

Becoming CycleSmart with CycleBeads®



You can use CycleBeads to learn about and keep track of your period, also called menstruation. Your **menstrual cycle** covers all the days between one period and the next. Your period is the normal, healthy shedding of blood and tissue from the uterus. Once your period starts, it often comes about once a month and lasts for 3 to 7 days. Once a girl starts getting her period, she can get pregnant if she has sex on certain days of her cycle.

Tracking your period with CycleBeads

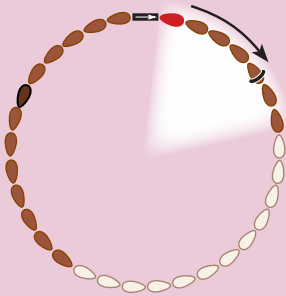
Each bead represents one day of your menstrual cycle.

On the first day you get your period move the ring to the red bead. You can also mark your calendar on that day.

Move the ring one bead each day, in the direction of the arrow. After the first day of your period the ring will be on a **brown bead**. Keep moving the ring one bead each day, even on the days when you have your period.

If you don't feel well around the time you get your period, you can try hot water compresses, herbal teas, a mild pain reliever or other remedies.

On days of menstrual bleeding a girl puts a pad in her underwear, or uses other well-cleaned protection, to prevent blood from staining her clothes.



"Sometimes I get cramps or gain weight around the time of my period. Or, I might get upset more easily."

Circle below any menstrual products you have seen.



Store-bought products

A soft pad with a thin layer of plastic that sticks to the underwear. Most types are thrown in the trash after each use.



Home-made pads

Layers of clean, cotton rags, cut to fit into the underwear. These are washed, dried and then used again.

Understanding your cycle

After your period ends, as you continue to move the CycleBeads ring one bead each day, you will come to the **white beads**.

A girl or woman can get pregnant during several days in a row, about in the middle of her menstrual cycle. For many women, this is when the ring is on the **white beads**. There are 12 white beads, all in a row.

Look at your CycleBeads. See how many days a woman or girl could become pregnant if she had sex. Remember, after a girl gets her first period, it often takes a few years before her cycles become regular. That's why a girl can't know for sure which days she could get pregnant.

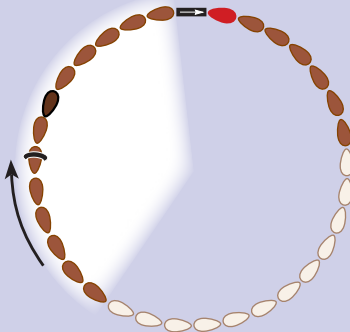
Girls should not try to use CycleBeads as a way to prevent pregnancy.

If you, or someone you know, need a family planning method, talk with a health provider or another trusted adult.

When the ring is on the white beads, you may also notice a **white fluid** or wetness in the genital area that is not menstruation. These are **cervical secretions**, a healthy sign that a girl or woman can become pregnant. You may, or you may not, notice these secretions.

After you move this ring over the last white bead, you will come to the brown beads. For many women, these are the days when pregnancy is not likely. On the days when the ring is on a brown bead, you will probably not see or feel any secretions.

Often when the ring is on one of these brown beads, you will get your next period. Then you move the ring to the red bead again, and start over. On days of menstrual bleeding, pregnancy is unlikely.



"I saw secretions months before my first period. They're supposed to be there and are a sign of a healthy vagina. Don't wash them out of the vagina and don't dry them up with herbs or powders!"

Unscramble the letters below to find the words you know.

- A. YESCDCLBAE _____
- B. SOITMNETARUN _____
- C. LIRG WEROP _____
- D. HAYLTHE _____

(See the picture of the mom for the answers.)

Use CycleBeads to know when your period will come

As you continue to move the CycleBeads ring one bead each day, check where the ring is when you get your **next period**.

Does your period start when the ring is somewhere between the dark brown bead and the arrow?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, this means your periods come about a month apart.

Does your period come before the ring is on the dark brown bead?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, this is a short cycle.

Does your period come sometime after the ring is on the arrow, and there are no more beads left?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, this is a long cycle.

It's normal for girls (and women) to have cycles that are long, or short, or about a month apart. Over time, many girls start getting their periods about a month apart.



"Sometimes my period comes a few days after that last bead. So, I just wait until I start my next period, and then I put the ring on the red bead again."

CycleBeads help you know about when your period will come. This helps you remember to carry a pad with you, so you're always prepared.

"The beads helped us talk about SO many important things."



"My mom showed me how to use CycleBeads to keep track of my periods."

Answers to the word scramble:
A. CycleBeads B. Menstruation C. Girl Power D. Healthy

How is your body changing?

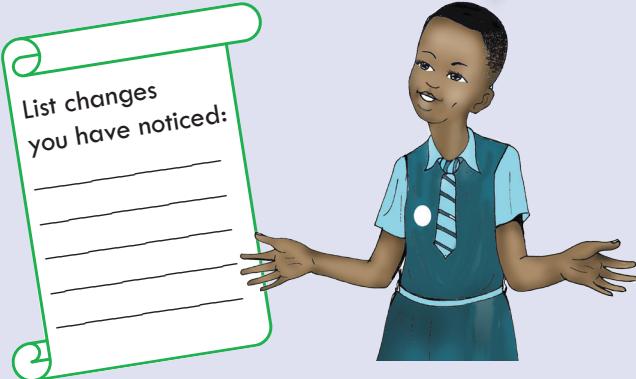
Girls

Girls notice many changes that happen over several years.

- You get taller, your breasts grow, hair grows under your arms and on your private parts (also called the genital area).
- Your skin may be oily, or have pimples.
- You may sweat more and have some body odor.
- One day your period starts—a little blood comes out of your vagina for a few days each month. This means a girl is becoming an adult, and is now able to become pregnant.

“My mom says these changes may come sooner or later for different people. It happens at different times, and it’s all **normal**!”

List changes you have noticed:



Boys

Boys notice changes in their skin and sweat more too. Also their voice gets deeper, their muscles develop and hair grows on their face.

But, a boy does **not** get a period. Instead, he notices a wet dream, when semen comes out of the penis, usually during sleep. This means he is able to get a woman or girl pregnant, if his penis releases semen in her vagina.

As your body changes sometimes family and friends start treating you differently from boys.

6 to 8 years old



10-14 years old



Does this ever happen to you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What would you do? _____

Other changes

As your body changes you may start feeling differently about yourself. Other people may see you differently or treat you differently too.

It is normal to have romantic feelings or be attracted to someone, and it is normal not to have these feelings.

We show love in many ways. Love and caring does not have to mean having sex.

Part of growing up is staying **healthy and safe**. Your friends can help you do that. Choose friends (girls and boys) who respect you and care about what’s best for YOU.

“Here are some things my friends and I do to stay safe.”



“Don’t go to a private place, alone, with a boy or man.”

“Even if he gives you gifts or money, say ‘No!’”

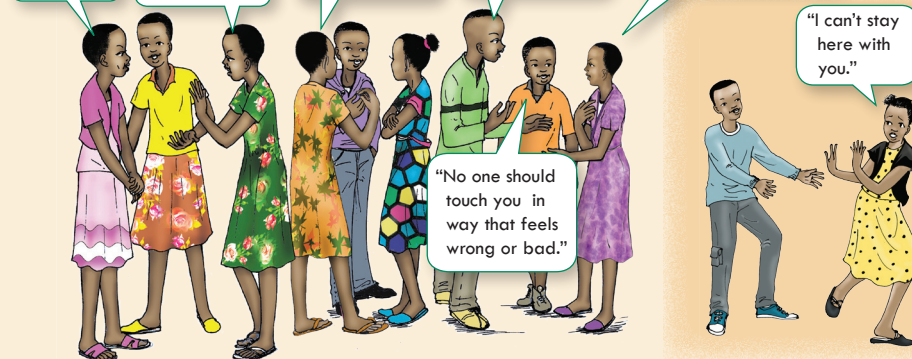
“Stay away from alcohol and drugs. These lead to risky choices.”

“Talk to a trusted grown-up if you feel pressured or unsafe.”

“Not having sex is the best way to protect against pregnancy and the infections a pregnant get from having sex, like HIV.”

“I can’t stay here with you.”

“No one should touch you in way that feels wrong or bad.”



How do you and your friends stay safe? _____

Cycle Smart Girls

“Hi, I’m **Emma**. Let me show you how to use CycleBeads® to learn about YOUR changing body.”



“My mom was telling me about it. Then my dad walked in, and they both explained it.”

“My schoolmates told me. Then I double-checked with my teacher, to make sure I had the right information.”

“No one told me about getting my period. I was so scared when it happened.”

“You talked with your dad about this?”
(Yeah...)

“I’m going to talk with my younger sister before it happens to her.”

“Me too!!”

