

On the Days of your Period

You can go to school and do all of your regular activities, even on the days when you have your period. On these days of menstrual bleeding put a pad in your underwear, or use other well-cleaned protection, to prevent blood from staining your clothes.



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

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

Check the box if you have seen any of these menstrual products:

☐


Washable and reusable pads

A soft, cloth pad you wash, dry and reuse. These last for up to one year.

☐


Home-made pads

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

☐


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.

☐

Other, describe: _____

Talking about your Period

Look Mom, these CycleBeads help me understand my periods.



The beads help us talk about SO many important things.

Can you unscramble the letters below to find the words you know? Follow the example.

A. EROIPD

P E R I O D

B. YESCDCLBAE

C. SOITMNETARUN

D. LIRG WEROP

E. HAYLTHE

(Check your answers below.)

Answers to the word scramble:
B. CYCLEBEADS C. MENSTRUATION D. GIRL POWER E. HEALTHY

For more information contact your health facility, school or youth center.



MINISTRY OF HEALTH



Institute for
Reproductive Health
Georgetown University

GrowUpSmart

Talking about Girls and Adolescence

Hi, I'm Mutoni. Let me show you how to use CycleBeads® to learn about a girl's changing body.



Rwanda

Growing Up Smart with CycleBeads®

You can use CycleBeads to learn about and keep track of your period, also called menstruation.

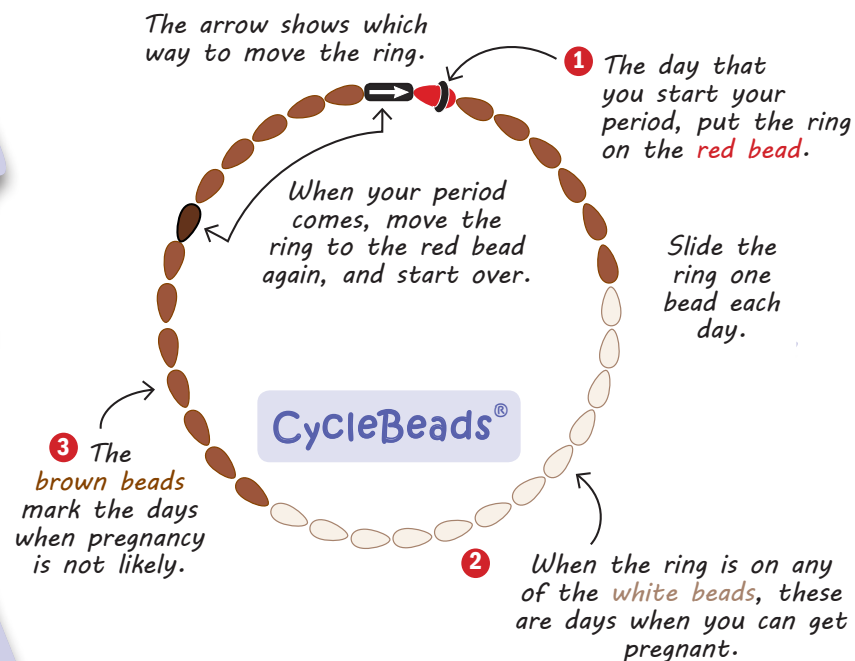
Your period is the normal, healthy shedding of blood and tissue from the uterus. Once your period starts, it often comes about once a month and lasts for 3 to 7 days.

Your **menstrual cycle** starts on the first day of bleeding and ends the day before your next period starts. This cycle covers all the days between one period and the next.

Once a girl starts getting her period, she can get pregnant if she has sex on certain days of her cycle.

How Girls Use CycleBeads

Each bead represents one day of your menstrual cycle. To keep track, move the ring one bead each day.



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.

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.

Tracking your period with CycleBeads

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

Continue to move the ring one bead each day, in the direction of the arrow, even on the days when you have your period.

2 After your period ends, as you continue to move the CycleBeads ring 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**.

When the ring is on the **white beads**, you may also notice 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.

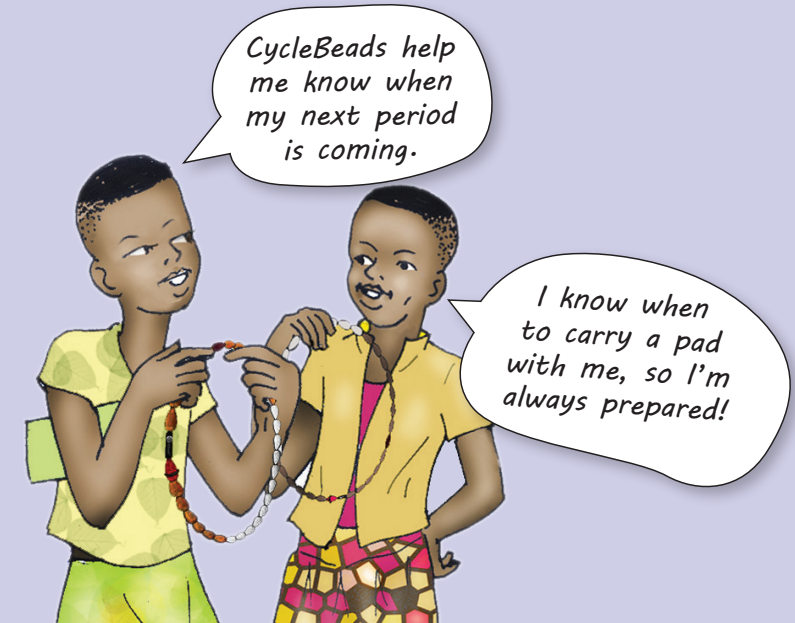


I saw secretions months before my first period. They're supposed to be there. Healthy secretions are not smelly or itchy. Don't wash them out of the vagina and don't dry them up with herbs or powders!

3 After 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 between the **dark brown bead** and the arrow, you will get your next period. Sometimes it comes earlier or later than that. When your period does come you move the ring to the **red bead** again, and start over. On days of menstrual bleeding, pregnancy is unlikely.

This brochure does not provide enough information to use CycleBeads as a family planning method. Not having sex is the best way for young people to prevent pregnancy and infections a person can get from having sex, like HIV.



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

Mark below if your period comes:

- ☐ between the dark brown bead and the arrow (a 26 to 32 day cycle)
- ☐ before the dark brown bead (short cycle)
- ☐ more than one day after the last brown bead (longer 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.

CycleBeads help boys to learn about the changes girls experience and to understand how pregnancy occurs.

