

Periods

What Happens & Why?



When will my periods start?

Usually when you are between 10 - 16 years but you could be anything from 8 to 18 years.

Your periods will start when your body is ready. You can't make them start or stop them from starting.



Why do I have periods?



Periods are caused by hormone levels changing within your body.

It is nature's way of preparing your body for having a baby.

Periods are part of the female reproductive cycle.

What Happens?

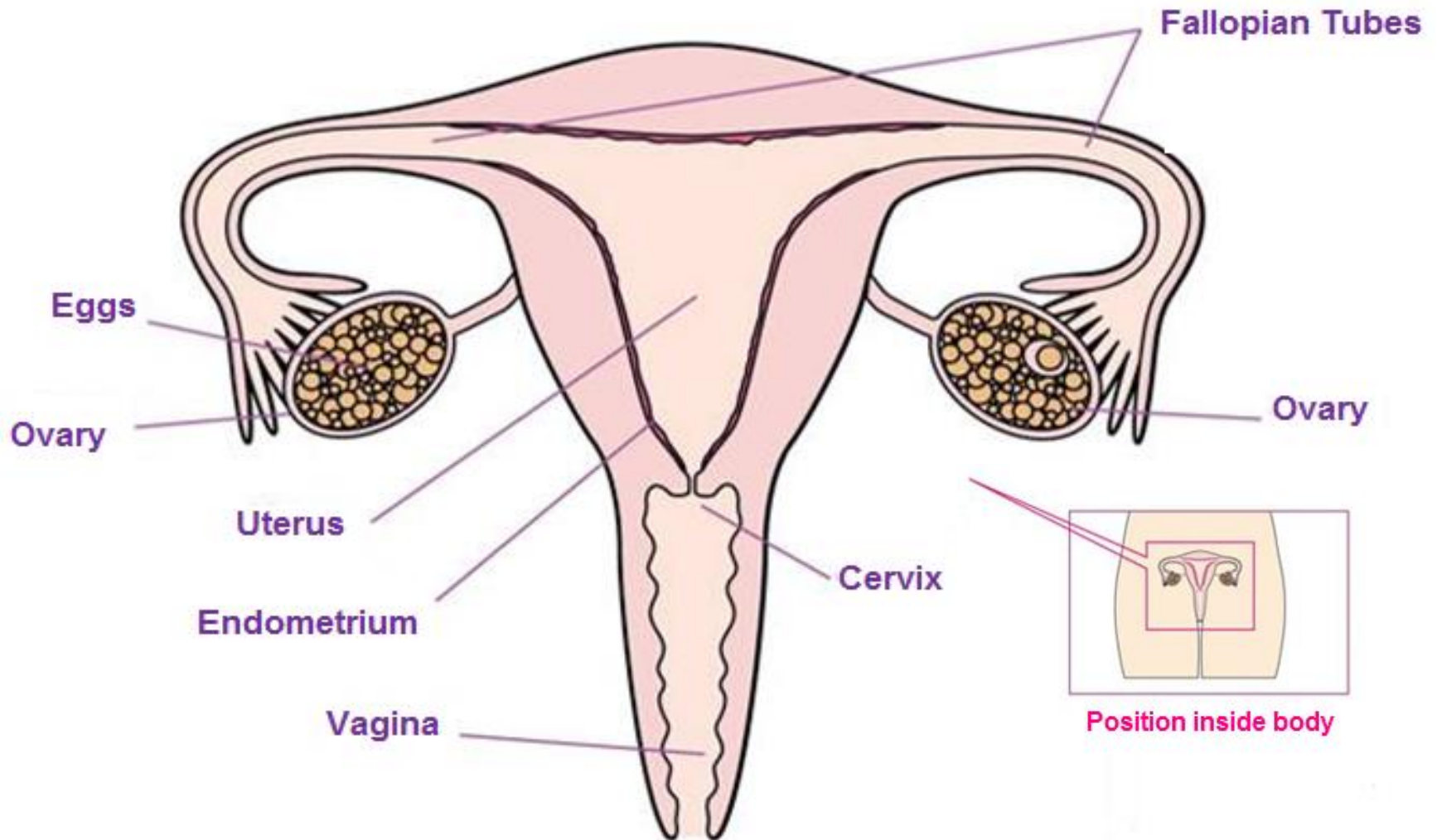


Even before birth, a girl has 1-2 million tiny eggs (**Ovum**) in her ovaries. When puberty is reached usually an egg is released each month from her ovaries.

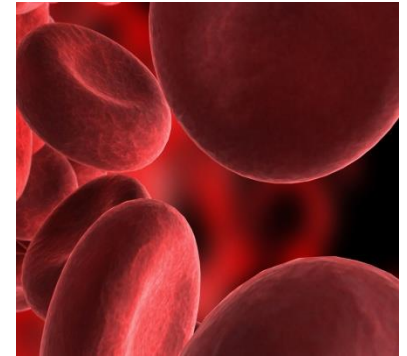
The egg moves from the ovary and along the fallopian tube and down into the (womb) uterus.

If the egg is fertilised by sperm then a pregnancy will occur. If the egg is not fertilised then the lining of the womb and the egg leave your body through your vagina; this is your period.

The Female Reproductive System



The Period



Bleeding can last between 3 and 8 days.

Blood flow may be heavier in the first few days.

The average blood loss is only around 80ml (roughly 3 tablespoons)

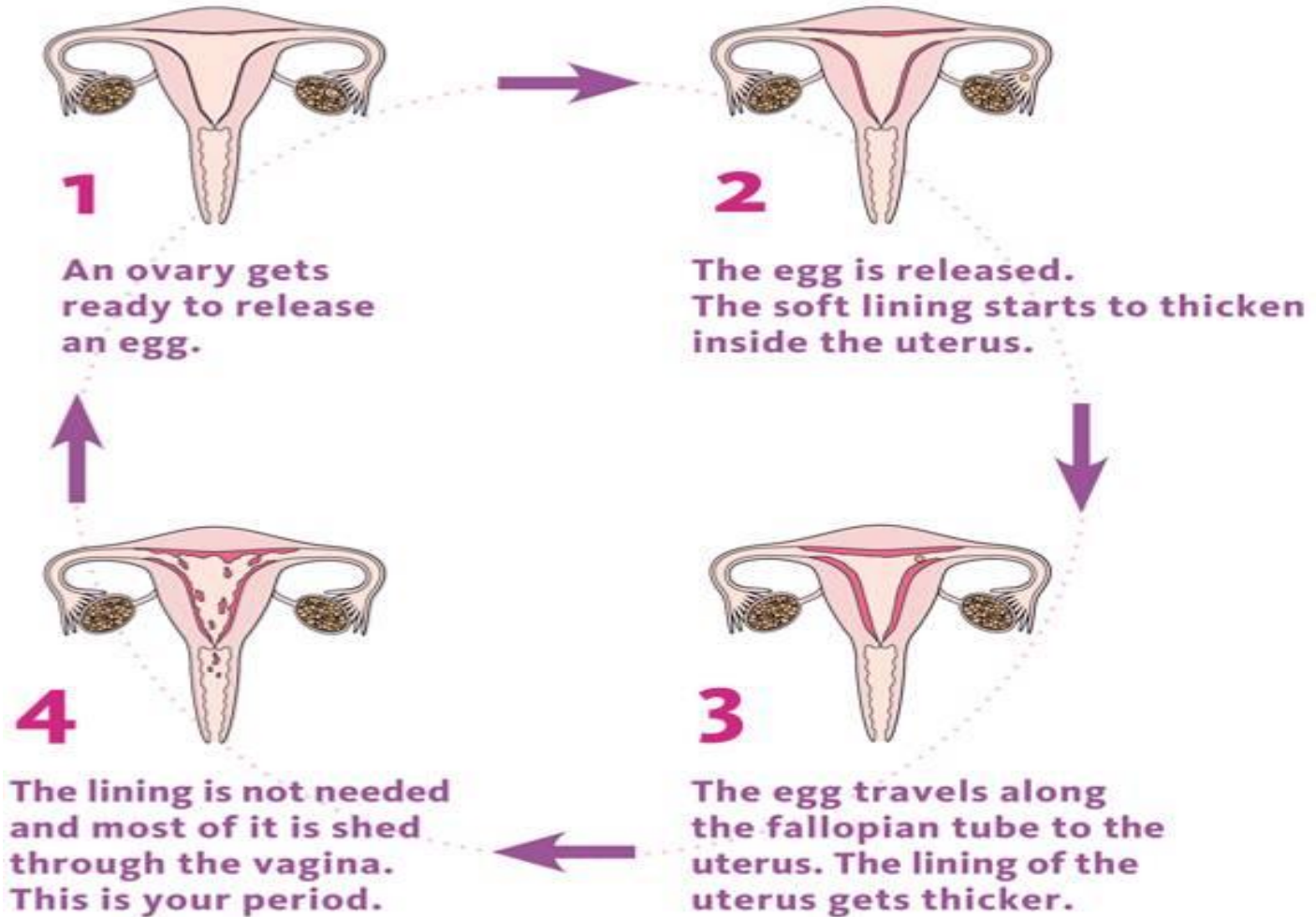
Periods are part of your menstrual cycle.

The Menstrual Cycle

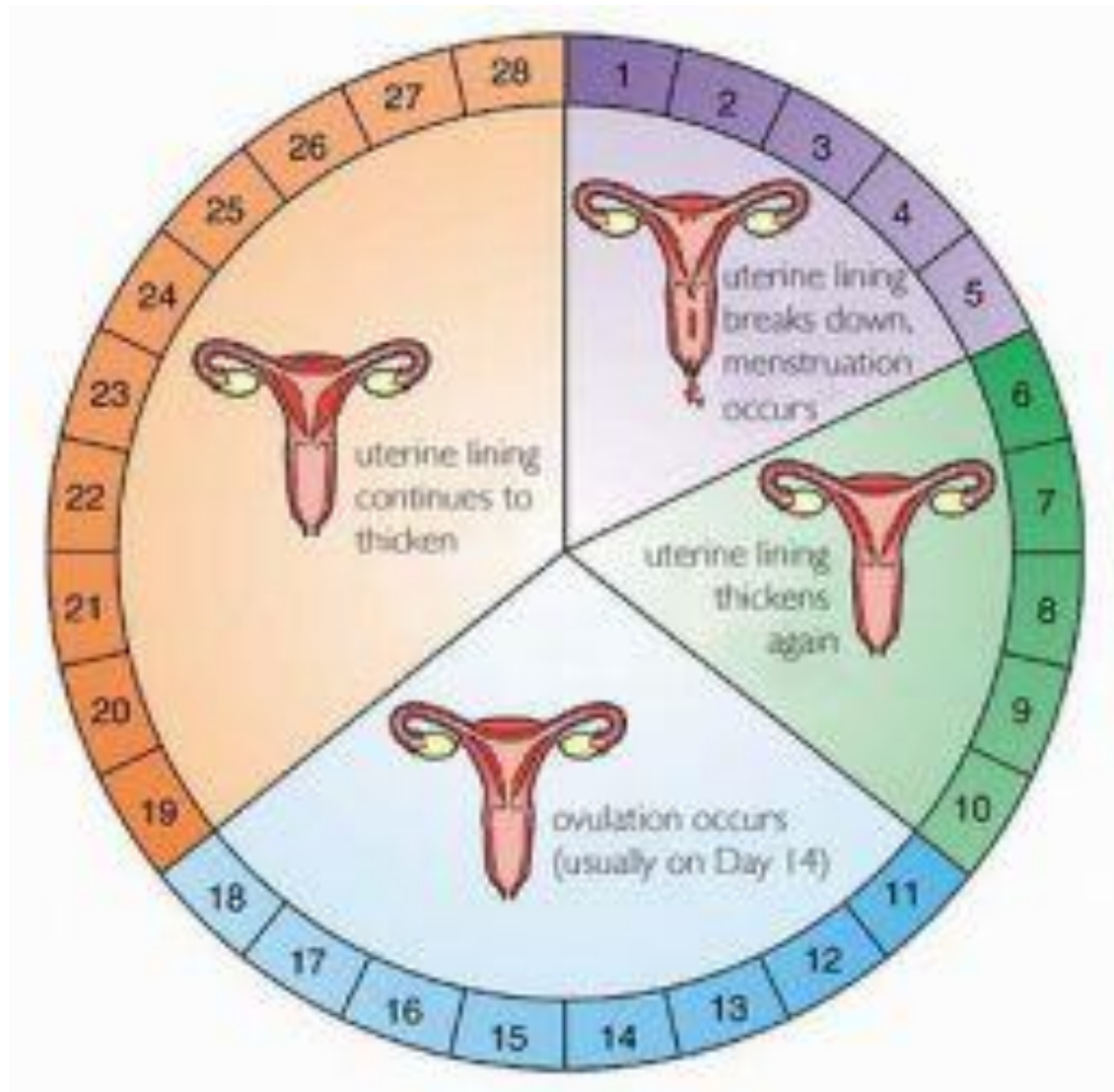
- Days 1-7 are the beginning of the cycle when the lining of the womb comes away (Period).
- Days 7-14 are when the egg is being produced within the ovary. It is then released into the fallopian tube to make its way down to the womb to wait to be fertilised.
- Days 14-28 are when the lining of the womb becomes thicker in blood supply.

If the egg is not fertilised by the sperm then the cycle starts all over again.

The Menstrual Cycle



The Menstrual Cycle



What symptoms are there?

Many girls will feel PMS (premenstrual syndrome), symptoms can include:

- Tender breasts
- Headaches
- Mood swings
- Stomach cramps
- Tiredness
- Spots
- Food cravings
- Difficulty concentrating



Planning



- Always mark on a calendar the date of your first period.
- Count 28 days from the day of your FIRST blood show, this will give you a rough idea of when your next period will be.
- BUT periods will not have a set pattern in the beginning, they will eventually settle into their own pattern.
- Always carry some spare knickers and sanitary towels in your bag.

What do I use?



- Most girl's will wear a sanitary towel when they have a period. It is placed within the knickers and it works by soaking up the blood.
- It is important to change the sanitary towels every 3-4 hours. This helps you to stay clean and fresh.

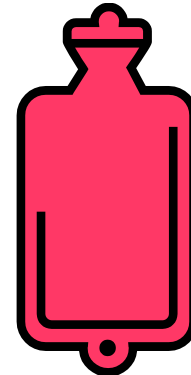
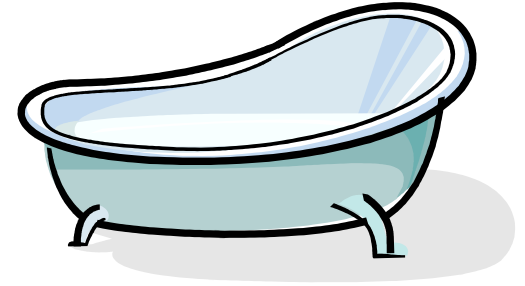
Painful Periods



- Some girls may experience pain.
- Tell your parent/big sister and ask advice.
- You can take pain relief to help, but carry on as normal.
- Remember to tell your teacher as well.
- If pain continues or is really painful then see a doctor who will help.

Things to try...

- Have a warm bath
- Massage your stomach
- Have a nice warm drink
- Use a hot water bottle or use a heat pad.
- Eat a well balanced diet.
- Exercise



Remember...



Having a period is a normal healthy thing to happen.

It is a natural process for every girl/teenager/woman.

It can take some time getting used to having periods and feeling confident about dealing with them.

Periods are a sign that your body is working properly, they are a special part of being a Female.