

always changing® and growing up
girl's guide

always®



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All the words in **bold type** in this booklet are defined in the glossary.

Puberty. Yeah, it's a weird word, but it doesn't make you weird.

Puberty is a series of changes that your body – and all your friends' bodies – will go through as you grow up. Like the word, puberty may seem strange because it's new to you. But the more you know about it, the more comfortable it will be. This guide will help with that by:

- Letting you know what changes to expect and helping you understand them.

- Helping you prepare for what's ahead so you can feel more confident.

- Giving you helpful tips and answers to many girl questions.

It also helps to talk about puberty. It may seem embarrassing – that's normal – but it will help you feel more relaxed and confident. Here are some tips:

- Ask someone like your mom or older sister to answer your questions. They've "been there, done that," so their experience may help.

- If it's hard to ask your question face-to-face, leave it in a note.

- Visit beinggirl.com, a site just for girls, where you can learn and talk with other girls about growing up – like how your body and feelings change.

It's not summer vacation, but it is a great journey.

During puberty you'll experience changes to your body, skin, hair – even your emotions. It may seem like a wild ride sometimes. But chances are you'll be happy with the outcome – the same "you," just a more grown-up version.

Where it all begins.

Your **pituitary gland**, located beneath the front of your brain, starts puberty. Your pituitary gland sends a signal to two other glands – your **ovaries** – telling them to make a special chemical, or **hormone**, called estrogen. **Estrogen** is the main female hormone that triggers most of the changes you'll see and feel. Boys have a different hormone, **testosterone**, that causes most of their changes.



Are we there yet? Are we there yet?

Puberty usually starts between the ages of 8 and 13 and lasts a few years. But every girl is different. Some girls' pituitary glands are eager, some take their time. The important thing is that your pituitary gland will start your puberty when it's right for your body. But if you haven't experienced any puberty changes by age 14, you may want to talk to your doctor.

The puberty event girls want to know about most. Period.

Your period is the biggest change you'll experience. "What's a period?" "When do you get it?" "What do you do about it?" These questions and more are answered on pages 15 to 33.

What you'll see along the way.

Here's a quick rundown of the main physical changes you'll go through.

You'll find more info about these throughout this guide.

- ✿ Your body grows taller and broader.
- ✿ Your breasts begin to grow.
- ✿ Your skin may become oilier, and you may get pimples.
- ✿ Your hair may become oilier.
- ✿ Your body may sweat more, and you may develop body odor.
- ✿ You begin to grow underarm and pubic hair.
- ✿ Vaginal discharge begins.
- ✿ Your period starts.

It's OK.

All these changes won't happen overnight. Some may be quick, but others will take place slowly over a few years.

What you'll feel along the way.

The emotional changes you'll experience during puberty may not happen at the same time your body matures. You could feel older before you look older, or the other way around. In any case, here are some things to expect:

- ✿ You'll start to think more like an adult does.
- ✿ You'll begin to make more sense of your feelings – both positive and negative ones – and express them better.
- ✿ You may get angry a lot easier and go through mood swings. Plus, you may cry more – over little and big things.
- ✿ You may become more self-conscious.
- ✿ You may compare yourself to your friends and feel like something is wrong with you. But there's not!
- ✿ You may feel and act more feminine.



Take some time to shine up your self-image.

A healthy body image depends on a healthy attitude – and that's something you can control. Just remember, the impossibly perfect bodies you see on TV and in magazines are not what most girls and women look like, or should look like.

Feeling good about your body is a great start to boosting your overall self-esteem. Here are some other ways:

1. Find something you do well, like a sport, an art or a school subject, and focus on succeeding at it.
2. Instead of comparing yourself to others, each day write down three things about yourself that you wouldn't change.
3. Concentrate on your abilities, skills and accomplishments instead of your faults.
4. Set expectations that are realistic. Aim for accomplishment, not perfection.
5. Do a good deed. Making a difference will help you feel like a better person.
6. Exercise. You'll unload stress and feel stronger and happier.

Things will begin to shape up for you.

You know puberty has kicked in when you grow taller and begin to take on a more feminine shape. Your hips will widen and your breasts will begin to grow. Until you get used to your new shape and size, you may feel awkward. And naturally, you may gain weight. In fact, many girls are a little larger than boys in the early years of puberty. All girls, as they grow up, develop more body fat. As long as you eat well and exercise, your weight should stay in a healthy range.

Eat well and feel well – inside and out.

Eat a range of foods to get all the vitamins and nutrients you need. Try to eat lots of protein (like fish, meat, cheese, milk, eggs and beans). You also need complex carbohydrates (like whole wheat breads, pasta and cereals) and fresh fruits and vegetables.

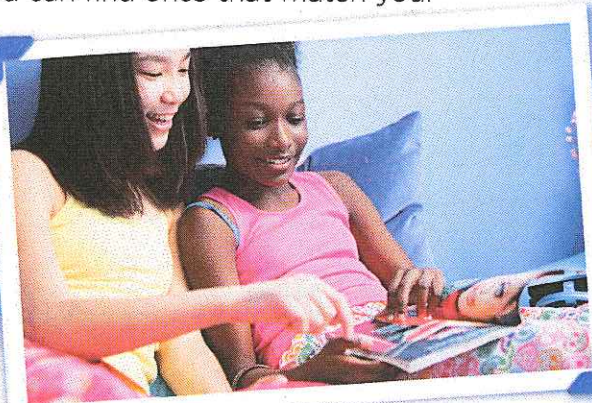


Starting from the top.

During early puberty, the first stage of breast development happens, called "budding." From there, your breasts grow gradually – you probably won't notice it most of the time. One breast may grow larger than the other – that's okay. They'll be about the same size in the end. But like your legs and arms, your breasts will never be exactly alike – no one's are.

Breasts and bras – both come in lots of shapes and sizes.

Once your breasts develop, wearing a bra provides support and coverage that can help you feel more comfortable. Plus, bras come in tons of fun colors and designs so you can find ones that match your personal style. Just make sure it fits you properly.



The scoop on bra sizing.

Many stores that sell bras have experts who can tell your correct size by measuring you. Or, you can have a friend or trusted adult measure you using the following guide:

1. Measure around your chest just below your breasts.

2. If it's an odd number, add 5.
If it's an even number, add 4.
This is your **frame size**.

3. Now find your **bust line size** by measuring around your chest over the fullest part of your breasts.

4. Compare your frame size and bust line size to determine your **cup size**:

- ✿ If they are the same, you need an AA-cup.
- ✿ If they differ by 1, you need an A-cup.
- ✿ If they differ by 2, you need a B-cup.
- ✿ If they differ by 3, you need a C-cup.
- ✿ If they differ by 4, you need a D-cup.

5. Your **bra size** is your frame and cup sizes together.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 27 \text{ chest} \\
 + 5 \\
 \hline
 32 \text{ frame} \\
 \\
 33 \text{ bust line} \\
 - 32 \text{ frame} \\
 \hline
 1 \text{ A-cup} \\
 \text{Bra size} = 32\text{A}
 \end{array}$$

The skinny on your skin.

During puberty, your oil glands produce more **sebum** (an oily substance). Sometimes extra sebum and dead skin cells clog your skin's pores. When bacteria grow in the clogged pores it causes pimples (**acne**).

Acne is very common – 90% of young people get it. You can keep it under control, though, most of the time with a daily routine of skin care. Just remember to be patient. Acne doesn't disappear overnight – for anyone.

Good habits for healthy skin.

- ☀ Wash your face twice a day with a cleanser or medicated acne wash.
- ☀ Keep your hands away from your face and don't squeeze, pick or pop pimples.
- ☀ Take a daily multivitamin, eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and drink lots of water.
- ☀ Wash your pillowcase frequently to get rid of oil and dirt build-up.
- ☀ When you're in the sun, wear sunscreen or block with at least an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15.

Heads up!

Your hair may need more attention.

Puberty may cause your hair to become oilier, thicker, coarser – even curlier or straighter. The important thing is to keep it healthy with regular care.

Good habits for healthy hair.

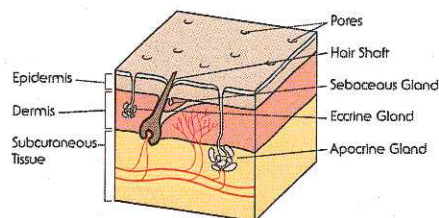
- ☀ Shampoo regularly (daily or every other day is best for most hair types).
- ☀ If you're African-American, your hair may be dry and delicate. So you only need to wash your hair 1 to 2 times a week.
- ☀ After shampooing, use a light conditioner to add moisture, control and strength.
- ☀ When you're swimming or in the sun, use an intensive conditioner with UV protection.
- ☀ When your hair is wet, use a wide-tooth comb. A brush may break your hair strands.

Got a question?

For answers to your hair and skin care questions, visit beinggirl.com.

Sweating is good for you. So why the big stink about it?

Everybody sweats, or perspires. It's a normal and important function – it helps regulate your body temperature. But once you hit puberty, sweating can also cause body odor.



Body odor is triggered by your **apocrine glands** – the kind of sweat glands that kick in at puberty. Your other

sweat glands – **eccrine glands** – start working at birth. Eccrine glands produce clear, odorless perspiration, but apocrine glands produce perspiration that can smell bad when it comes in contact with bacteria on your skin.

Since a lot of apocrine glands are under your arms, many people use underarm deodorants or antiperspirants.

Deodorants counteract odor to help you smell better.

Antiperspirants reduce sweating and underarm wetness.

Since these are the main causes of body odor, anti-perspirants help prevent odor before it starts.

Body odor busters.

- ✿ Shower or bathe frequently to wash dirt and oil off your skin.
- ✿ Make sure to wash your underarms thoroughly.
- ✿ Apply deodorant/antiperspirant at least once a day.
- ✿ Wear clothes made of material that breathes, like cotton.
- ✿ Always shower or bathe after you exercise. If you can't do it right away, at least change out of your sweaty clothes and into clean ones.

When you're ready for deodorant.

There are many types of antiperspirants/deodorants. What kind you need or want depends on you. How much you sweat (we're all different), whether you like a more noticeable scent (or not), and even how the product feels can all help you figure out which type is best for you.

Did you know?

- ☀ Sweat glands are everywhere on your body except your lips and ears.
- ☀ Females have a lot more apocrine glands than males.
- ☀ Females and males sweat differently. So their deodorants and antiperspirants are different, too. For the best protection, pick one that's made for girls and women.

Vaginal discharge – a sign that your period is on its way.

Vaginal discharge is a clear or whitish fluid that comes from your **vagina** (an opening between your legs). This type of discharge is healthy and normal. It keeps the vagina from drying out and helps prevent infection. When you notice it in your underwear (a creamy white stain) for the first time, it usually means your first period is coming soon. To avoid getting discharge in your underwear between periods, you can wear a pantiliner (for more info, see pages 26, 27 and 30).

If you have any discharge that is thick, yellowish or darker, smells unpleasant or causes itching or burning, it could be a sign of a vaginal infection. Check with your doctor. Most vaginal infections can be easily treated.

Good feminine hygiene can help protect you from infections:

- ☀ After going to the bathroom, wipe from front to back to avoid spreading bacteria from your anus to your vagina.
- ☀ Avoid heavily perfumed soaps or shower gels – these can sometimes irritate the delicate skin around your vagina.
- ☀ Remember, if you're taking antibiotics, vaginal infections are more likely to occur.

Your period. Celebrate it with an exclamation point!

Getting your period is probably the biggest change you'll experience during puberty. It's a very normal, healthy and positive part of growing up! It's part of a natural cycle (the **menstrual cycle**) that prepares the body's ability to have children.

A quick definition.

Your period is when you shed tissue, fluid and blood from your uterine lining (also called menstrual discharge). It leaves your body through your vagina. For most girls and women, it usually happens each month and lasts between 3 and 7 days. It may come as a surprise when you get your first one – that's okay, it happens to a lot of girls.

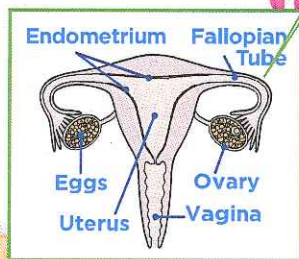
The whole story.

The complete explanation may sound like a science lesson. But understanding the menstrual cycle will help take the mystery out of your period. It will also help you predict when your period will come each month once your cycle starts.

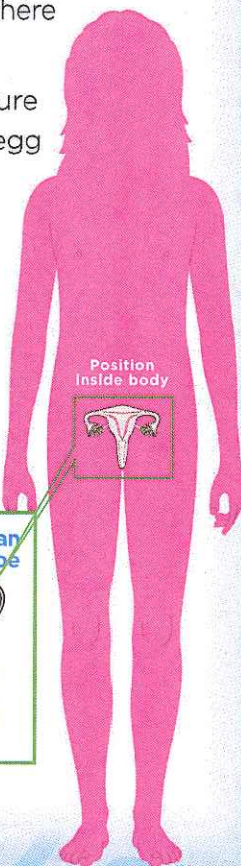


The phases of the menstrual cycle.

- 1. Pre-Ovulation.** Females have two ovaries that contain thousands of eggs (**ova**). Estrogen tells an ovary to release an egg every month. (One ovary releases an egg each month.) At the same time, the soft lining (**endometrium**) of the **uterus** (the place where a baby can grow) starts to thicken.
- 2. Ovulation.** Ovulation occurs when a mature egg is released from the ovary. After the egg is released it travels along the **fallopian tube** to the thickening endometrium. If a **sperm** (the male reproductive cell) **fertilizes** the egg, a baby develops.
- 3. Premenstrual.** If the egg isn't fertilized, it breaks down and the endometrium isn't needed. As a result, hormone levels drop causing the endometrium to shed.
- 4. Menstruation.** The endometrium leaves the body through the vagina as a reddish fluid containing blood. This is a period.

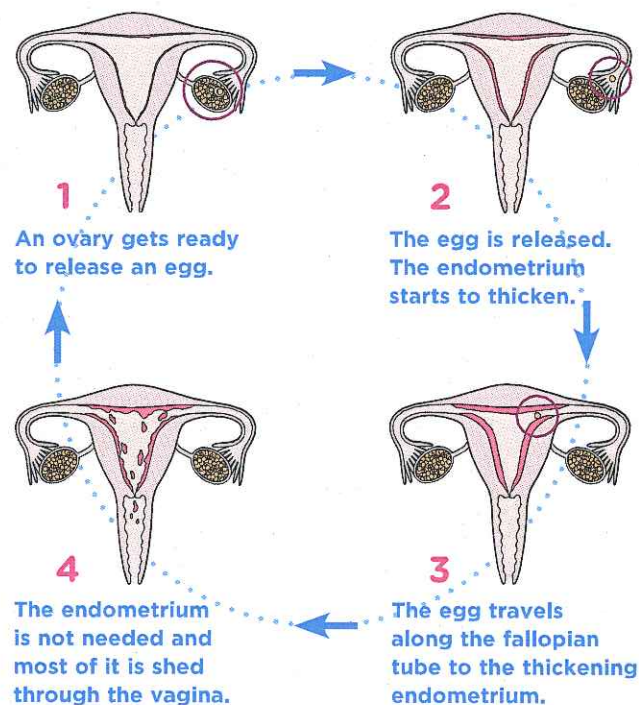


Position
Inside body



The cycle repeats itself.

A complete menstrual cycle runs from the first day of one period to the first day of the next. The average time this takes is 28 days, but anywhere between 21 and 35 days is normal. Then the cycle starts again.



Getting into a groove.

It's a good idea to get to know your cycle right from the start. Many girls and women prepare for their next period by tracking their cycle on a calendar. You can use your own calendar or the one online at <http://www.beinggirl.com/article/period-predictor/>.

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 ☺	11 ☺	12 ♥	13 ★	14 ★
15 ★	16 ★	17 ★	18 ♥	19 ♥	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

☺ Mood Changes ♥ Light Period Day ★ Heavy Period Day

Each month, mark the days that you have your period. As your cycle evens out, you'll begin to see a regular pattern. By figuring the average number of days between your periods, you'll be able to tell when the next one will most likely start. You can also record how you feel on your pre-period days. These feelings may be future "hints" that your period is coming.

When will your period start?

Most girls get their first period between the ages of 9 and 16, but there is no "right" time. Your period will start when your body is ready. If you haven't started by the time you're 16, you may want to talk to your doctor.

As a rough guide, your period will probably start:

- ☼ About two years after your breasts begin to develop.
- ☼ Within a year or so after you've developed pubic and underarm hair.
- ☼ After you start to notice some vaginal discharge in your undies.

Being irregular is a regular thing.

In the beginning, your period may be irregular. You could have one period and then wait as long as 6 months for the next one! Or, one period may last one day, while the next lasts 10 days. This happens to a lot of girls. Oftentimes, it takes a while before a girl's body settles into a regular cycle. In fact, it may take up to 2 or 3 years.



Some popular questions about your period.

❁ Is it okay to take a bath or shower when you have your period?

Yes. During your period is an important time to keep yourself fresh and clean.

❁ Is there anything you won't be able to do when you have your period?

No. It doesn't have to stop you from doing the things you usually do. You can still go to school, help at home, see your friends, play sports and so on.

❁ Will anyone notice when you have your period?

No. Not unless you tell them.

❁ How much blood do you lose during your period?

The average female loses about 4 to 12 teaspoons of menstrual fluid during her period. But only a small amount of that is blood. Since your body contains more than 5 quarts of blood, it doesn't miss the little bit lost during a period – and your body makes up for it quickly.

Sometimes your period brings uninvited guests – cramps.

A lot of girls and women experience “period cramps” caused by the contraction of the uterus. If you get cramps, you may feel aches in your abdomen, your lower back or even down your legs.

Ways to put cramps in their place.

- ❁ Take a warm bath, unwind and listen to some tunes.
- ❁ Place a heating pad or heat wrap on your abdomen. Then kick back, relax and read a magazine or watch TV.
- ❁ Do some mild exercise that you enjoy, like walking your dog or riding your bike with a friend.

If cramps continue to be a problem for you, make sure you check with an adult before taking any kind of medication.



What is Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)?

PMS refers to the symptoms that some girls and women experience 1 to 14 days before their period. These symptoms are caused by changing hormone levels and may include headaches, backaches, food cravings, depression, moodiness, breast tenderness, pain in the joints, general tiredness, and weight gain or a bloated feeling. Skin blemishes may also flare up.

Here are a few things you can do to help relieve PMS:

- ✿ Exercise regularly.
- ✿ Limit drinking caffeinated drinks like colas.
- ✿ Avoid salt.
- ✿ Ask your doctor for remedies.
- ✿ Check with a trusted adult to see if you can take an over-the-counter medication.



What to use during your period.

Feminine protection refers to the products girls and women use to absorb their menstrual flow or to stay feeling fresh, comfortable and confident every day.

There are three types of feminine protection.

(You'll find more details about these on pages 24 to 31.)

- ✿ Pads.
- ✿ Pantliners.
- ✿ Tampons.

Where to buy them.

You can buy pantliners, pads or tampons in many places like supermarkets, pharmacies and discount stores. If you feel a little funny about buying them at first, just ask someone like your mom or older sister to make the purchase for you.

What is right for you?

Some girls and women prefer pads and pantliners, some prefer tampons, and some like to use pads on some days and tampons on others. We recommend you start off with pads and pantliners, and if you want to use tampons, talk to your mom, school nurse or another trusted adult.



Pads are worn in your underwear during your period to absorb your menstrual flow. A pad has a soft, cotton-like layer on the top and a sticky tape on the back to keep it firmly placed in your underwear.

Starting out, most girls use pads.

Some flows are heavy, some are light, and some are in between. That's why pads, like Always®, come in different shapes, lengths and absorbencies. Some pads also have wings that wrap around your underwear to fit securely. Pads also come in scented or unscented forms.

To find the pad that works best for you, ask someone like your mom or a school nurse for help, see page 31, or go to beinggirl.com to learn more about the different types of pads.

Always Flexi-Wings flex when you move. They wrap securely around your undies to protect you from side leaks and to keep your pad where it belongs.



How to use a pad.



1. Pull off the paper strip or wrapper that covers the sticky part on the back.



2. Attach the sticky part securely to the inside center of your underwear.

3. When you need to change your pad, just pull it off.

How often to change a pad.

Change it every 4 to 6 hours or more often if your flow is heavy. Also, if you're wearing a smaller pad or one with less absorbency, you may need to change it more frequently. Your pad may begin to leak if you wear it too long.

Types of Always® pads:

- ✿ **Always® Infinity™** A super-absorbent thin pad made with a super-soft cover and unique material that feels incredibly light. Look for the Always pads in a box.
- ✿ **Ultra Thin.** A thin pad that provides great protection and comfort without the bulk of a maxi pad. Look for the green Always bag.
- ✿ **Maxi.** A thicker pad with a close body fit and gentle, panty hugging shape for comfort. Look for the blue Always bag.

How to get rid of a pad.

1. Fold it up.
2. Wrap it in tissue, toilet paper or the wrapper of your new pad.
3. Put it in the trash. (Most restrooms have a trash can in each stall for feminine products.)
4. Don't flush pads down the toilet because they can clog it.
5. Wash your hands.



Pantiliners can be part of your daily hygiene routine, like brushing your teeth, to help keep you feeling clean and confident.

A pantiliner is worn on the inside of your underwear like a pad, but most are smaller and thinner than pads and can feel invisible.

Pantiliners are great for:

- ✿ Vaginal discharge.
- ✿ Absorbing perspiration from sports or daily activity.
- ✿ Light period days.
- ✿ As a backup to a tampon.

To feel fresh
all day try a
pantiliner.

Pantiliner types

Girls and women are all different shapes and have different levels of natural moisture. So pantiliners, such as Always®, are available in different lengths and absorbencies. (See page 30 for more information.)

How often to change a pantiliner

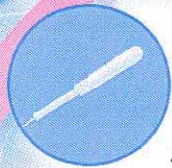
You can wear one daily and change it as often as you need to feel clean. To dispose of it, treat it like a pad.

Be ready at school.

Until your cycle becomes regular, your period may take you by surprise – especially your first one. So it helps to be prepared, particularly at school.

- ✿ A pantiliner is a great way to help you feel fresh and prepared every day.
- ✿ Prepare a locker or backpack “emergency kit.” Keep a pantiliner, a pad and a pair of clean underwear in a discreet bag.
- ✿ Keep a pantiliner or a pad in your purse.
- ✿ You can use toilet paper or tissue until you can get a pantiliner or a pad. Your period won’t start all at once, so you have a little time.
- ✿ Ask a friend, a school nurse or a teacher for help. Most schools keep extra pantiliners or pads for times like these.



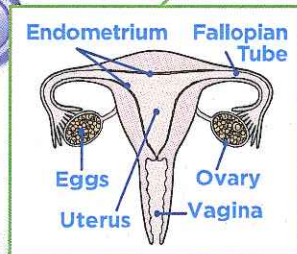
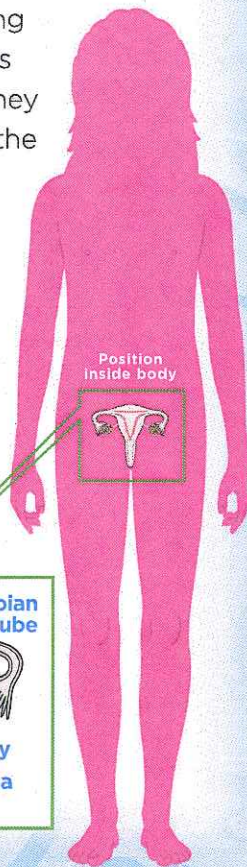


Tampons provide protection that is worn inside your body, in your vagina, during your period.

A tampon is made of soft absorbent material compressed into a small oblong shape with a string securely sewn through it for removal. It is held into place by the muscular walls of your vagina and gently expands to absorb your flow. Many girls first start using tampons when they go swimming. Some girls find them more comfortable to wear when they are active in sports during their period. But, the choice is up to you.

How do you choose a tampon?

Tampons come in different absorbencies. Choose one with the minimum absorbency needed to control your flow. Many girls find that a tampon with a rounded tip, like Tampax Pearl® Plastic, is comfortable for first-time users.



How often do you change a tampon?

It depends on how heavy your flow is, but a tampon should be changed regularly, about every 4 to 8 hours. Although a tampon can be worn for up to 8 hours, never leave a tampon in for longer than that, and only use it during your period. If you are going to use a tampon at night and sleep longer than 8 hours, you should use a pad instead.

How do you put in a tampon?

It's easy with just a little practice. Check out the instructions in the box or visit beinggirl.com for a helpful demo. For your first time, try Tampax Pearl® Plastic with a rounded tip; it may be more comfortable for you to insert.

Should you use tampons if you're involved in sports or dance activities?

Tampons are a great choice for athletic activities because they allow you to move fully and comfortably. Of course, tampons are the only suitable form of period protection for swimming, since they are worn inside your body.

What is Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS)?

TSS is a very rare but serious disease associated with using tampons. Be sure to read and keep the leaflet that comes in every box of tampons and talk to an adult if you have questions. The most important thing to know is that if you get a fever and feel sick while you are using a tampon, take it out right away. Tell an adult you are worried about TSS and contact your doctor. Tell the doctor you've been using a tampon so you can get the best treatment quickly.

Glossary.

Acne An inflammatory disease of the sebaceous glands that causes pimples to break out, especially on the face.

Antiperspirant A substance used to reduce perspiration under the arms in order to prevent body odor.

Apocrine glands Sweat glands (mostly under the arms and in the genital area) that produce perspiration that can mix with bacteria to cause body odor. Apocrine glands become active during puberty.

Deodorant A substance used under the arms to counteract or mask odors caused by perspiration.

Eccrine glands Sweat glands (all over the body) that produce clear, odorless perspiration. Eccrine glands are active at all ages.

Endometrium The soft, spongy lining of blood and tissue that thickens inside the uterus. It nourishes the developing baby during early pregnancy, or else it is shed during menstruation.

Estrogen The female hormone produced in the ovaries that is responsible for many of the changes that take place in females during puberty.

Fallopian tubes Two tubes through which eggs travel from the ovaries to the uterus.

Feminine protection The products girls and women use to absorb their period flow and to stay fresh, comfortable and confident.

Fertilize When a male sperm joins a female egg to form an embryo (the beginning of a baby).

Hormones The special chemicals that regulate the growth and activity of body tissues and organs.

Menopause The stage at which women stop having their periods (usually around age 50).

Menstrual cycle The time measured from the beginning of one period to the beginning of the next.

Menstruation The monthly process of shedding the lining of the uterus that passes out of the body through the vagina.

Ova The eggs found inside the ovaries. They are the female reproductive cells.

Ovaries Two glands, one on either side of the uterus, that contain a woman's eggs and produce the hormones estrogen and progesterone.

Ovulation The periodic release of a mature egg from one of the ovaries.

Pituitary gland A small gland beneath the front of the brain that is responsible for triggering the production of hormones that start puberty.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) A combination of emotional and physical symptoms such as tension, worrying, breast tenderness and bloating. These may occur and last 1 to 14 days before a period starts.

Progesterone A female hormone that causes a soft, spongy lining of blood and tissue (endometrium) to thicken inside the uterus. It also prepares the body for pregnancy.

Puberty The stage of life when human males and females develop physical and emotional changes and become capable of reproduction.

Pubic area The V-shaped area between your legs where your legs meet your body.

Sebum An oily substance (from the sebaceous glands) that helps keep skin moist. During puberty, too much sebum can contribute to acne.

Sperm The male reproductive cell.

Testosterone A male hormone that is responsible for the changes that take place in males during puberty.

Uterus The female organ lined with soft, nourishing tissue that carries a baby until it is born.

Vagina A flexible passageway leading from the uterus to the outside of the body through which menstrual fluid flows.

Vaginal discharge A clear or whitish fluid that comes from your vagina. It's the way the vagina cleanses itself and helps prevent infection.