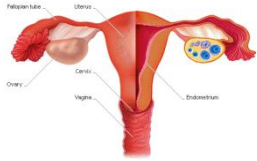


# Menstruation

## What is it?

- **Menstruation**– nature’s way of making a girl a woman, a sign of growing up, a girl is now able to bear a child, normal development that all girls experience unless sick or abnormal
  - **First Menstrual Period**- is called menarche, usually happens when a girl is 12 or 13, some earlier and later
  - **Female Reproductive System**- the ovaries are inactive until the ovaries mature; an egg (ovum) is formed in one of the ovaries about once every 28 days, it ripens and goes down the fallopian tube that leads to the uterus, when the egg in the tube meets the sperm it becomes fertilized which develops into a new life
  - **No Union of the Egg and Sperm**- the body gets rid of the fertilized egg, it is thrown out through the birth canal or vagina together with blood and this flow of blood and the unfertilized egg is called menstruation, each month the same process occurs; some periods last 3 to 4 days while others last 7-8 days; usually ends between 45 and 50 years of age marking the end of childbearing years; also stops temporarily while a woman is pregnant



## Symptoms:

- **Symptoms**- pain in the abdomen/belly (lower abdomen and lower back area), cramps, mild to quite severe pain, bloating, sore breasts, water retention, pelvic pressure, backache, food cravings, headache, fatigue, mood swings, irritability, difficulty concentrating
- **85% of Women**- report some physical and emotional changes



## What can I do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**- for more information
- **To Alleviate Cramping**- increase exercise, keep your abdomen warm, avoid tampons & IUD, meditate, massage, reduce stress, take a bubble bath, have an orgasm alone or with a partner
- **See a Registered Dietitian**- avoid red meats, refined sugars/sweets, caffeine, milk & fatty foods, eat lots of fresh fruits & vegetables, whole grains, nuts, & seeds, drink ginger root tea; add cayenne pepper to foods

