



Menstrual bleeding problems

Menstrual bleeding usually lasts from 2 to 7 days. It occurs about every 28 days.

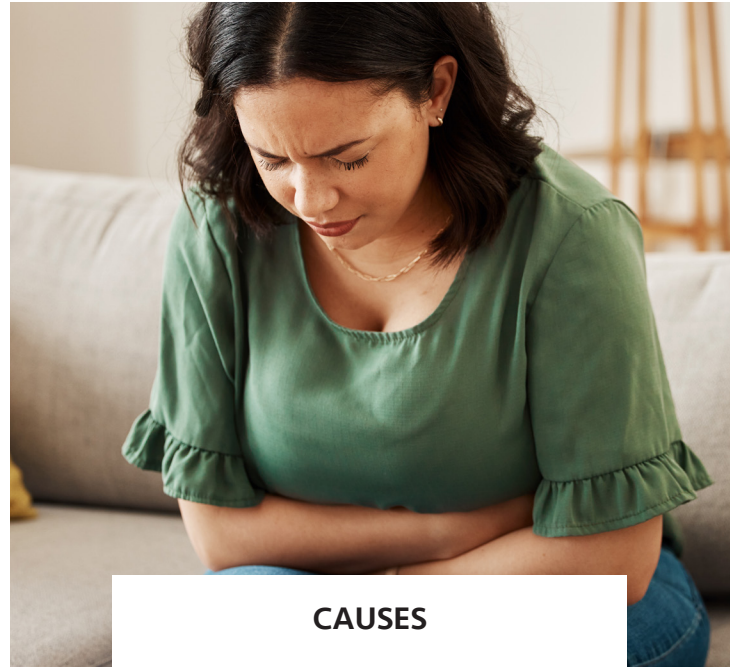


SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Spotting of blood between periods
- Menstrual periods that occur more often than every 21 days or less often than every 35 days
- Periods last longer than 7 days
- Two or more times the average amount of blood is lost during a period.
- A tampon or a sanitary pad is soaked through every hour for 6 hours in a row.

TREATMENT

- Iron supplements to treat anemia, if present.
- Medicines. Examples are birth control pills; GnRH agonists; Danazol (low dose); and a medicine called tranexamic acid.
- Surgery, as needed, for the cause of the problem.



CAUSES

- It is normal for changes to occur at certain times. This includes: When monthly periods begin; during perimenopause; and when some birth control methods are started, stopped, and changed.
- Light bleeding can occur for 2 to 3 days when you ovulate. This is usually normal, too.
- Starting or stopping estrogen therapy. Using an IUD for birth control.
- Weight gain or loss. Too much exercise. Anorexia nervosa.
- Vaginal irritation or infection.
- Endometriosis. Fibroids. Ovarian cysts.
- Ectopic pregnancy. Miscarriage.
- Cancer of the cervix or uterus.
- Hypothyroidism. Pituitary and adrenal gland disorders.
- Side effects of blood-thinners or corticosteroids.
- Bleeding or clotting disorders. One example is Von Willebrand disease. This is a genetic bleeding disorder. Often, it is not diagnosed. Bleeding is excessive with menstrual periods and after surgery, dental work, etc. Nosebleeds occur often. Bruises occur easily.
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). This is caused by an excess of a certain hormone. It can result in irregular periods or no periods.



TRIAGE QUESTIONS



Could you be pregnant? If so, do you have any of these problems?

- Sudden fainting
- Abnormal vaginal bleeding. This can range from spotting that persists to bursts of bleeding.
- Severe cramping in one side of your lower abdomen
- Sharp pains in one side of your lower abdomen, rectum, or shoulder

NO **YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**



With menstrual bleeding, do you have any of these problems?

- Pelvic pain is much worse than normal or causes you to double over.
- The bleeding is heavier than normal.
- You feel dizzy, faint, or lightheaded when you sit up.

NO **YES** ➔ **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**



Do periods return after not having one for 6 months?

NO **YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



With irregular menstrual periods, do you have any of these problems?

- Your abdomen is tender and/or bloated.
- Pain in your pelvis or back
- Pain during sex
- The skin on your abdomen feels sensitive.
- Vaginal discharge with abnormal color or odor. This occurs when you are not having a period.
- Change in menstrual flow
- Fever. Chills.

NO **YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**

CONTINUE IN NEXT COLUMN



Do you have symptoms of hypothyroidism or of hyperthyroidism?

NO **YES** ➔ **SEE DOCTOR**



With irregular menstrual periods, do you have any of these problems?

- Nausea, vomiting, or pain is worse than with normal periods.
- Periods are heavier than normal or last longer than 10 days.
- After taking birth control pills for 3 months, you bleed more or you keep bleeding or spotting between periods.

NO **YES** ➔ **CALL DOCTOR**



USE SELF-CARE



SELF-CARE

- Keep track of how many days and how much you bleed to know what is normal for you.
- Change tampons and sanitary napkins as needed. Note if they are soaked through.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Take ibuprofen or naproxen sodium as directed. Don't use aspirin. It can prolong bleeding. Take iron, as advised by your doctor.
- If you have an IUD, check it as advised to make sure the strings can be felt. If Depo-Provera or an IUD cause bleeding problems, change birth control methods.
- Don't have sex until treatment is done. Follow your doctor's advice.
- To prevent vaginitis from vaginal dryness, use a prescribed estrogen cream, as needed.