



## PUBERTY - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

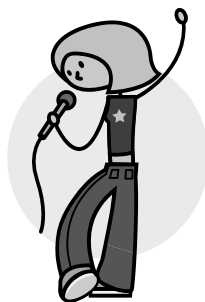
### **When will I start my period?**

No one can tell you that for sure. Everyone is an individual on a different timetable. Your period may start any time between the ages of 9 and 16. There is no right age or normal age.



### **What signs should I look for?**

Generally, you can expect your first period about two years after your breasts first start to develop, and soon after you have some hair under your arms and in your pubic area. Vaginal discharge is also a good indication that you could begin to menstruate soon.



### **What will it feel like?**

When you first begin your period, you may feel moisture in your underwear. It may not feel much different than the discharge you've had before. Sometimes you can feel the menstrual flow, especially after you've been sitting or lying down for a while.



### **Can anyone tell when I have my period?**

No one can tell. When you first start wearing feminine protection products, it will be a new feeling. While you may be very aware of your period when you first start having periods, other people won't be. You can wear thin pads and feel confident even in tight fitting clothing like sports uniforms.

### **What about cramps?**

Menstrual cramps are like cramps elsewhere in your body. A muscle contracts too hard or too fast. In this case, the muscles are in the uterus. Simple health habits of good exercise and adequate diet help. You can also try a warm bath, taking deep breaths, or use a heating pad on the abdomen. If cramps present a problem, discuss this with your parent, doctor, or school nurse.



### **How often will I have my period?**

Everyone's cycle is different. You may menstruate every 22 days to 43 days, and it may vary for the first couple of years after you start your period. An average cycle is 28 days, about once a month. (Menstruation comes from the Latin word menses which means month.) But your average may be different. That's normal. Keep track with a calendar by circling the first day your period starts each time.

### **What if I start my period at school or someplace else?**

Consider always carrying an emergency kit in your backpack, purse or keeping one in your locker. This kit can contain a pad or two and a change of underwear. Some restrooms have vending machines. At school, you can check with the school nurse or office.



### **Can I still play sports and participate in other activities during my period?**

Yes, you can participate in your normal activities. Do what you feel like. If you think about it, many of the girls and women around you all the time probably have their periods.

### **Can I use tampons?**

When a girl first starts her period she may not be ready to use tampons. Check with your mom or another adult female you trust before using them for the first time. It's important to read the directions and change them often.



### **How do I know what products are right for me?**

Talk to your mom, school nurse or an adult you feel comfortable talking with to help you decide. There are a variety of products to choose from. Experiment to find the right system of protection for you.