

Puberty

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Introduction

Between the ages of about 10 and 14, you will begin to notice changes in your body. Or you might just feel different. That's puberty - everyone goes through it. Some of the changes your body experiences will be more exciting than others - but they're all part of becoming an adult.

There are many different signs that suggest you may be going through puberty. Just remember – everyone's experience will be different.

Common signs of puberty:

| | |
|--|---|
| Acne | Emotional changes – (e.g., loneliness, crushes, wanting to be independent, self-consciousness) |
| Moodiness due to changes in hormones | |
| Sweat and body odor becoming more noticeable | Hair beginning to grow in your armpits and pubic region |

Increased tiredness

Height and weight increasing



Feeling awkward or embarrassed, especially in times of change

Sexual curiosity and attraction developing

A need for independence from their parents

Menstruation

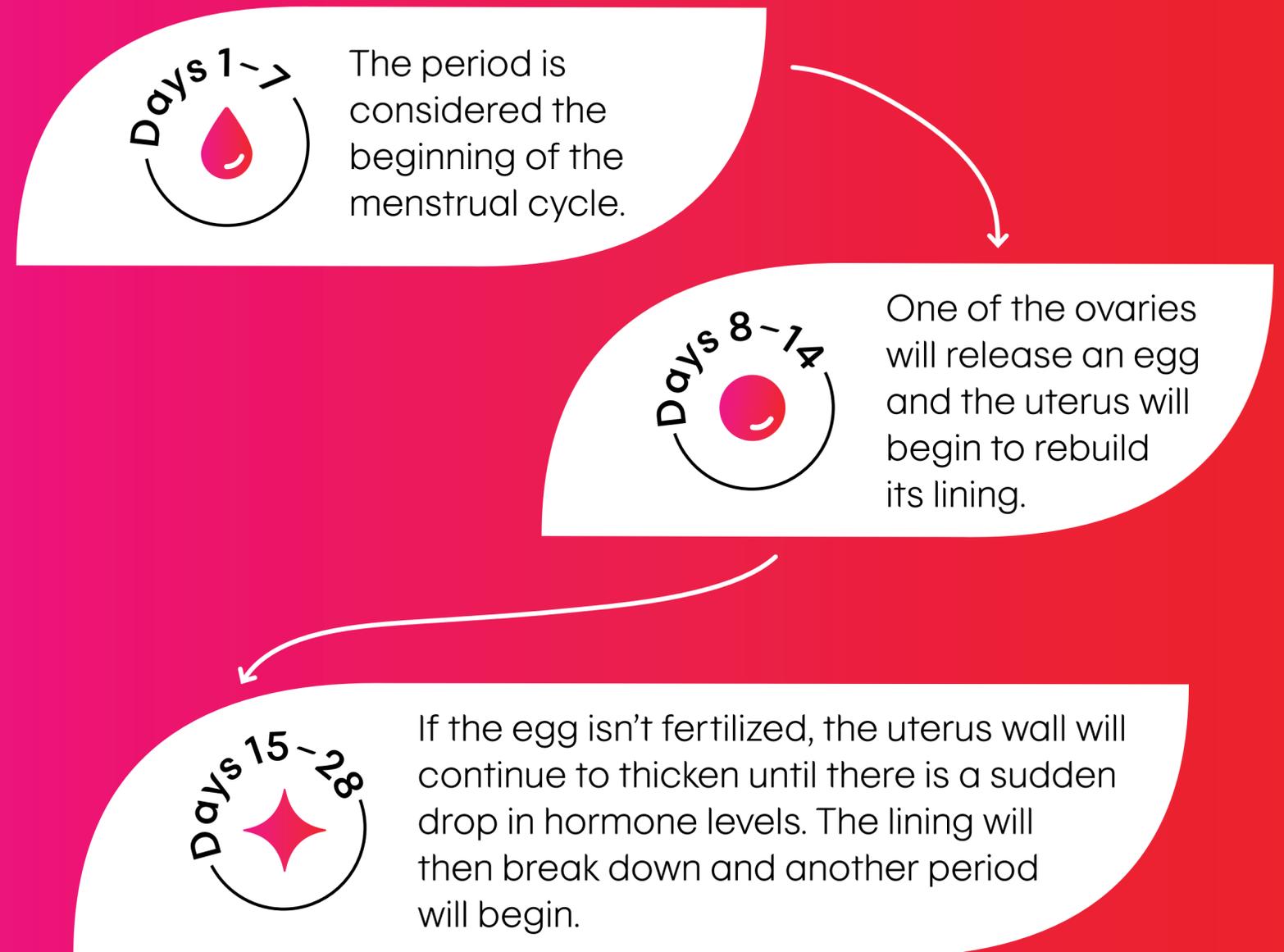
It's important to call a period just that – a period. “Aunt Flow” isn't “visiting.” The “red river” isn't “running.” There is no crime scene to be found. It's a period, not a joke. Periods might be uncomfortable to talk about initially (hence the jokes), but they're nothing to be ashamed of.

The average cycle lasts around 28 to 30 days, but it can range from around 21 to 35 days. Within each cycle, the period will last for a few days at a time, but its length will vary from person to person. Remember, every period is different, and that's totally okay.

When someone gets their period, it's one sign that their reproductive system is functioning properly.

The Menstrual Cycle

A guide to a typical 28-day menstrual cycle:



It doesn't sound glamorous or fun – but having periods means you can create life.



Dictionary

Menstruation: Also referred to as “having a period.” The vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of the monthly cycle.

Menstrual Cycle: The regular and natural change in the reproductive system that makes pregnancy possible.

Uterus: Also known as the “womb.” Where a fertilized egg will become a fetus.

Ovary: Where eggs (also known as “ova”) develop. Eggs are released from the ovaries and travel down the fallopian tubes into the uterus.

Ovum: Also known as an “egg.” A reproductive cell that will develop into a fetus if it is fertilized by a sperm. One ovum is released each month during the menstrual cycle. Fertilization usually happens only with unprotected sex. **FYI:** The plural of ovum is “ova.”

Social & Emotional Changes

If you are going through puberty, your body is probably changing in more ways than you even realize. With your hormones changing, you might experience some mood swings or just feel like you aren't in control of your emotions. Don't worry, you're not the only one feeling this way.

You might also feel more sensitive and self-conscious about your body because of all the physical changes you are experiencing. Growing into an adult can be hard and confusing – but the growth period doesn't last forever. Puberty is a great sign that your body is healthy, functioning, and maturing as normal.

True or False?

Your Changing Body Quiz

These are just a few things that your body will experience during puberty. If you have any questions, make sure to ask a trusted adult.

Circle the correct answer:

1. Everyone gets their period when they turn 13 years old

T F

2. In girls, one breast may grow more quickly than the other

T F

3. The body will change shape during puberty

T F

4. During puberty, increased appetite leads to acne

T F

5. During puberty, girls grow hair in more places than boys

T F

6. Increased testosterone causes voices to deepen

T F

7. Puberty does change the body's hygiene needs

T F

8. All the changes during puberty are external

T F

9. Sexual desires will develop during puberty

T F

10. Energy levels increase during puberty

T F



Answers can be found on the next page!

How to deal with changes:

- Ask a lot of questions
- Respect your body
- Accept your body
- Talk to somebody
- Be patient with your parents/guardians

Answers to the True False Quiz:

1. False, 2. True, 3. True, 4. False, 5. False,
6. True 7. True 8. False, 9. True, 10. False

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