

Getting to the bottom of period concerns

Knowing when to seek help

EXCERPT FROM
'THE BRIGHT GIRL
GUIDE' BOOK

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WHERE TO SEEK HEALTH INFORMATION & ADVICE

When we go to the doctor for a heart problem, we get referred to a heart specialist.

When we go for a skin problem, we get referred to a dermatologist.

It should be the same for period problems.

When seeking professional help for period issues, it is very important to connect with **a practitioner who specialises in women's health, hormones, and period concerns**. Not every doctor does.

If you have ongoing period concerns, they should not be brushed off.

It is also very important to investigate and address the **root cause** of period issues. Many ongoing or severe period symptoms can be indicative of a deeper issue.

Medications like the oral contraceptive pill, while they *may* decrease period symptoms, have many side effects and do not treat the root cause of the problem, resulting in symptoms re-occurring once someone stops taking the medication. Teenage periods are more expected to be irregular while the body learns this new function. Using more natural methods of treating the root cause can be a preferred route of many practitioners when treating teenagers.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP FROM A PROFESSIONAL?

1.

Just because it's 'common' doesn't mean it's normal

Just because you know people who experience a particular period irregularity doesn't mean it's 'normal' or 'good' if it is bothering you (ie. horrible period pain, acne, bad mood swings, poor digestion, etc.). Surveys show that 80% of women experience period pain, varying from mild to disabling pain. Just because it's common, doesn't mean you should endure being miserable each month. If this is you, seek solutions!

2.

If a symptom stops you from living your best life, participating in everyday activities and doing the things you want to do

20-40% of women said that their PMS symptoms were troubling enough to negatively impact their daily life. If period irregularities are stopping you from participating in or carrying out everyday activities, listen to your body and investigate your symptoms further.

3.

Look for patterns

Something that happens once and never happens again may not be cause to run to the doctor in a worry, unless it's a new or concerning symptom, or the first 2 rules apply. However, when period irregularities form a pattern by arising again and again, it's important to investigate the signs your body is giving you. If you notice recurring period symptoms or irregularities, it can be helpful to:

- **Chart your symptoms** so you can keep track of patterns. Don't just rely on memory. You can also show this chart to a health professional, and they can use it to help get to the bottom of any issues.
- **Look for patterns on your chart** - Do concerning symptoms happen more than once, or do they occur in a particular phase of your cycle?
- **Connect with a women's health practitioner** - You can ask your GP to refer you to a women's health specialist. Google "women's health practitioner" to find one in your area. Many naturopaths, functional medicine doctors & Chinese medicine doctors specialise in womens health.

