



# nyssa

THE NYSSA GUIDE TO...

## Starting a Positive Period Care Practice

in collaboration with  
Pediatrician Dr. Rupa Mahadevan



# SO, YOU GOT YOUR PERIOD?

Your first period is a pretty big milestone that comes with a lot of changes. The first thing to know is: there is absolutely zero shame in getting periods or finding stains in your underwear (trust us, we've all been there). **Periods are not gross, icky, or embarrassing.** And they're not something you need to hide. We actually think that **periods are pretty awesome.** Here's why:

## Periods are natural and healthy.

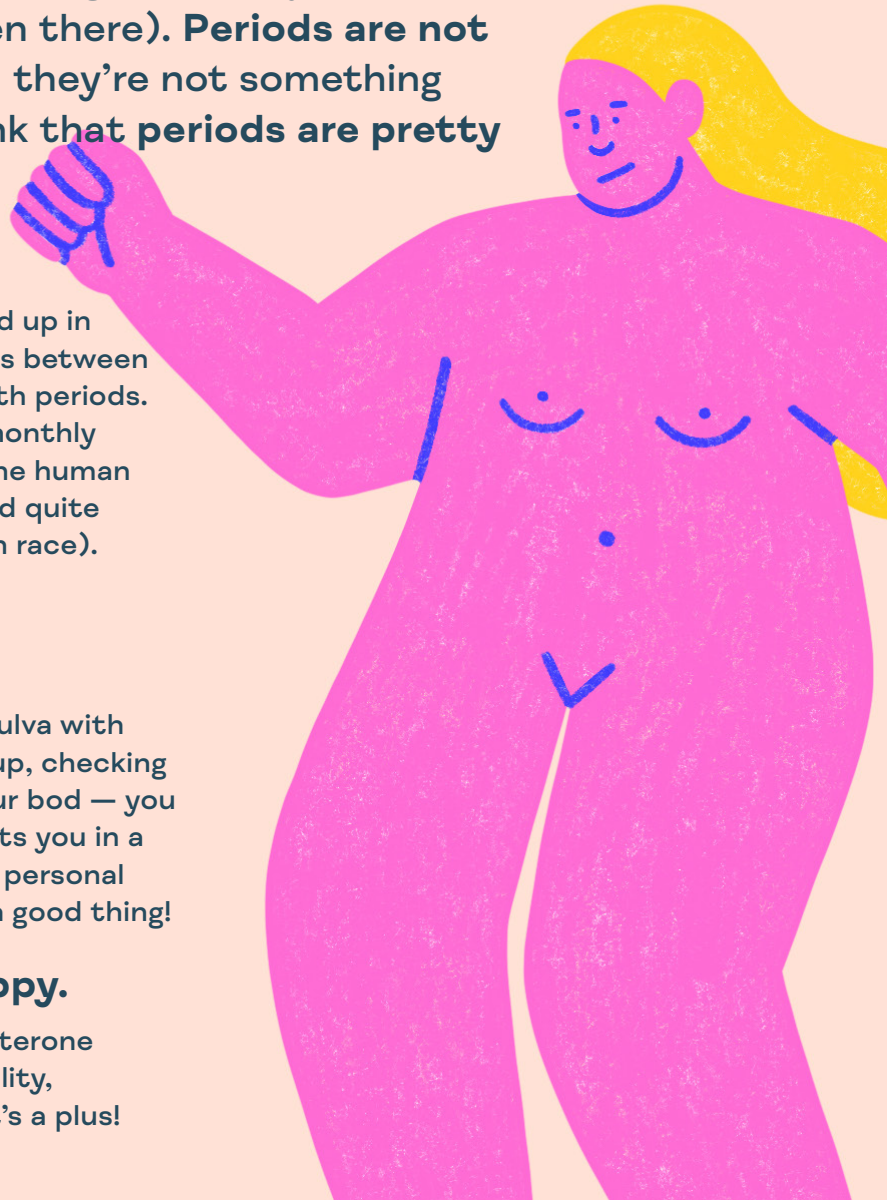
Ever since the first prehistoric women huddled up in the corner of their caves stuffing piles of moss between their legs every month, we've been dealing with periods. It's easy to forget that periods aren't just a monthly event — they're an essential component of the human reproductive cycle. Without periods, life would quite simply cease to exist (you're welcome, human race).

## Periods help you keep in touch with your body.

If you haven't fully explored your vagina and vulva with your fingers, whether removing a menstrual cup, checking up on a wayward tampon or just exploring your bod — you probably should. Like it or not, your period puts you in a situation where you need to get up close and personal with what's going on down there. And that's a good thing!

## Periods keep your hormones happy.

During the second week of your cycle, progesterone makes you experience unparalleled mental agility, along with boosted self confidence. Now that's a plus!



✓ **LIFE-AFFIRMING.**

✓ **HEALTH-CONFIRMING.**

✓ **MOOD-BOOSTING.**

We're calling time-out on periods getting a bad rap. So, roll out the red carpet and check-out Nyssa's tips for finding your flow and creating a healthy period care practice that will help set you up for a lifetime of happy periods.

## TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST.

Whether it's your mom, caregiver, big sis, another family member or friend, or your healthcare provider, telling someone you trust can be really helpful as you navigate a new phase of your life. They can be your sounding board for any questions you may have and help you better understand what to expect.



## EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS:

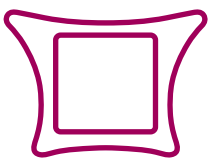
While many people choose pads to start, there are lots of options when it comes to finding the right period care items for you.



If you do use a tampon, remember not to keep it inside you for more than **4 hours at a time** and to always remove it at the end of your period.



Cups are another great option, as you can use the same one for years if you sanitize it in-between each period.



Inserting tampons and cups can take a while to get the hang of. You might want to try using **Nyssa's VieVision Between Legs Mirror** to help you see what you're doing – it's even got an LED light to make things extra clear!

Try experimenting with various period care items until you find the one that suits you best. You may even choose to switch it up, day-to-day or month-to-month, depending on how you feel.



## GET TO KNOW YOUR FLOW:

The first day of your period to the first day of your next period forms one menstrual cycle. This can be anywhere between 21-45 days, though for most girls it's 25-35 days.

In the first 6 months after getting your first period, you may experience irregular periods. That is perfectly fine. Most likely, your cycle will become more regular over time.

- Some people have very heavy periods, which is called **menorrhagia**. If you can't maintain your usual activities when you have your period because you have so much blood loss and cramping, speak with your healthcare provider.



Your period gives you an opportunity to think about **self-care**. Mother nature works in cycles and seasons just like your period. This is a great time to **eat for hormonal balance**.

The **seed rotation\*** is a great way to promote hormonal balance and minimize cramps. Choosing foods **rich in iron** can help maintain your blood counts. Some women may need an iron supplement as well so check with your doctor if you feel light headed or weak during your cycles. Eating a **well balanced, plant forward diet** can be helpful in alleviating cramps since plants are filled with nutrients such as **magnesium, vitamin C, and B vitamins** which can help the body's response to pain.

\*<https://hormonesbalance.com/articles/how-to-use-seed-rotation-to-rebalance-your-menstrual-cycle/>

## UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS:



Starting your period can bring up so many emotions. You might be excited, anxious, or weirded-out. **That's all totally normal.**

Feeling **depressed, sad, or anxious** is very common among girls and women before and during their period (in fact, 75% of menstruating people report feeling this way<sup>1</sup>). So is crying, even if you can't quite figure out what is wrong.

Periods and ovulation create hormonal changes throughout the month. These **fluctuations** have a lot to do with why your emotions may feel chaotic for weeks before your period (aka premenstrual syndrome, or PMS).

And know, **these feelings are real.**

Your reactions might be heightened because of hormones, but they are still valid, real feelings. Add PMS and common period-related body changes (such as bloating, oily skin and potential breakouts and breast tenderness) on top of the regular highs and lows of being a teen and, well, **it ain't easy.**

Please know that **you are not alone.** Talk to someone you trust, whether it's a family member, friend, teacher or healthcare provider. There are options to help you manage PMS if you feel like it's interfering with your daily activities. Think about **special self-care activities** you enjoy and make time for them around the time of your cycle to help decrease the feelings of irritability or emotional unrest.



## GAUGE YOUR PAIN TOLERANCE:

We're big on period positivity at Nyssa. But at the end of the day, being in pain sucks. If you suffer from period cramps, heat can be super effective at providing relief from discomfort. We created our **VieWear Period Comfort Underwear** to help teens and women deal with period pain proactively. Each pair features a pocket opening in the front. You simply pop a heat pack inside it and it will be held in place. Try our **Uterine Reusable Ice/Heat Pack**, which is uniquely contoured to sit over the uterus and ovaries, where the symptoms of period pain tend to start. We also have **Uterine On-the-Go Heat Presses**, which are air-activated, so you can throw them in your backpack, heat them up anywhere — from school to sports clubs and friends' houses. Send pain packing and get on with your life!

<sup>1</sup> PubMed Health, 2013

## LITTLE TIPS TO KEEP YOU FEELING GOOD:



Place a heat pack on your lower abdomen.

**Nyssa's Uterine Reusable Ice/Heat Pack** is designed to sit just below to curvature of your belly and give direct heat therapy to your uterus and ovaries, which can be comforting and help relieve pain.



Try warm drinks such as golden milk turmeric tea or chamomile tea, and lots of water.

Rest on your side with your knees bent.

Lightly massage your lower abdomen.



You might feel like cuddling up under a blanket or re-watching your favorite TV shows. And that's just fine!

## WHEN TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER:

- If your cycles are **irregular, changing dramatically** in length from one month to the next.
- If your cycles are **shorter than 24 or longer than 38 days** in length.
- If you haven't had a period in **3 months or longer**.
- If you have **considerable pain** or other unusual symptoms that accompany your bleeding.
- If you **bleed between periods**.
- If you have to change your pad or tampon every 1-2 hours due to a **high flow over 5-8 days**

Read **Ellen's Loudspeaker Letter** (she works for Nyssa), all about starting her first period and the words of advice she would give to her younger self.



If you have any concerns about your period or wellbeing, please contact your healthcare provider.

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THE NYSSA CHECKLIST FOR...

## Getting to Know Your Flow

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# CHECK-IN WITH YOURSELF:

Every **body** is different.

What is typical for you and your cycle might be unusual for somebody else. Your menstrual cycle might be regular — about the same length every month — or somewhat irregular, and your period might be light or heavy, painful or pain-free, long or short, and still be considered normal. That’s why it’s so important to get in tune with what is normal for you. That way, you’ll know if anything seems off course, and you’ll be better able to explain it to your healthcare provider. **Try asking yourself these questions:**

## Is my flow light, medium, or heavy?

“Heavy” means changing your tampon or pad every hour or so or during the night, having periods that last for more than a week, or passing blood clots bigger than a quarter. **How would you describe your flow during these days of your cycle?**

	 LIGHT	 MEDIUM	 HEAVY
Day 1 & 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 3 & 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day 5+	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## How regular is my cycle?

Getting your period as often as every 3 weeks could still be normal. It may take a couple of years after your first period to settle into a schedule — typically, anywhere from 24 to 38 days.

**How often, on average, do you get your period?**

- Less than every 21 days
- Every 21-26 days
- Every 27-32 days
- Every 33-38 days
- More than every 38 days





## Do I ever miss my periods?

The most common cause is pregnancy, but stress, a hormone imbalance, being underweight, scar tissue, and some meds can also stop periods. If you've skipped three in a row, see your doctor.

**Have you missed a period?**

- Yes (try to record when this happened, if you can)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- No

## Do I ever bleed between periods?

Growths in and around your uterus (such as endometriosis, fibroids, or polyps), problems with your hormones or the type of birth control pill you're using, and STDs (including chlamydia and gonorrhea) can be responsible for blood showing up during the off-season.

**Have you ever noticed bleeding or spotting in between your periods?**

- Yes (try to record when this happened and any details about the spotting/bleeding, if you can)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- No

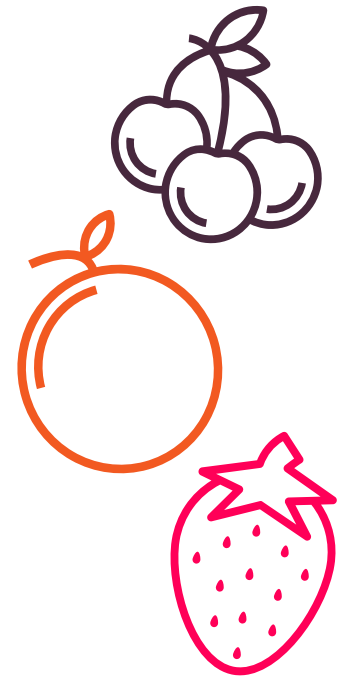


## How does the color of my blood change throughout my period?

Fresh blood at the beginning of your period is usually bright red. A heavy flow could be darker, especially with clots. Rusty brown blood is older; what you'll typically see toward the end of the week because the air has had a chance to react with it. Young women who have just started their periods may experience great variety in the colors and textures of their menstrual blood for the first several years. **What do you notice about the color of your period blood?**

- Black or brown blood at the beginning and/or end of my period
- Dark red blood, especially after sleeping or laying down for a long time
- Bright red or pink blood
- Orange blood
- Grey blood

Blood color can be an indicator of larger health issues at play. If your blood is unusually (for you) bright red/pink, orange, or grey, you should call your healthcare provider just to get a check-up.



## What's going on with my cramps?

More than half of menstruating women hurt in their low belly, thighs, or back for a day or two every month, just before or as the bleeding starts. Some cramps start earlier in your cycle and last longer. And you generally don't feel sick in any other way because of them. These aren't normal. The lining of your uterus may be growing where it shouldn't (endometriosis or adenomyosis), you may have fibroids (noncancerous growths in your uterus), or you could have pelvic inflammatory disease, which would need to be treated right away. **How would you describe your cramps?**

- No cramping at all (lucky you!)
- Light cramping a few days before and/or during my period
- Intense cramping a few days before and/or during my period
- Moderate to intense cramping more than a few days before my period







## I'm experiencing other types of pain during my period — what's that about?

Does it hurt when you pee or poop, or do you have diarrhea or constipation, while you're on your period? These may be things that help point your doctor toward a diagnosis of endometriosis, especially when you have other symptoms, like heavy periods or bad cramps. A headache around the start of your period every month could be related to the drop in your estrogen level or the release of prostaglandin. It's called a menstrual migraine.

### Do you experience other types of pain beyond cramping?

- Heavy periods along with diarrhea and constipation
- Moderate to severe cramping along with diarrhea and constipation
- Headaches or migraines before your period
- Pain in your pelvic area outside of the times of your period. For example, for a few days every week or every second week

If you have not started your period or your period continues to be irregular after 6 months try talking to your doctor.

Healthcare providers will likely check your lab work for any thyroid dysfunction or will consider an ultrasound to look for PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome) which both can be normalized with medication.



If you have any concerns about your period or wellbeing, please contact your healthcare provider.

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