Let’s talk MENSTRUATION

The MENSTRUAL CYCLE occurs in women from puberty to menopause to prepare the body for a possible pregnancy. Every woman is different, but most women experience a cycle between 21–35 days.

THE FEMALE BODY WILL PREP TO ACHIEVE PREGNANCY IN 2 WAYS

1. Releasing an egg from an ovary. The egg will travel through the fallopian tube and wait for sperm.
2. Building TISSUE LINING in the uterus. If the egg is fertilized by a sperm, it will attach to the uterine wall.

IF NO SPERM ENTERS EGG:
The unfertilized egg and uterine lining shed (period occurs). After the period, the uterine lining will start to grow anew and the cycle will begin again.

IF SPERM ENTERS EGG:
The now fertilized egg will attach to the wall of the uterine cavity. A baby will begin to develop and periods will cease for 9 months.

Let’s look at an example 28-day cycle!

DAYS 1–13: FOLLICULAR PHASE
- DAYS 1–7: The body removes an unfertilized egg from the previous cycle and the uterine lining sheds. This is called the “menstrual period.”

DAYS 14: OVULATORY PHASE
The uterine lining is fully formed and a mature egg is released, waiting for potential sperm.

DAYS 15–28: LUTEAL PHASE
If no sperm penetrates the egg (no fertilization), the egg and uterine lining will break down. Premenstrual symptoms (PMS) may now occur. IF FERTILIZATION HAPPENS, the fertilized egg may implant into the uterine wall. Pregnancy begins!

YOUR QUESTIONS, answered!

1. What does a period look like? At the end of a menstrual cycle, there will be a mixture of blood, tissue, and fluid.
2. How long does it last? The average period lasts 3 to 5 days. It may be heavier in the first 3 days and lighter towards the end.
3. How much blood is lost? On average, a 5- to 6-day period will lose 14 to 20 ml of blood. Most women lose less than 80 ml of blood during their period.
4. Is the period painful? Yes, it can cause cramps, bloating, and other symptoms. Menstrual cramps are common and can be severe, but they are usually not painful.
5. What causes cramps? Hormone-like molecules cause the uterus to contract, producing cramps.
6. What does it feel like? Before or during the period, you may experience emotional, behavioral, or physical symptoms called premenstrual syndrome (PMS).