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## 5 Important Things to Know About Your Period

Last Updated: Jun 08, 2016 | By Dr. Lee Shulman



Your period can signal things that are going on with your body. Photo Credit marjan4782/AdobeStock

All women have thought it at some point every month: Having a period stinks.

But your period is important; in certain cases it can be the “canary in the coal mine” that lets you know that something may be wrong. So get to know your period! Here are five things that you may not know about your menstrual cycle:

### 1. Your Period Is a Sign That Things Are Good

If you're not getting your period, don't assume it's *not* a big deal. A monthly period is a sign that everything is working properly in women of child-bearing age.

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If you're not taking any type of hormone and don't have a regular period, you should see your gynecologist. Not having a period, or amenorrhea, could be a sign of a lack of ovulation. Over time, that could lead to a thickening of the lining of the uterus and become a precancerous lesion.

The exceptions to this rule are women who are pregnant or have recently given birth.

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## 2. Not All Bleeding Is Your Period

I often see patients who think they're having their period when, in fact, bleeding is occurring for another reason. Irregular bleeding can be a sign of underlying problems, such as polyps or fibroids, or could be the result of hormonal abnormalities.

It's important for women to track their monthly cycles and be aware of "normal" bleeding versus bleeding that could be a sign of a problem.

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## 3. Don't Worry About a Lighter Period

Patients often say to me, "My period has gotten lighter, and I'm really worried." But that's probably a good thing: What's important is that you have *some* sort of menstruation, unless you're on a type of contraception that eliminates your period completely.

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There can be many reasons why your periods get lighter, and most of those reasons aren't linked to a medical problem. Less bleeding also reduces the likelihood of anemia and other related conditions.



Your cycle can make you tired, bloated and anxious. Photo Credit shefkate/AdobeStock

## 4. Your Cycle Affects Your Whole Body

About 72 percent of women experience breast discomfort during their menstrual cycles. This discomfort can be attributed to the hormonal changes during your cycle that cause cells in your breasts to swell and shrink.

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There's a nonhormonal solution available for this type of menstrual-related breast discomfort. Molecular iodine supplements, such as Violet® iodine, are available without a prescription, contain no hormones and can help reduce swollen breast tissue.

Other period-related symptoms may include fatigue, bloating, anxiety and mood swings.



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You can use the pill to stop your period completely, but talk to your doctor first. Photo Credit Pabkov/AdobeStock

## 5. You Can Stop Your Period

Hormones, such as those found in birth control pills, can be used to get rid of your periods completely.

In addition to saying goodbye to monthly bleeding, getting rid of your monthly period can also reduce symptoms of fibrocystic breast changes and other menstrual-related complications and hormonal fluctuations.

You can use safe, reliable contraceptive methods to manipulate your menstrual cycle, but you should discuss this option with your doctor or health care provider first.

## What Do YOU Think?

Are there things about your period that you were surprised to learn about? What are some other issues that you think women should know about their periods? Did you find this article helpful? Leave a comment below and let us know!

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