

What are Menstrual Disorders?

Menstrual disorders are problems with a woman's period. There may be pain during periods, unusual bleeding or irregular periods.



WHAT CAUSES THEM?

There are many causes of menstrual problems. You may have a hormonal imbalance. You may have suddenly changed your diet or exercise. You may be stressed or have an infection. Sometimes there is a problem with an organ in the body. Sometimes there is a problem with blood clotting. Sometimes a medication can cause them. Often tests are needed to find out why.

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Some people don't feel their abnormal periods, but others do. You may have very painful cramps, migraines, mood changes, or leg aches during parts of your period.

WHAT CAN I DO?

GET GOOD HEALTH CARE!

- ❑ Keep a period calendar: It is hard to find the pattern of how you feel during your periods without looking at a calendar. Be sure to bring it to your appointment.
- ❑ Work with your health professional to find out the cause and treatment of your problem.



PAIN CONTROL

- ❑ Try a heating pad, a hot bath, go for a walk, or have some soothing herbal tea for painful cramps. Heat can be as good as medications like ibuprofen.
- ❑ Aromatherapy with or without massage: May reduce how many days a period is painful, if used daily. Try lavender, clary sage, and marjoram. Try a gentle belly massage with oil. Look at the Aromatherapy handout for instructions on how to use these oils.
- ❑ Get Acupressure or Acupuncture: Works well for pain control.

DIET

- ❑ Watch what you eat and drink: Some causes of painful cramps and mood changes may be helped by eating a nutritious diet and eating less sugar, caffeine and alcohol.
- ❑ Follow an anti-inflammatory diet. Studies show that following the

anti-inflammatory diet leads to feeling better and is well-balanced.

EXERCISE

Exercise regularly. Exercise can help painful cramps. It lowers stress, improves mood, and can stabilize weight. However, excessive exercise without a nutritious diet can cause periods to stop (this could be a sign of an eating disorder). Plan for 30-60 minutes a day of physical activity that is enjoyable for you.

LOWER STRESS

- ❑ Try meditation: Yoga, breathing methods, meditation, and acupuncture can help you manage stress better.
- ❑ Get regular sleep: Sleep is a time for the body to heal and relax. Giving your body and mind the time and space to refresh is vital to feeling well.

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements for painful periods:

- ❑ Ginger: Taking ginger several times a day may decrease pain.
- ❑ Fenugreek: Taking fenugreek during your period may help with pain.
- ❑ Thiamine (Vitamin B1): Take 100mg a day to lessen pain and mood changes.
- ❑ Calcium: might help with painful periods.
- ❑ Vitex or Chastetree berry is an herbal medicine which can help some people with menstrual symptoms.

CAUTION

Concerning symptoms: See a medical provider for very heavy periods (>1 heavy pad or tampon per hour for several hours) or long periods (>8 days). Pain that stops normal activity, irregular bleeding, or feeling weak, short of breath, or blood clots greater than an inch are concerning.

For more information, scan the QR code below, or visit nciph.org/menstrual_disorders



