

Getting my period



I am a girl.

That means my body is a little bit different to a boy's body. The most obvious difference is the parts of my body beneath my underwear.

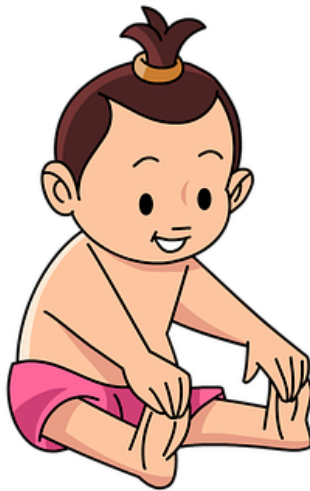


I have a vagina and a vulva. But boys have a penis and testicles.

These parts are called "genitals".

Everyone has them but we don't see them very often, because they are private, so we keep them covered with clothes.

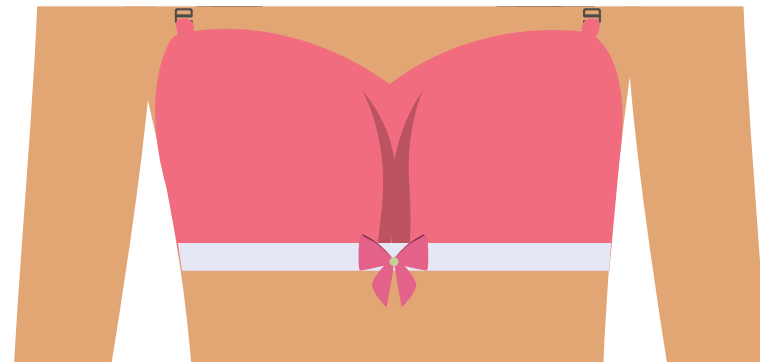
Bodies are pretty cool. As we get older in years, our body starts to grow and change. When i was first born I was a tiny baby and i had no teeth or hair. But since then, my body has grown hair, and teeth, and i got taller. Much taller.

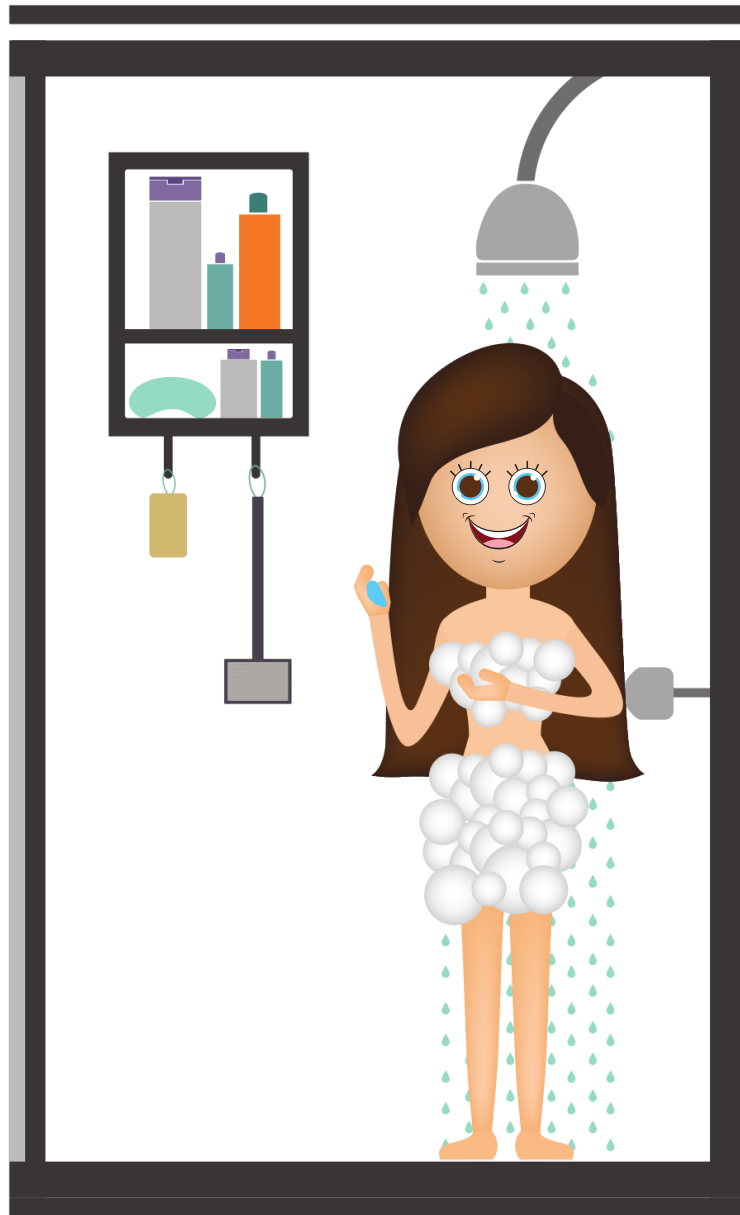


Bodies change because they are **amazing!**

In the next few years my body will continue to change. It's been a while since i noticed big changes in my body, so these new changes may be a bit surprising for me.

I will probably start to grow breasts. Some people call these "boobs" or "bosoms". There are lots of different words for them, but their proper name is "breasts".





I will also start to grow more hair in new places, such as under my armpits, or between my legs - near my genitals. This type of hair is called "pubic hair". It will probably look different to the hair on my head. It might be a different colour and it will probably be a bit curly.

I don't need to brush my pubic hair like I do the hair on my head. I also don't need to use shampoo or conditioner on my pubic hair, I just need to use my normal body soap to wash it to make sure it stays clean.

There's one more **BIG** change that will happen to my body sometime soon. Maybe it will happen next month, or in two years time. No one ever knows for sure when this change will happen to them; so that's why i'm telling you now, so you can be prepared and know about it when it happens.

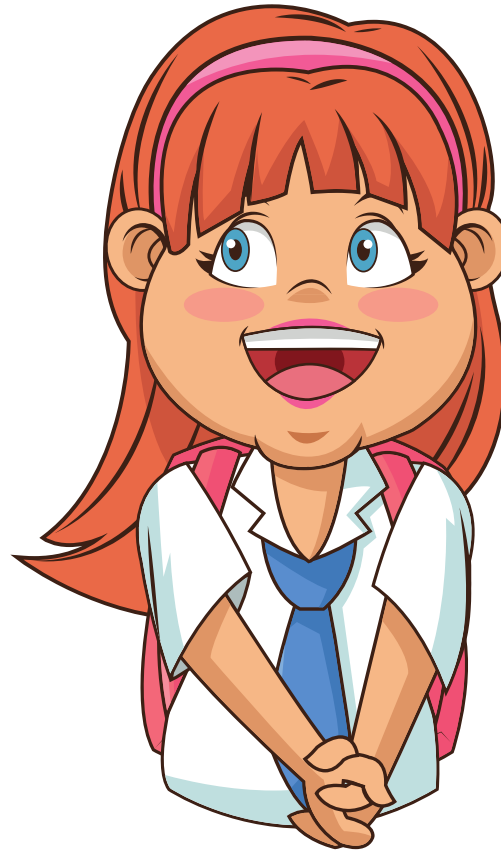
It's called menstruation.
Wow, that's a big word hey? You say
it just like this...

"men-stray-shun"

Because it's such a big word people
generally call menstruation a "period"

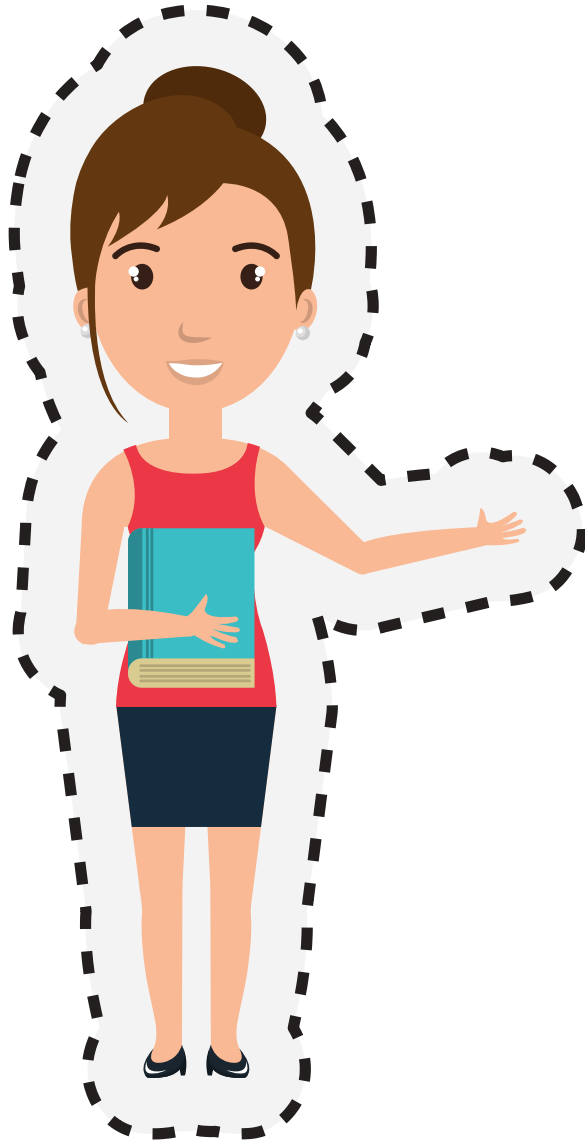


Have you ever heard older girls in the school toilets talking about "getting their period"?. They're talking about menstruation. Or maybe you've heard your Mum or another grown up talking about it?



Menstruation happens to every girl. Most often, girls get their first period around the age of about 10-13, but some girls might get it younger, or they might be older.

Periods generally last about 5 days. Sometimes they're shorter or longer - maybe only 3 days or sometimes 7 or 8. Periods happen every month for most girls. Usually you'll get another period about 28 days after your last one started.

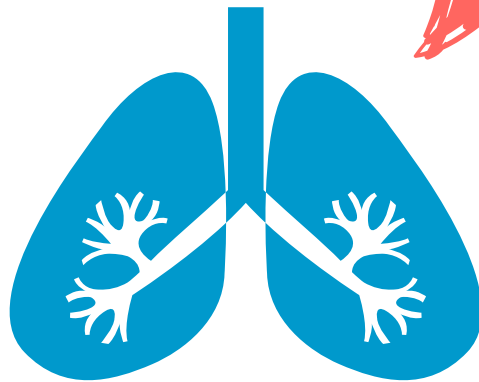


But what is "a period"?

What happens during
menstruation?

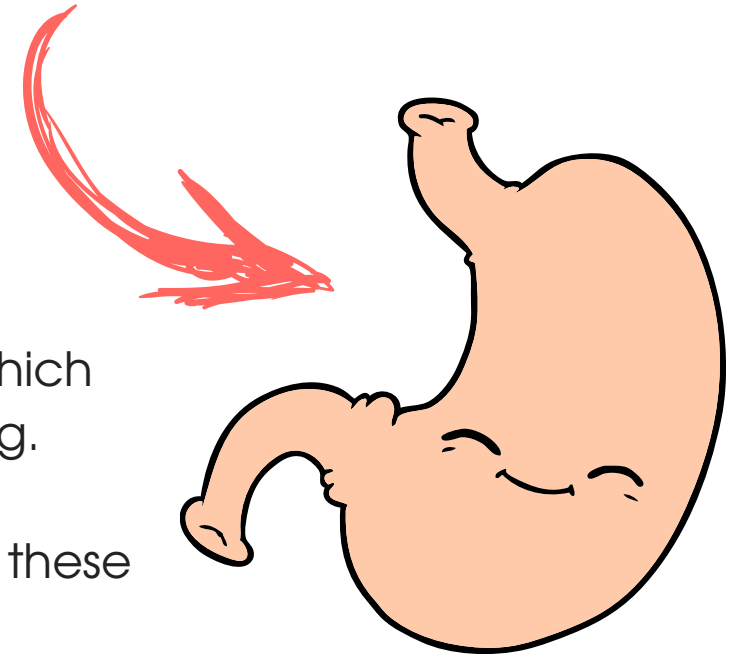
Let me explain.

Inside of our body we all have organs.
You probably know of some - you have your stomach which stores the
food you eat,



You also have lungs, which
control your breathing.

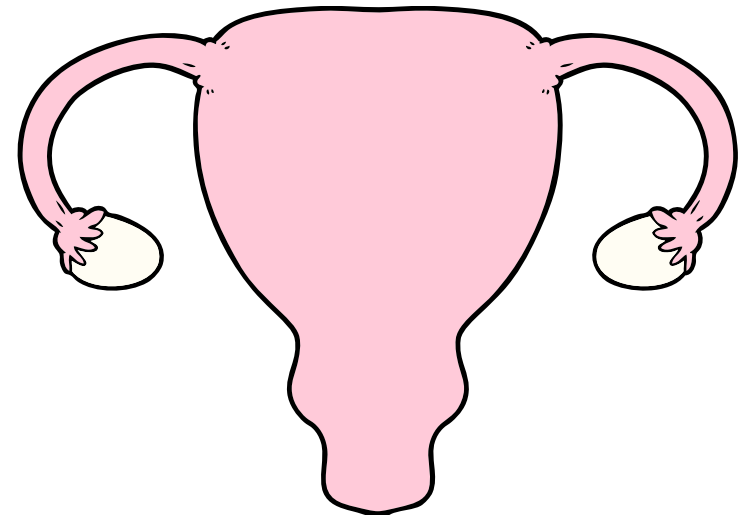
Both boys and girls have these
organs.



But there are some special organs that **ONLY** girls have.

One of them is called the "uterus".
It sits inside your body below your stomach, in
between your hip bones.

It's a funny shape. I can't describe it, so here's a
drawing of what it looks like.



Now just like every other organ in your body, the uterus has a very
important job that only it can do.

It's where women grow babies inside their body.

Have you noticed that only women get pregnant and grow big bellies to
have babies?

Men can't do this because they don't have a uterus.

As you can imagine, growing a baby is a very important job, the uterus needs to be working really well to get that job right, so it starts practicing early.

Here's what it does:

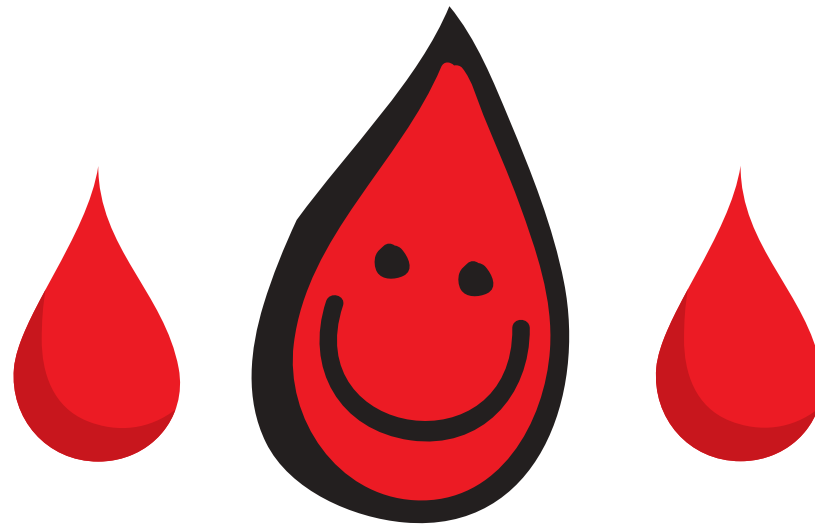
You know that blood is important to keep us alive and healthy as people?

Well babies need blood too when they're growing inside of a woman's body. This blood lines the walls of the uterus and makes it a squooshy and safe place for the baby to live for 9 months.



So, once a girl is old enough and starts puberty, the uterus gets busy practicing. The girl's body grows lots of blood and stores it inside of the uterus. It lines all the sides of the uterus - to make a nice soft, squishy home for a baby.

The uterus starts practicing early, so that it's ready to store a baby when the girl is older and is ready to have a baby.



After about a month of storing blood, when the body realises there's no baby in the uterus - it decides to get rid of all that blood, to remove it from the uterus so it can start collecting fresh, new blood for next month.

When the uterus decides to get rid of all that blood, it flows down a pipe called the vagina and flows out of our body.

So that's what "menstruation" is.



Its when the unneeded "menstrual blood" from your uterus is released from the body, through your vagina.

Like i said, this happens every month, roughly about every 28 days.

Now menstrual blood is different to other blood that lives inside our bodies. The "rest of our body" blood is supposed to stay inside our body. When it doesn't, that can sometimes be a concern.

Have you ever seen blood?

Maybe you fell over and scraped your knee; or cut your fingers on some scissors or may you got bumped in the nose and got a nosebleed.



Most of the time when "rest of our body" blood comes outside of our body; it's a sign that we're hurt, or unwell, so it can be a little scary or painful.

But "menstrual blood" is different. When period blood comes out of our body, it's not because we're hurt or sick;



It's actually a sign
that our body -
especially our
uterus - is working
exactly as it should
be!

So how do we deal with that blood?

As you can imagine - when period blood comes out of your vagina it can be a little messy. So we girls need to have ways to stop and collect the blood as it comes out of our body.

We will need to use one or more of the following "sanitary items" to help us to manage the menstrual blood coming from our body.



Pads

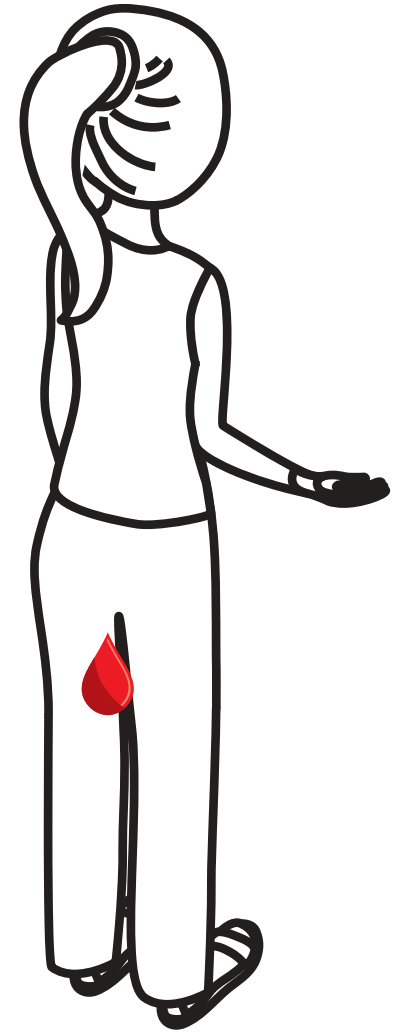
Pads, tampons, panty liners, menstrual cups and period underwear are all ways of collecting the blood, so we can hygienically dispose of it.

We need these items to collect the blood, so that it doesn't make a mess on our underwear, clothes, or furniture.

You can ask someone you know and trust to show you these items and explain how they work.



Tampons



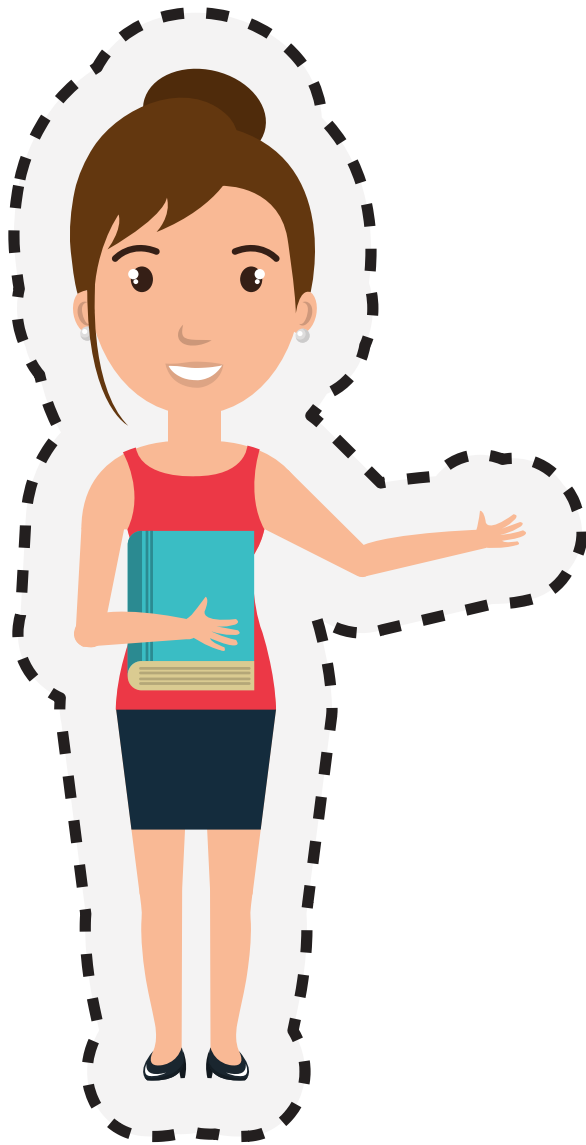
So that's menstruation!

It's an important part of puberty that happens for every girl.

We don't know when we will first start to menstruate, so it's a good idea to learn about it and get prepared early, once we first start going through puberty.

It's common for girls to feel worried or uncomfortable talking about their period. But remember that it's a perfectly normal part of changing from being a girl, into being a woman.

You can find some quiet time to ask another woman you trust, about any questions you have about puberty and menstruation.



Want more help to manage the puberty years?

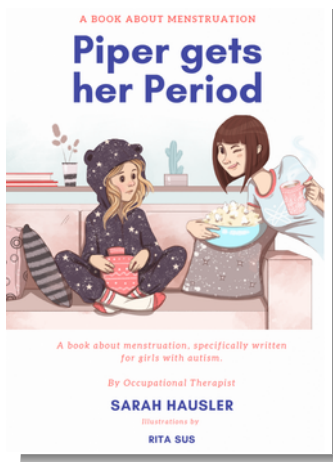
We have more resources to help:

'Piper Gets Her Period' is an 80 page full colour book about menstruation, specifically written to be easily accessed and understood by girls with autism.

This can be purchased in paperback and eBook.

If you're in Australia or New Zealand visit www.bloomwellbeing.com.au/book to order your copy.

International readers can purchase the eBook from the website above, or can order a paperback copy from Amazon.com or Amazon.co.uk



Still want more?

We also have a 10 module online program, specifically designed for children with autism, to help them better understand puberty.

Visit <https://bloom-wellbeing.mykajabi.com/offers/GQThWazw> for more information.

Don't forget to follow our socials!

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