

LET'S TALK PERIOD

NORMAL VS. ABNORMAL MENSTRUAL BLEEDING

WHAT IS A NORMAL PERIOD?

Some women have short, light periods, while others have longer, heavier periods. Normal periods usually:

- last for 3-7 days
- occur every 21-35 days
- have about 2-3 tablespoons (30-50mL) of blood loss

WHEN IS BLEEDING ABNORMAL?

- consistently bleeding > 7 days
- changing protection more than every hour
- results in iron deficiency anemia
- frequently soaking the sheets
- > 80 mL blood loss
- bleeding/spotting between periods
- bleeding/spotting after sex
- bleeding after menopause

CHANGES IN YOUR PERIOD?

Changes in your period can be a sign of a problem.

You should see a doctor if:

- your period stops for more than 90 days (and you are not pregnant or on extended birth control)
- your periods have become irregular when you usually have regular periods
- you are bleeding for longer than normal - for example, your period normally lasts 5 days and is suddenly 9 or 10 days long
- you are bleeding between periods
- you have pain during your period when you usually don't have pain
- you have bleeding that has become very heavy, soaking through more than one pad or tampon per hour or staining night clothes



HOW IS ABNORMAL BLEEDING DIAGNOSED?

- discuss your health history and your menstrual cycle with your health care professional
- keep a log of dates, lengths and types (light, medium, heavy or spotting) of your periods

HOW IS ABNORMAL BLEEDING TREATED?

- hormonal birth control methods, such as birth control pills, skin patches and vaginal rings, can control the menstrual cycle
- levonorgestrel IUD (intrauterine device) decreases menstrual blood loss in many women
- tranexamic acid can be used to treat heavy menstrual bleeding
- non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen, can help control heavy bleeding and relieve menstrual cramps
- antibiotics can treat bleeding caused by an infection

Take the self-administered bleeding assessment tool (self-BAT) at letstalkperiod.ca to see if you may have abnormal bleeding.

Learn more about normal and abnormal periods at:
letstalkperiod.ca.