

# Menstrual Bleeding - Missed Period

## Definition

- Menstrual bleeding (your period) is the monthly loss of blood that lines the uterus.
- "Late" period: at least 5 days later than expected that month.
- "Missed" period: it's been 6 weeks since your last one with no period bleeding.

## Health Information

### Causes

- **Periods in first year.** In the first year of getting your periods, they can be irregular. You may go a few months between periods. This is normal.
- **Stress.** Life stress, change in routine or illness can make your periods irregular.
- **Weight loss.** Losing weight will make your periods come less often. This can be from an eating disorder, illness, or exercising a lot.
- **Birth control.** Birth control shots, implants and some IUDs will stop regular periods.
- **Pregnancy.** Each month, your uterus builds up its lining to prepare for a possible pregnancy. If no pregnancy occurs, the lining flows out of your vagina. This is your period. If you are pregnant, no period will happen.

## Care Advice

### 1. Key Points

- Your period is the normal monthly shedding of the lining of your uterus.
- It is normal for periods to be irregular in the first year.
- Stress, weight loss, and birth control can make periods late or irregular.
- Pregnancy will make you stop having periods.
- Here is some home care advice that should help.

### 2. Check for Pregnancy

- Home urine pregnancy tests are available without a prescription. They are cheap, accurate and easy to use.
- Do the pregnancy test on a first morning urine sample. This is when any pregnancy hormones are highest. Follow the directions in the test package.
- A pregnancy testing fact sheet can be found on the website <http://www.womenshealth.gov>. Search for "pregnancy tests."
- If the pregnancy test is negative, it may be too early to be reliable. If you still haven't gotten your period in 1 week, take another pregnancy test.
- If your pregnancy test is positive, start taking a prenatal vitamin. No prescription is needed. Call your doctor for next steps. Do not drink alcohol. Do not take any medicines, unless approved by your doctor.

### 3. Keep Track of Your Cycle

- Use a calendar or app to record when you have your periods.
- This helps your doctor see the pattern of your periods. This gives clues to why your periods are irregular.

#### 4. **Reduce Stress**

- Stress can interrupt normal menstrual cycles.
- Talk about your stress with someone you trust.
- Try to avoid any stress that you can.
- If you feel overscheduled, find something you can stop doing.
- Consider help from a counselor.

#### 5. **Eat a Healthy Diet**

- Rapid weight loss can interrupt normal periods.
- Follow a healthy varied diet.
- If you are underweight, try to eat more calories. Consider seeing a nutritionist to help you.
- Exercise is good. It does burn calories. Cut back on any excessive exercise until periods return.

#### 6. **What To Expect**

- Periods will become more regular in 1 to 2 years after starting your period.
- If you are pregnant, talk with your doctor about next steps.

### **Call Your Doctor If**

- You have a positive pregnancy test
- You have no period for more than 3 months with negative pregnancy tests.
- You think you need to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

#### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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