

A parent's guide to conquer periods & hormones with their teen

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOKLET?

PERIOD CARE PRODUCTS:

Information, links and discounts for period care products that help to meet the needs of a range of different people.

LEARNING RESOURCES & FREEBIES:

Education resources to help further learning for yourself and your teenager.

PRACTITIONER DIRECTORY:

To find practitioners who are qualified to find & treat the root cause of teen period concerns.

ENJOY!

Demi Spaccavento

Free recipe eBook



Easy and delicious recipes to help reduce period symptoms

WRITTEN BY OUR NUTRITIONISTS

[Download recipe book](#)

Recipes from our nutritionists to make periods a better experience



WHAT IS 'NORMAL'?

What's 'normal' when it comes to periods?

Period symptoms and irregularities are more expected when teens first start having their period. It takes time for the body to be able to regulate the menstrual cycle. In fact, it can take up to 6 years!

It's important for teens to be kind and patient with their body during this time. Aim towards balanced hormones and minimal period symptoms over time.

How much pain is too much?

Ideally, we want irregular or symptomatic teenage periods improve with time. Help can be sought for symptoms that impact a teen's ability to carry on with everyday life.

Extreme symptoms in teenage years (fainting, vomiting, extreme pain, etc.) are not normal. If your child is experiencing severe symptoms, it's a good idea to consult an experienced menstrual health or hormone specialist to find the root cause.

When should the first period arrive?

The average age a period should start is between 9 and 16. Everyone is different.

If your teen doesn't have their period yet, but has other puberty signs, such as pubic hair, breast growth, growing taller, and a changing body shape, then this is a great sign that the body is on track and their period is on its way.

The advice of a health practitioner can be sought if your teen is 14, 15, or 16 and isn't showing signs of puberty.

How to talk about periods - parents & teens:

- Keep it lighthearted
- Keep it positive
- Read through this page together
- Share something personal first to help them feel comfortable to open up
- Use the conversation starters at the bottom of this page

HELP-SEEKING

When is it time to see a doctor?

- 1.) Symptoms are extreme
- 2.) Symptoms are disrupting their ability to carry on with (and enjoy) everyday life
- 3.) Worrying symptoms become a pattern

Finding a practitioner

Most GPs and family doctors are the first place people go for help with period concerns. It's important to remember that most general practitioners do not specialise in periods and hormones. [A menstrual or hormonal health specialist](#) may be more equipped to help diagnose and treat period concerns.

Ask your doctor to refer you to a [menstrual health or hormone specialist](#).
OR, look for one in our [practitioner directory](#).

CONNECT WITH A MENSTRUAL HEALTH SPECIALIST

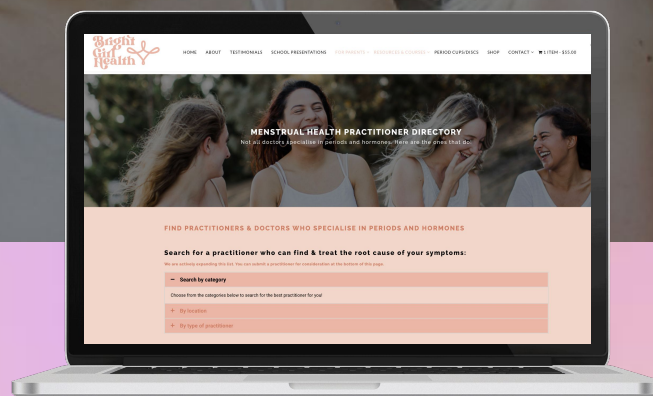
The Bright Girl Health practitioner directory allows you to search for menstrual health practitioners by:

Location - Type of practitioner - Area of concern (eg: missing periods, period pain)



MENSTRUAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER DIRECTORY

Not all doctors specialise in periods and hormones. Here are the ones that do!



SEARCH THE DIRECTORY

IS IT TIME TO SEEK HELP FOR PERIOD PAIN?

The links below will help you determine if your child's period symptoms are typical, or if they warrant seeing a medical practitioner.

Take the
Period Pain Assessment Online Screening Tool (PIPPA)
developed by Canberra Health Services

PIPPA period pain screening

This 5 question screening will let you know if you should see a practitioner about your period pain

Self-management tools

Read the self-management tools for period symptoms published by Canberra Health Services

Note for your doctor

Download a letter to initiate a conversation about your best pathway for period pain help with your doctor

Period care products

The choice is no longer limited to just pads
or tampons.
More options means more people get their
needs met.

MENSTRUAL CUPS



INTERNAL



EXTERNAL



REUSABLE



DISPOSABLE

How do they work?

Menstrual cups are inserted into the vaginal canal, just like a tampon would be. However, instead of absorbing menstrual blood like a tampon, the menstrual cup collects the blood.

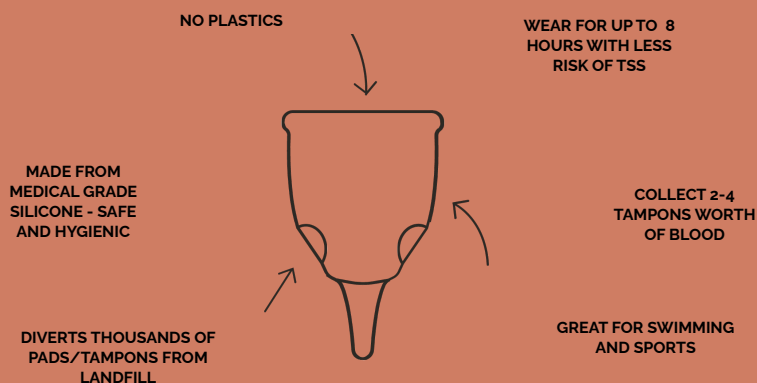
- The cup gets folded up so its tip is about the size of a tampon
- The tip is positioned at the vaginal opening, and it is gently directed inside the vaginal canal on a diagonal angle
- Once inside, it opens up and the holes around the rim of the cup create a seal to the walls of the vagina, ensuring it does not move out of place and that blood will not leak out. If inserted correctly, you shouldn't be able to feel the menstrual cup and it shouldn't cause discomfort
- It can be worn for up to 8 hours before changing

Cleaning your cup:

A menstrual cup is reusable. It is cleaned after each use, and used again. Because the cup is made of 100% medical grade silicone, it is hygienic and safe. After removing, rinse cup the sink with cold water and gentle soap and reinsert.

When your period is over, you can sanitise the cup by boiling it in a pot on the stove for a few minutes (follow manufacturers instructions). Alternatively, the TOM Organic cup comes with a steriliser case to sanitise your cup in the microwave. Do this prior to re-inserting before your next period too.

BENEFITS OF USING A MENSTRUAL CUP



MENSTRUAL CUPS

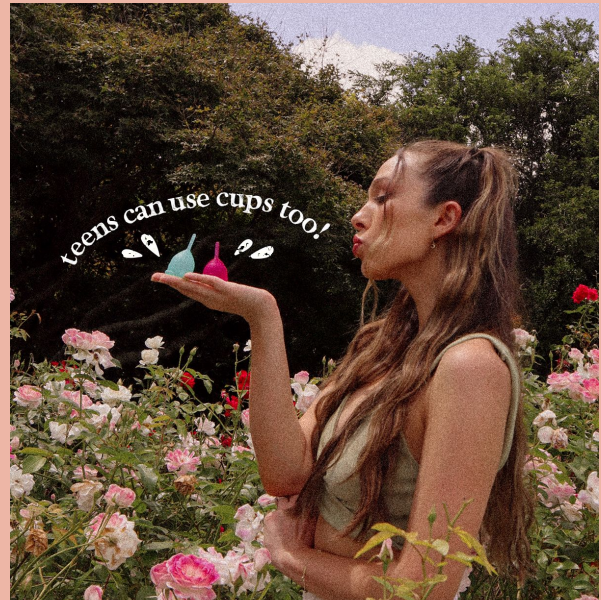
Can teens use a cup?

Many teenagers use menstrual cups. Some are able to make the cup work right away. Others need to practise for a few cycles.

It's okay to try inserting a cup part way, call it a day, and try again when you're feeling comfortable. Eventually you'll be able to position the cup so that you can't even feel it.

Teenagers can use a cup as soon as they feel comfortable and confident to try it out. The Saalt teen cup is a smaller size to make starting out with a cup easier!

[Read more about teens & period cups here](#)



TEEN PERIOD CUP

The Saalt TEEN cup is smaller and easier for first time cup users.

[Shop teen cups](#)



[Watch period cup playlist](#)

PERIOD UNDERWEAR

INTERNAL EXTERNAL REUSABLE DISPOSABLE

How do they work?

Period-proof underwear are a reusable period care option, designed to absorb period blood and keep you dry without the need for pads or tampons. Period underwear have an absorbent section in them (similar to having an inbuilt pad) with multiple layers that absorb blood, prevent leaks, and keep moisture away from skin. They hold more blood than a pad or tampon, so you can often go longer without needing to change them. However, wear time will depend on how heavy your flow is.

Washing your period underwear:

1. Remove the period underwear.
2. Rinse excess blood off the surface under cold water in a sink or bathtub until the water runs clear.
3. Wash with like colours in the washing machine on a cold cycle **WITHOUT** fabric softener.
4. Hang, dry and wear them again!

BENEFITS OF PERIOD UNDERWEAR

HOLDS 2-4
(sometimes more)
TAMPONS WORTH
OF BLOOD

WEAR FOR
HOURS, WASH,
AND REUSE

NO PLASTICS

CUTE AND
COMFORTABLE

NO NEED FOR PADS OR
TAMPONS

SWIMWEAR OPTIONS
AVAILABLE



Getting started with period undies video

PERIOD SWIMWEAR

INTERNAL EXTERNAL REUSABLE DISPOSABLE

How do they work?

Period-proof swimwear allow you to swim with confidence on your period!

On light flow days, period swimwear is all you'll need – no pads or tampons required!

On a heavy day, you can pair period swimwear with a cup or tampon for extra protection so you can 'just keep swimming'.

Period swimwear work by using a 3 layered gusset:

- Top layer draws in period blood
- Middle layer locks in blood and odour
- Outer layer is water repellent to keep water out and prevent leaks

Washing period swimwear:

- Rinse off excess blood under cold water in a sink or bathtub until the water runs clear
- Place in a laundry bag in a delicate, cold cycle with like colours. Omit fabric softener, harsh detergents or bleach
- Hang, dry and wear them again

Benefits:

- Keep swimming on your period - never miss a pool/beach day or swim meet!
- Keeps blood in and water out
- Holds 2 tampons worth of blood
- Looks like regular swimwear
- One-piece and bikini brief options



[Getting started with period swimwear video](#)

ORGANIC PADS & TAMPONS



INTERNAL



EXTERNAL



REUSABLE



DISPOSABLE

As conscious consumers, we can think about the potential impact our period care products have on the environment and our body.

Environmental impact of disposable pads/tampons:

- Plastic packaging, pad inlays, and tampon applicators can take potentially hundreds of years to break down
- Tampon applicators are one of the most common items polluting beaches

Health impact – endocrine disruptors:

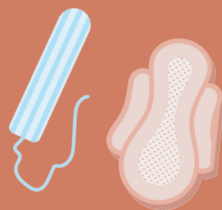
- Many pads and tampons contain pesticides, phthalates and fragrances, which are hormone disruptors (xeno-oestrogens)
- Hormone disruptors impact the body's endocrine (hormone) system
- These can also cause skin irritation for some users

What to look for:

For a more environmentally and body friendly alternative, you can look for pads and tampons that are:

- Organic
- Use biodegradable materials
- Free from dioxins, bleaches, phthalates, polypropylene, fragrances
- Disclose their ingredients

WHERE DOES PADS/TAMPON WASTE END UP?



In landfill, where plastic components take hundreds of years to break down



Polluting beaches and oceans

REUSABLE PADS

INTERNAL

EXTERNAL

REUSABLE

DISPOSABLE

How do they work?

Reusable pads absorb your period blood without the need for disposable pads or tampons. They have an inbuilt absorbent section that absorbs blood. Reusable pads usually clip onto your underwear.

They usually hold more blood than a disposable pad, so you can often go longer without needing to change them.

However, wear time will depend on how heavy your flow is. Just make sure to change after 8 hours!

To clean your reusable pads:

- Remove the reusable pad
- Soak in cold water to get out the excess blood on the surface and prevent staining. Follow product guidelines for soaking
- Wash with like colours in the washing machine on a cold cycle WITHOUT fabric softener
- Hang, dry and wear them again!

BENEFITS OF USING REUSABLE PADS

HOLDS 2-4
(sometimes more)
TAMPONS WORTH
OF BLOOD

NO PLASTICS

NO NEED FOR PADS OR
TAMPONS



WEAR FOR HOURS,
WASH, AND REUSE

CUTE AND
COMFORTABLE

DECREASES WASTE
FROM DISPOSABLES

Conversation starters & activities

Use these resources to foster conversation
around periods within your family

YOUR VIEW ON PERIODS

1. What can be scary about getting your first period?

2. What can be some exciting things about getting your first period?

3. What new responsibilities come along with having a period?

4. How might having a period change your school life or the way you work at school?

5. Make a list of questions you have about periods.

Why a period happens

The endometrium

EXCERPT FROM
'THE BRIGHT
GIRL GUIDE'
BOOK

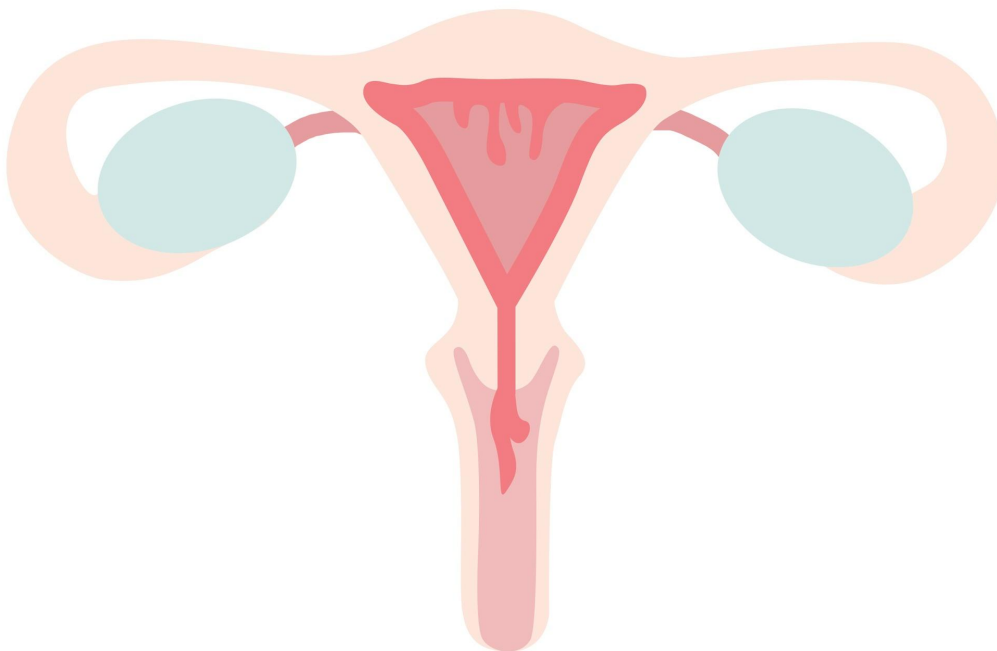
[CLICK HERE FOR
MORE](#)

WHY A PERIOD HAPPENS

Most months people do not get pregnant. This means that the uterus does not need the thickened endometrium that was built up throughout the cycle.

The menstrual bleed, or period, is the body expelling the inner layer of the endometrium that it no longer needs. The period bleed is made up of this layer of the endometrium, white blood cells and some mucus.

The diagram below shows the endometrium being shed at the time of menstruation. The period blood exits the body through the vaginal canal.



Your period bleed is the body realising that pregnancy did not occur and it no longer needs the thickened endometrium that was built up, so it is shed.



[CLICK
HERE TO
SHOP](#)

MAKE HORMONES & PERIODS SIMPLE.

A BEAUTIFUL AND EASY TO READ BOOK TO
UNDERSTAND YOUR BODY BETTER.

AVAILABLE AS eBOOK OR PAPERBACK

PERIOD DIARY 1

1. Write down 5-10 words that you associate with having a period.

Using 3 different coloured highlighters, colour code each word you wrote above into one of 3 categories:

- Positive words (eg: Intelligent, insightful, grateful, communication)
- Neutral words (eg: biology, red, uterus)
- Negative words (eg: pain, suffering, frustrating, annoying)

2. Reflect on how many words you have in each category above. For each negative word you have written down, write down a positive word you would like to replace it with (eg: Write 'insightful' instead of 'frustrating').

NEGATIVE WORD	POSITIVE REPLACEMENT

3. Write 2-3 sentences to describe having a period using all the positive words you've listed in the table above (eg: my period is intelligent because it can communicate to me about my health).

Period Ready Kit

PARENT-TEEN MASTERCLASSES
& RESOURCE KIT

Super helpful, informative and useful. I wish I'd known all of this when I was younger!

Everything I expected and more! It is so important to know this from a young age.

EASY PEASY PERIODS. NO AWKWARD CONVERSATIONS REQUIRED.

- 2x 90 minute 'Period Perfect Masterclass' videos
- A copy of ['The Bright Girl Guide' ebook](#) – an all encompassing guide to the menstrual cycle and hormones
- Access to a resource kit of activities and worksheets
- Unlimited access to the masterclass recordings to watch back as you wish
- Self-paced access to the Masterclasses



[More info for parents](#)

Use code 'PARENT20' for \$20 off

Phases of the menstrual cycle

Your period speaks

What might your period say if it could talk?
Maybe it would say something like...

"Wear the white pants, it will be fine... just kidding!"

"I heard you have a pool party this weekend... it would be a shame if I came and ruined it!"

"I bled all over your favourite underwear! Sorry not sorry"

Sometimes it can feel like our period is out to get us, or that the period symptoms we experience are just annoying. However, period symptoms can be a useful way the body communicates.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: YOUR PERIOD'S LANGUAGE

Your body is intelligent and your period can give you *signs and symptoms* that act as an alarm or indicator to let you know an area of your health may need attention.

We might get frustrated at our body when we experience period symptoms like pain, acne, headaches, heavy bleeding or irregular periods. However, it's important that we recognise these symptoms as the body's way of communicating. We should listen to these signs and symptoms instead of getting angry about them.

Signs and symptoms are things you CAN SEE that tell you about things you CANNOT SEE.

WHAT WE CAN SEE (Sign or symptom)	WHAT WE CAN'T SEE (Cause)
Late period	Potentially: Stress, nutrient deficiency, hormone imbalance, etc.
Excess period pain	Potentially: Excess oestrogen, stress, reproductive health condition, etc.

PERIOD DIARY 2

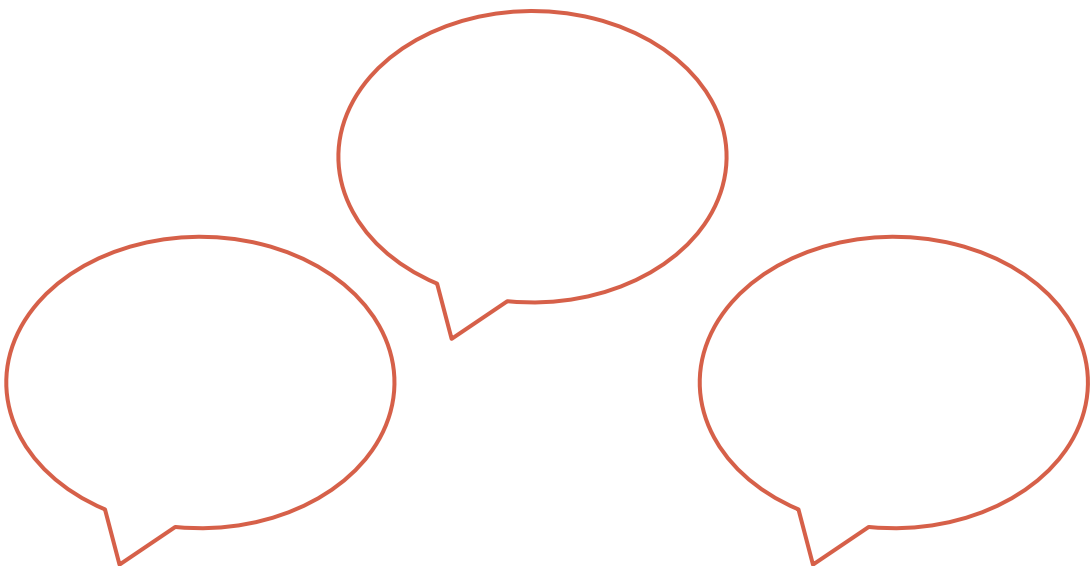
Fill out the speech bubbles with phrases that you personally feel like your period might say to you if it could talk.

Be honest! If you feel like your period would be sassy, rude, mean or angry, allow the phrases you write to reflect that.

If you feel your period would be insightful, calm, absent or silent, you can reflect those feelings in the speech bubbles too.



Fill out the next set of speech bubbles with what you would want to say to your period if it could understand you



Phases of the menstrual cycle

Characteristics of cycle phases

EXCERPT FROM
'THE BRIGHT GIRL
GUIDE' BOOK

[CLICK HERE
FOR MORE](#)

The menstrual cycle is not just when we're bleeding - it includes every day in between periods! There are 4 phases of the menstrual cycle. On any given day you are in one of these 4 phases (unless you're pregnant, using hormonal birth control, or haven't had your 1st period yet). The 4 animals below represent how we might feel as we move through these phases.

SLOTH PHASE

Menstruation/period bleed

- Includes the days of your period bleed
- Usually lasts 4-7 days
- May feel more tired, slow and inward focussed
- May feel the need for more rest at the beginning of this phase

LIONESSE PHASE

Before ovulation

- Starts immediately after your period bleed ends
- Lasts until ovulation time (the length of this phase can vary from person to person)
- May feel more energetic and strong
- May feel more happy and have more stable emotions in this phase

CAT PHASE

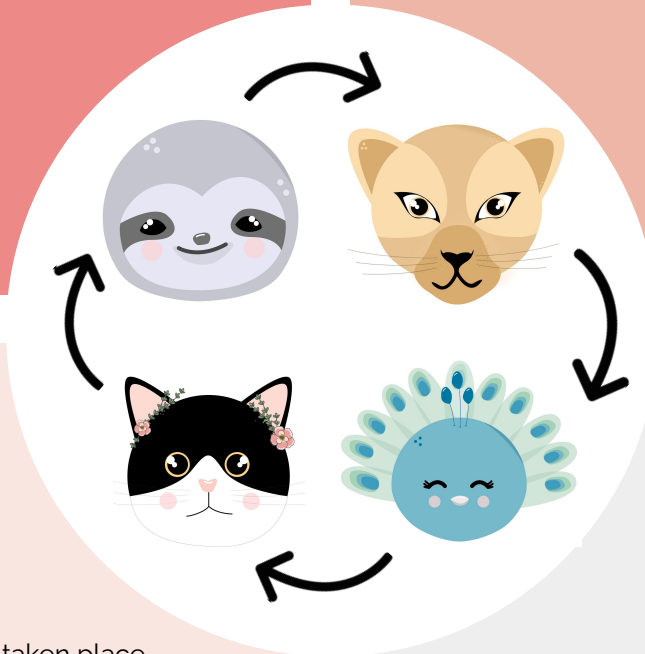
After ovulation

- Begins after ovulation has taken place
- Usually lasts 11-18 days .On average, this phase is 14 days leading up to your next period. This phase typically will not vary much in length
- May be characterised by PMS (premenstrual syndrome) symptoms

PEACOCK PHASE

Ovulation

- Roughly 1-3 days surrounding the time an egg is released from an ovary
- Ovulation is typically said to happen around cycle day 14. However, it doesn't always
- Some people may experience ovulation pain, ovulation spotting, or nausea
- May have increases in energy or improved mood



PERIOD DIARY 3

VISUAL PERIOD DIARY:

Create an artwork that reflects the way you feel on THIS DAY of your cycle and what you might need to feel better supported on this day. Here are some ideas:

- Use colours that reflect your mood
- Include words that reflect your dominant feelings or moods on this day of your cycle
- Include imagery that reflects what your body craves, desires or needs on this day (eg: more rest, time with friends, alone time, nourishing food, exercise and fresh air, etc.)

WRITTEN PERIOD DIARY: (alternative to the visual diary)

Write a diary entry that reflects on how you feel on THIS DAY of your cycle and what you might need to feel better supported on this day. Reflect on:

- Where are you in your cycle at the moment? (period, just after your period, period is coming up)
- The dominant feelings from this day you are experiencing
- Write down 2-3 things you feel like your body needs on this day (eg: more rest, time with friends, alone time, nourishing food, exercise and fresh air, etc.)

REFLECTION:

Write down what you need in order to feel supported and comfortable during your period.

PERIOD PLAYLIST:

Make a playlist of songs to suit and support your different moods during your menstrual cycle. You might name your playlists according to the different phases of your cycle (sloth, lioness, peacock, cat from previous activity).

Getting to the bottom of period concerns

Knowing when to seek help

EXCERPT FROM
'THE BRIGHT GIRL
GUIDE' BOOK

CLICK HERE FOR
MORE

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 menstrual 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 menstruators 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 menstruators 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 menstrual health practitioner** - You can ask your GP to refer you to a menstrual health specialist. Google "menstrual health practitioner" to find one in your area, or use the [Bright Girl Health practitioner directory](#). Many naturopaths, functional medicine doctors & Chinese medicine doctors specialise in menstrual health.

MENSTRUAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER DIRECTORY

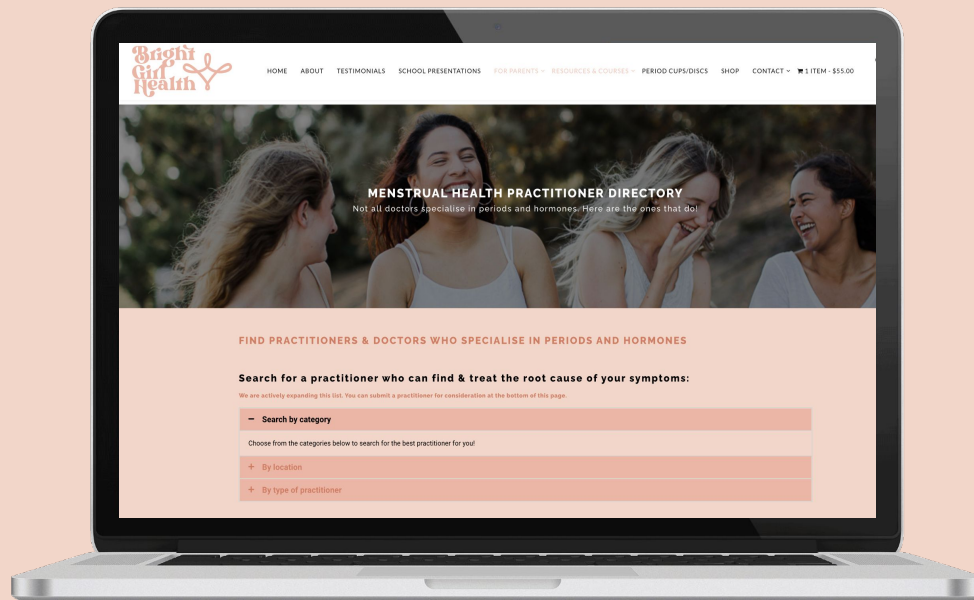
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[SEARCH THE DIRECTORY](#)



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& RESOURCE KIT



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A copy of 'The Bright Girl
Guide' ebook

A database of worksheets &
activities for deep learning

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FOR MORE
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OFF

ABOUT DEMI SPACCAVENTO



Demi Spaccavento is the founder of Bright Girl Health, a menstrual health educator, keynote speaker, and a passionate high school teacher.

Demi is the most sought after menstrual health presenter for schools in Australia. She has presented to thousands of students, empowering them to be in tune with their body and never dread their period again. Demi's communication style is high-energy and entertaining, and has been described by students as 'relatable' and 'fun'.

Demi has no filter when it comes to talking about periods and believes that we should never be kept in the dark about our own bodies. She believes that the menstrual cycle does not have to be your enemy – it can be your greatest tool for better health and wellbeing!

HAVING A BETTER PERIOD
STARTS WITH
UNDERSTANDING YOUR
BODY



"THE BRIGHT GIRL GUIDE"
AVAILABLE NOW!

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