



## Sex Ed Pakistan

### Lesson 1 - Puberty

#### Chapters:

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## **Lesson Details & Resources:**

### **Lesson 1.1: A Brief Introduction**

Puberty is when a child's body begins to develop and change as they become an adult.

Girls develop breasts and start their periods. Boys develop a deeper voice and facial hair will start to appear.

The average age for girls to begin puberty is 11, while for boys the average age is 12.

But it's different for everyone, so don't worry if your child reaches puberty before or after their friends.

It's completely normal for puberty to begin at any point from the ages of 8 to 14. The process can take up to 4 years.

#### **Late or early puberty**

Children who begin puberty either very early (before the age of 8) or very late (after 14) should see a doctor just to make sure they're in good health.

Read more about [puberty problems](#).

### **Lesson 1.2: The Female Body**

#### **Early Changes**

The first sign of puberty in girls is usually that their breasts begin to develop.

It's normal for breast buds to sometimes be very tender or for one breast to start to develop several months before the other one.

Pubic hair also starts to grow, and some girls may notice more hair on their legs and arms.

#### **Gradual Changes**

After a year or so of puberty beginning, and for the next couple of years:

- girls' breasts continue to grow and become fuller
- around 2 years after beginning puberty, girls usually [have their first period](#)
- pubic hair becomes coarser and curlier
- underarm hair begins to grow – some girls also have hair in other parts of their body, such as their top lip, and this is completely normal
- girls start to sweat more
- girls often get [acne](#) – a skin condition that shows up as different types of spots, including whiteheads, blackheads and pus-filled spots called pustules
- girls have a white [vaginal discharge](#)
- girls go through a growth spurt – from the time their periods start, girls grow 5 to 7.5cm (2 to 3 inches) annually over the next year or two, then reach their adult height
- most girls gain weight (which is normal) as their body shape changes – girls develop more body fat along their upper arms, thighs and upper back; their hips grow rounder and their waist gets narrower

### Eventual Changes

- breasts becomes adult-like
- pubic hair has spread to the inner thigh
- genitals should now be fully developed
- girls stop growing taller

## Lesson 1.3: The Male Body

### Early Changes

- the first sign of puberty in boys is usually that their testicles get bigger and the scrotum begins to thin and redden
- pubic hair also starts to appear at the base of the penis

### Gradual Changes

After a year or so of puberty starting, and for the next couple of years:

- the penis and testicles grow and the scrotum gradually becomes darker (read more about [penis health](#))
- pubic hair becomes thicker and curlier
- underarm hair starts to grow
- boys start to sweat more
- breasts can swell slightly temporarily – this is normal and not the same as ["man-boobs"](#)

- boys may have "wet dreams" (involuntary ejaculations of semen as they sleep)
- their voice "breaks" and gets permanently deeper – for a while, a boy might find his voice goes very deep one minute and very high the next
- boys often develop [acne](#) – a skin condition that shows up as different types of spots, including whiteheads, blackheads and pus-filled spots called pustules
- boys go through a growth spurt and become taller by an average of 7 to 8cms, or around 3 inches a year, and more muscular

### Eventual Changes

- genitals look like an adult's and pubic hair has spread to the inner thighs
- facial hair begins to grow and boys may start shaving
- boys get taller at a slower rate and stop growing completely at around 16 years of age (but may continue to get more muscular)
- most boys will have reached full adult maturity by the age of 18

## Lesson 1.4: Emotional Changes for Girls and Boys

Puberty can be a difficult time for children. They're coping with changes in their body, and possibly acne or [body odour](#) as well, at a time when they feel self-conscious.

Puberty can also be an exciting time, as children develop new emotions and feelings.

But the "emotional rollercoaster" they're on can have psychological and emotional effects, such as:

- unexplained mood swings
- [low self-esteem](#)
- aggression
- [depression](#)

Find out more about [teen aggression](#), [coping with your teenager](#) and [talking to your teen](#).

### Puberty Support for Children

If children are worried or confused about any part of puberty, it may help them to talk to a close friend or relative.

- [ChildLine's website](#) answers [boys' common questions about puberty](#) and [girls' common questions about puberty](#). It also offers free and confidential advice on its telephone helpline, which can be reached on 0800 1111. Children can also look at its [puberty message board for girls](#) and [puberty message board for boys](#) to see what other young people are asking about.

### Puberty support for parents and carers

- [The Royal College of Psychiatrists website](#) gives advice for parents and carers on what to expect when children hit adolescence, including why they're likely to become sulky, suddenly start dieting, have crushes on friends, and crave excitement.
- The FPA (formerly the Family Planning Association) has a range of [online leaflets](#) that give advice on talking to your children about growing up, sex and relationships.

## Lesson 1.5: Menstruation

Menstruation is a woman's monthly bleeding, often called your "period." When you menstruate, your body discards the monthly buildup of the lining of your uterus (womb). Menstrual blood and tissue flow from your uterus through the small opening in your cervix and pass out of your body through your vagina.

During the monthly menstrual cycle, the uterus lining builds up to prepare for pregnancy. If you do not get pregnant, estrogen and progesterone hormone levels begin falling. Very low levels of estrogen and progesterone tell your body to begin menstruation.

Menstruation/ Menstrual Cycle is more commonly known as a 'period'.

A period is a release of blood from a girl's [uterus](#), out through her vagina. It is a sign that she is getting close to the end of [puberty](#).

There is a lot to learn about periods. Here are some common questions that teens have.

### When Do Most Girls Get Their Period?

Most girls get their first period when they're around 12. But getting it any time between age 10 and 15 is OK. Every girl's body has its own schedule.

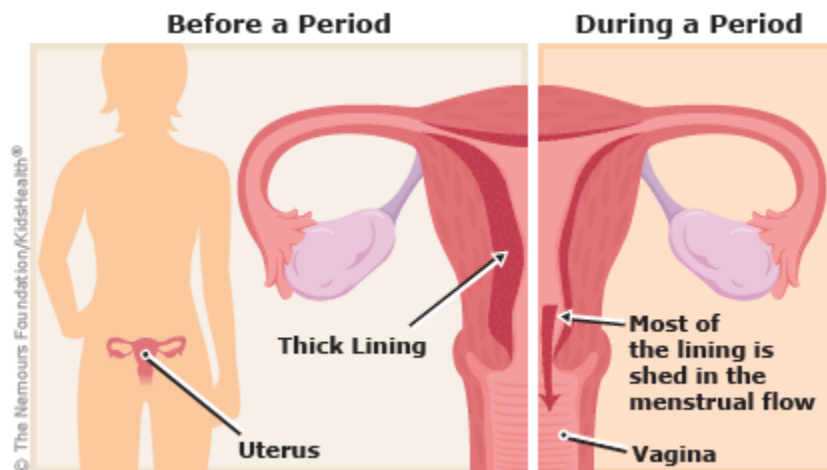
There isn't one right age for a girl to get her period. But there are some clues that it will start soon:

- Most of the time, a girl gets her period about 2 years after her breasts start to develop.

- Another sign is [vaginal discharge](#) fluid (sort of like mucus) that a girl might see or feel on her underwear. This discharge usually begins about 6 months to a year before a girl gets her first period.

## What Causes a Period?

A period happens because of changes in [hormones](#) in the body. Hormones are chemical messengers. The ovaries release the female hormones [estrogen](#) and [progesterone](#). These hormones cause the lining of the uterus (or womb) to build up. The built-up lining is ready for a fertilized egg to attach to and start developing. If there is no fertilized egg, the lining breaks down and bleeds. Then the same process happens all over again.



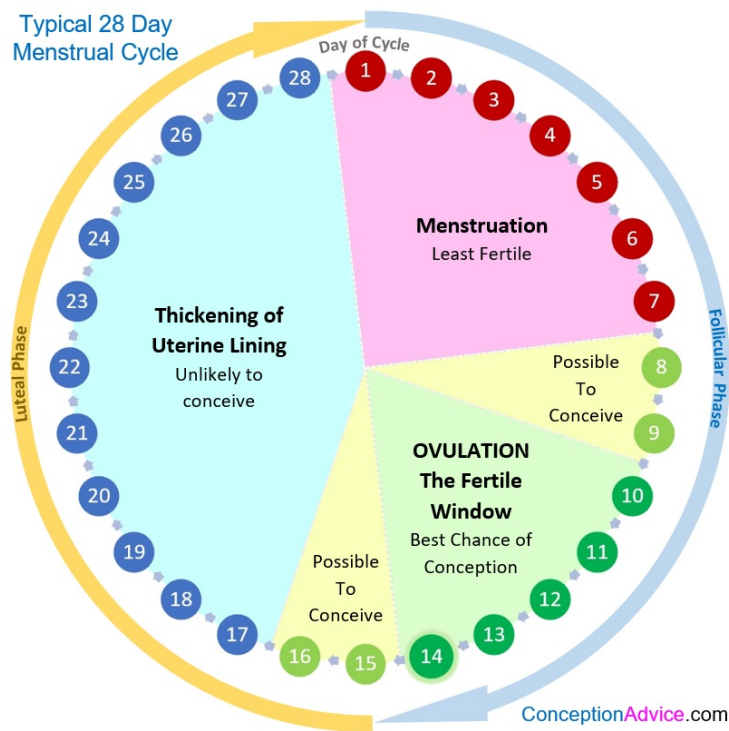
It usually takes about a month for the lining to build up, then break down. That is why most girls and women get their periods around once a month.

## How Does Ovulation Relate to Periods?

Ovulation (pronounced: ov-yoo-LAY-shun) is the release of an egg from the ovaries. The same hormones that cause the uterus lining to build up also cause an egg to leave one of the ovaries. The egg travels through a thin tube called a fallopian tube to the uterus.

If the egg is fertilized by a sperm cell, it attaches to the wall of the uterus, where over time it develops into a baby. If the egg is not fertilized, the uterus lining breaks down and bleeds, causing a period.

## Menstrual Cycle



## Lesson 1.6: FAQ about Periods

### Do Periods Happen Regularly When Menstruation Starts?

For the first few years after a girl starts her period, it may not come regularly. This is normal at first. By about 2–3 years after her first period, a girl's periods should be coming around once every 4–5 weeks.

### Can a Girl Get Pregnant as Soon as Her Period Starts?

Yes, a girl can get pregnant as soon as her period starts. A girl can even get pregnant right before her very first period. This is because a girl's hormones might already be active. The hormones may have led to [ovulation](#) and the building of the uterine wall. If a girl has sex, she can get pregnant, even though she has never had a period.

### **How Long Do Periods Last?**

Periods usually last about 5 days. But a period can be shorter or last longer.

### **How Often Does a Period Happen?**

Periods usually happen about once every 4–5 weeks. But some girls get their periods a little less or more often.

### **Should I Use a Pad, Tampon, or Menstrual Cup?**

You have [many choices](#) about how to deal with period blood. You may need to experiment a bit to find which works best for you. Some girls use only one method and others switch between different methods.

- Most girls use pads when they first get their period. Pads are made of cotton and come in lots of different sizes and shapes. They have sticky strips that attach to the underwear.
- Many girls find tampons more convenient than pads, especially when playing sports or swimming. A tampon is a cotton plug that a girl puts into her vagina. Most tampons come with an applicator that guides the tampon into place. The tampon absorbs the blood. Don't leave a tampon in for more than 8 hours because this can increase your risk of a serious infection called [toxic shock syndrome](#).
- Some girls prefer a menstrual cup. Most menstrual cups are made of silicone. To use a menstrual cup, a girl inserts it into her vagina. It holds the blood until she empties it.

### **How Much Blood Comes Out?**

It may look like a lot of blood, but a girl usually only loses a few tablespoons of blood during the whole period. Most girls need to change their pad, tampon, or menstrual cup about 3–6 times a day.



## **Will I Have Periods for the Rest of My Life?**

When women reach menopause (around age 45–55), their periods will permanently stop. Women also won't have a period while they are [pregnant](#).

## **What Is PMS?**

PMS (premenstrual syndrome) is when a girl has emotional and physical symptoms that happen before or during her period. These symptoms can include moodiness, sadness, anxiety, bloating, and acne. The symptoms go away after the first few days of a period.

## **What Can I Do About Cramps?**

Many girls have cramps with their period, especially in the first few days. If cramps bother you, you can try:

- a warm heating pad on your belly
- taking ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, or store brand) or naproxen (Aleve or store brand)

## **Should I Watch for Any Problems?**

Most girls don't have any problems with their periods. But call your doctor if you:

- are 15 and haven't started your period
- have had your period for more than 2 years and it still doesn't come regularly (about every 4–5 weeks)
- have bleeding between periods
- have severe cramps that don't get better with ibuprofen or naproxen
- have very heavy bleeding (bleeding that goes through a pad or tampon faster than every 1 hour)
- have periods that last more than about a week
- have severe PMS that gets in the way of your everyday activities

## **Looking Ahead**

Periods are a natural, healthy part of a girl's life. They shouldn't get in the way of exercising, having fun, and enjoying life. If you have questions about periods, ask your doctor, a parent, health teacher, school nurse, or older sister.

**Sources:**

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/stages-of-puberty-what-happens-to-boys-and-girls/>

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<https://www.conceptionadvice.com/menstrual-cycle-calendar-phases/>