 8 or 9 years old. Gradually, families should introduce these concepts to a girl on the eve of her adolescence since usually these matters are not openly discussed within families, schools or in our society.

We must take care to present the basic ideas of menstruation to the adolescent girls before their menarche. This will protect them from having a petrifying first menstrual experience mainly because they didn't have adequate information about menses.

Aaniyah and Aadiyah's Dad



"Friendly relationship with my girls are playing a big role in boosting their confidence."

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Bidushi and her dad



“It is our responsibility to make every adolescent girl's growing up memorable by eliminating period taboos.”

Some General Information About Menstruation:

Generally, in any month between 9 to 16 years, adolescent girl's bodies start the preparation for childbirth. If the ovum in the uterus isn't fertilized then this ovum breaks apart and comes out through the vagina along with the uterine lining which is called menstruation or period.

Things That Must Be Shared With Daughters:

- ♀ Menstruation is very normal for every girl.
- ♀ Each month menstruation can typically last from 3 to 7 days.
- ♀ Menstruation experiences can vary for every girl.
- ♀ Some may have heavy bleeding, some may have light bleeding. Some may experience abdominal pain while others do not.
- ♀ In each menstrual cycle, one tablespoon to half a cup or up to 100 ml of blood is lost.
- ♀ It can take up to two years for the body to adjust after the menarche. This means that during this time menstruations can be irregular.
- ♀ Period is a normal occurrence for all the people who have a uterus. You are not alone, your friend, sister, mother, aunty everyone has it.
- ♀ All those who menstruate have uterus, but not all of them may be girls or women. Such as, transgender people.

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How Do You Know If Your Daughter Has Started Menstruating?

- Pain at lower abdomen.
- Mood swings- getting annoyed, angry, crying at trivial matters.
- Feeling nauseous.
- Declining participation in sports or other activities.



How to Prepare Your Daughter For Menstruation?

Start sharing menstruation related information with your daughter slowly from the beginning of her adolescence years. Don't wait for her menstruation to start. By doing this, she will be mentally ready for menstruation. At the same time, arrange the required products to get ready for menstruation. Such as, sanitary napkins, panties etc.

Keep the necessary items in an accessible area that your daughter knows of so that she can take them out and use them at any time.

Oh, it's best to make a menstruation kit. A kit that can be kept in her school bag or travel bag for emergencies.



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Menstruation Product Ideas

Reusable Sanitary Napkins



These are usually cloth napkins which can be washed and used for 1 year to 5 years.

Usage:

First thoroughly wash your hands with soap or disinfectant.

Put the core pad inside the elastic of the backing. Place the core pad and backing in the inner side of the panty and button up the backing from the outside of the panty.

Then wear the panty and wash your hands thoroughly with disinfectant.

Steps to Clean Used Napkins:

If you are outside of home, fold the used core pad and keep it in the carry bag.

When you come home or if you are already at home, then soak the used core pad in water for 30 minutes. After that, clean the pads with soap or detergent and let it dry in the hot sun. You can wash the pads in savlon water if you want.

Store the dried pads in the carry bag for use in the next month.

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Muneeba, Muneeza & their dad

Remember:

Thoroughly wash hands with soap or disinfectant before and after changing the napkin each time.
Never dump the used pads in the commode or toilet. This can clog the toilet and stop the water flow.
Under no circumstances, a pad/napkin be worn for more than 6 hours at a stretch.



"I dream of a world where menstruation will not stand in the way of my daughter's achievements."

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Menstruation Product Ideas

Single Use Sanitary Pad / Disposable Pad



These market available pads have to be discarded after they have been used once.

Usage:

First thoroughly wash your hands with soap or disinfectant. Then, remove the individual pad wrapper around the pad. Now, remove the glue paper from the bottom of the pad. Place the adhesive part of the pad in the middle part of the panty (which sits between the two legs). Press firmly so that it sticks to the panty. If there are wings on the pad, take out the glue paper from both wings and attach those to the panty. Fold and throw the wrapper, glue papers in the waste bin. When everything is done, wash your hands thoroughly with disinfectant.

Used Disposable Sanitary Napkin Disposal Method:

Thoroughly, wash hands with soap or disinfectant before and after changing the pad each time.

Wrap the used pad in a paper and fold it.

Then throw it in the waste bin.

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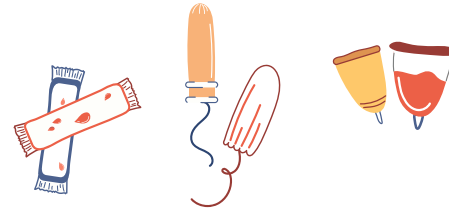


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Remember:

- ♥ Menstruation products can vary in brands, colors, sizes and absorbency levels.
- ♥ Depending on the flow of menstruation blood, your daughter may prefer different brands at different times. So, ask your daughter to explore various menstruation products.



Signs of Adolescence in Girls Before the Onset of Menstruation:

- * Getting taller.
- * Breast development.
- * Changing body shape.
- * Pimples.
- * Mood swings- getting annoyed.
- * Hair growth in the armpits.

Also the signs that are not visible to others-

- * Vaginal discharge.
- * Pubic hair.



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Essential Food For Adolescents Growth:

Teenage girls tend to grow rapidly during adolescence, so they need nutritious food this time. Food must contain the following nourishing elements.

- ♥ Seasonal leafy greens, vegetables and fruits.
- ♥ Grains- Rice, Bread, Pasta, Oats.
- ♥ Dairy- Milk, Cheese.
- ♥ Protein- Eggs, Fish, Pulses, Nuts.
- ♥ Drinks- Water, Freshly Squeezed Juice, Coconut water.



Saarin and Parin's Dad



"May menstruation be a joyous event for every girl."

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Mounota and her dad



"I want my daughter to live free of the taboo that period is a thing to be hidden and not be discussed. Let's create a better world for all the women around us."

Which foods should be eaten less?

Fast foods, soda/soft drinks, fruit drinks, oily foods such as biriyani, roast, tehari etc.



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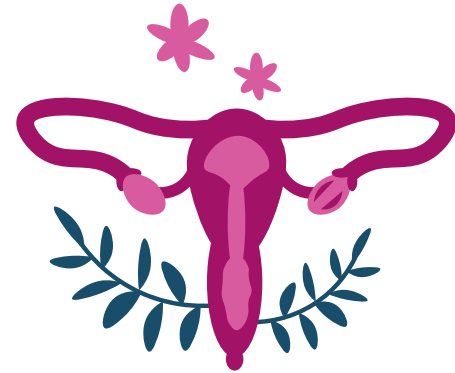
Frequently Asked Question about Adolescence and Menstruation:

1. Why adolescent girls experience frequent mood swings?

Due to the release of various kinds of hormones in the body, girls often experience mood swings during their adolescent years.

2. Why does the body smell during adolescence?

During adolescence, teen girls begin to produce many new hormones that manage the female reproductive system and aid the growth spurt in the body. The presence of all these hormones in adolescent girls' bodies produces sweat in many new places. For instance, in vagina. Also during this time a new type of gland is formed near the armpits and vagina where a specific type of oil is secreted in addition to sweat. This oil mixed sweat creates dampness where bacteria grow if these areas are not cleaned properly everyday. It is because of this special type of bacteria perspiration becomes very stinky during adolescence.



3. What is menstruation?

Each month, an egg is released from the ovary which comes through the fallopian tube and waits in the uterus to be fertilized. But if the egg is not fertilized, then the egg and the ruptured uterine lining containing blood, mucus, etc. comes out of the body through the vagina. This blood that comes out of the vagina every month is called menstruation.

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Manha and her dad



“Instead of portraying menstruation as a confidential matter, make it normal. Talk with your daughter about menstruation like regular everyday stories that will make her confident.”

4. When do girls have their first menstruation?

In general, girls start to have their first menstruation any time between the ages of 9 to 16 years. However, depending on the environment, diet, fluctuations in hormone production etc. different girls start menstruation at different times.

5. What is the importance of having menstruation?

Simply put, when a girl has her menstruations in a regular interval it means that her reproductive system is working properly.

6. How many times does menstruation occur in a month?

Menstruation usually occurs once in a month. It is normal to have menstruation every 24 to 35 days.

7. How long does menstruation last?

Generally, it is normal to have menstruation for 2 to 7 days. Teenagers and young adults typically menstruate for 5 to 7 days. Later when they grow older, menstruation days decrease.

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Mounami and her dad



“When my daughter was around 9 or 10, I used to tell her bedtime stories and in between these tales I informed her about menstruation. I taught her that period is her private matter but it is not a matter that is shameful or should be hidden. Being a mother is a privilege, it is a sign of that fortune.”

8. How much does a girl or woman bleed during menstruation?

From one tablespoon to half a cup or up to 100 milliliter of blood loss can occur during each menstruation.

9. What is menstrual cycle? What are the 4 stages of menstrual cycle? What happens at each stage of the menstrual cycle?

Menstrual cycle is the various biological changes that the female reproductive system (especially, uterus and ovary) goes through each month in the anticipation of pregnancy. This whole process usually takes 24-28 days. For some, it can happen in every 35 days. This cycle is called Menstrual Cycle.

The menstrual cycle has four stages. Each stage plays a role in preparing the body for pregnancy. The length of each stage may vary for every girl or woman and this may change over time.

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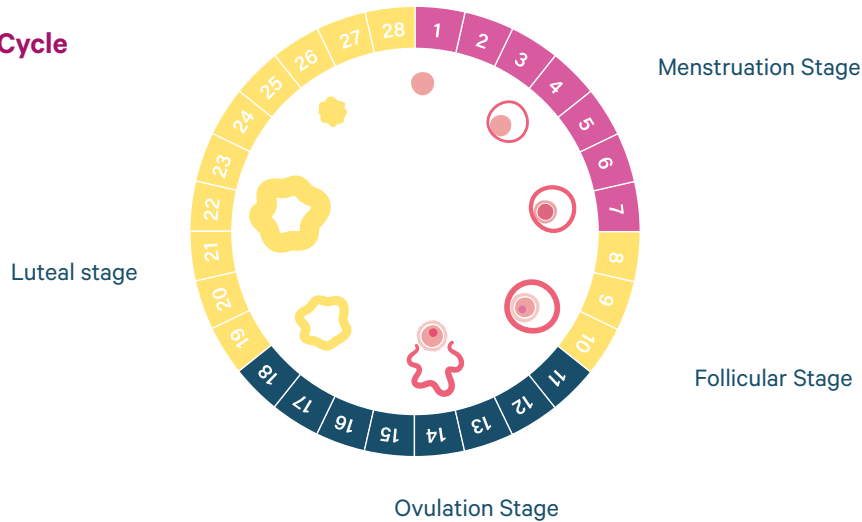
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Menstruation Cycle



From the first day of menstruation a menstrual cycle is counted. The four stages of menstrual cycle are (assuming the average length of a menstrual cycle is 28 days)-

1. Menstruation Stage (1st to 7th day)- The uterine lining is broken and menstruation occurs.
2. Follicular Stage (8th to 10th day)- The level of the uterus begins to rise again.
3. Ovulation Stage (11th to 18th day)- The ovum comes out of the ovary.
4. Luteal stage (19th to 28th day)- The unfertilized egg bursts.

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11. What to use during menstruation?

Every girl and woman has different menstruation patterns, blood flows and personal preferences. So, they can use any menstruation product according to their own convenience.

12. How frequently menstruation products need to be changed?

Every 4 to 6 hours. If the blood flow is heavy, then it should be changed even earlier.

13. How to dispose of used sanitary pads?

Wrap the used disposable sanitary pad in paper, fold it and throw it in the covered waste bin.



Zara and Sarah's Dad



“Menstruation needs to be discussed in a friendly manner within the family. This will make our girls to grow up with more confidence and self-esteem.”

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14. Ways to reduce menstruation pain.

- * Drink plenty of water.
- * Making tea with hot water, ginger, and lemon.
- * Place a heat pack or hot water bag in a towel and hold it against the lower abdomen or in the lower part of the back.
- * Do gentle yoga stretches. For example- Supported Prone Position, Supine Twist, Reclined Bound Angle, Inverted Leg Pose etc.

Note: Consult a doctor if the menstruation cramp is severe.



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15. What is PMS? What are the symptoms of PMS?

PMS or Premenstrual Syndrome refers to some common symptoms that occur before menstruation. These symptoms signal that menstruation will happen very soon. The symptoms include-

- * Nausea.
- * Lower abdomen cramp.
- * Pain in the lower back and spine.
- * Mood swings at regular intervals.
- * Lack of attention.
- * Feeling very tired and weak.
- * Depression.
- * Bloating or Flatulence.
- * Headache.
- * Weight gain due to water retention.
- * Pimples.
- * Constipation or Diarrhoea.
- * Pain in joints or muscles.
- * Sleep problems.



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16. How to make a menstruation kit? What goes inside a menstruation kit?

Menstruation kits can be made with any small bag that we have at home. It may contain-

- ♥ Sanitary pad (disposable or reusable) or Menstrual cup.
- ♥ Panty.
- ♥ A sheet of paper.
- ♥ Hand sanitizer.
- ♥ Poly bag.
- ♥ A small chocolate bar to boost the mood.

17. Is it possible to swim or play sports during menstruation?

If you are wearing a pad, you have to take it off before swimming. You can play sports while wearing a pad.



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Pavel Sarwar



“If I don’t know about the important adolescent matters and don’t educate my daughter in time because of discomfort, she will learn these things from different sources. Who can say that it will not be wrong information? Rather, it would be best for my daughter if I can give her the right information. That would be best for my daughter.”

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**Our efforts are for all the dads in this world
May the Dad become a superhero for every daughter!**

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