

## Importance of Menstrual Cycle and its Phases

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### DESCRIPTION

Menstruation is a natural biological process that occurs in most women and individuals assigned female at birth, marking a vital part of the reproductive cycle. Often surrounded by social stigma and misunderstanding, menstruation is not just a monthly occurrence; it plays a crucial role in reproductive health and overall well-being. This article aims to explore the phases of menstruation, its physiological mechanisms, common myths, and the importance of menstrual health.

Menstruation, commonly known as a period, is the monthly shedding of the uterine lining when pregnancy does not occur. This process typically begins during puberty, around the ages of 9 to 16, and continues until menopause, which generally occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. The average menstrual cycle lasts about 28 days, but it can vary from 21 to 35 days in adults and 21 to 45 days in young teens.

### Phases of the menstrual cycle

The menstrual cycle can be divided into several phases

**Menstrual phase:** This phase marks the beginning of the cycle and lasts between 3 to 7 days. The uterine lining, built up during the previous cycle, is shed through the vagina, resulting in menstrual bleeding.

**Follicular phase:** Following menstruation, the body prepares for a new cycle. The pituitary gland releases Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH), stimulating the ovaries to produce follicles, each containing an egg. One dominant follicle will mature and prepare for ovulation.

**Ovulation:** Around the midpoint of the cycle, typically day 14, a surge in Luteinizing Hormone (LH) triggers the release of the mature egg from the ovary. This is the most fertile period, and the egg can be fertilized by sperm for about 24 hours after ovulation.

**Luteal phase:** After ovulation, the ruptured follicle transforms into the corpus luteum, which produces progesterone. This

hormone helps thicken the uterine lining in preparation for a potential pregnancy. If the egg is not fertilized, the corpus luteum breaks down, leading to decreased hormone levels and the start of menstruation again.

### Importance of menstrual health

Understanding and prioritizing menstrual health is essential for overall well-being. Here are a few key reasons

**Physical health:** Regular menstrual cycles can indicate a healthy reproductive system. Irregularities may signal underlying health issues, such as hormonal imbalances, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), or thyroid disorders.

**Psychological well-being:** Hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle can affect mood and emotional health. Awareness of these changes can help individuals manage symptoms of Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) or Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD).

**Access to resources:** Adequate menstrual hygiene products are crucial for managing menstruation. However, many people worldwide face "period poverty," lacking access to necessary supplies. Addressing this issue is vital for promoting menstrual health and hygiene.

**Education and awareness:** Comprehensive education about menstruation is essential for dispelling myths and reducing stigma. Schools, families, and communities play a critical role in fostering open discussions about menstrual health.

### CONCLUSION

Menstruation is a natural and vital aspect of reproductive health. Promoting menstrual health is essential not only for personal well-being but also for fostering a more informed and compassionate society. As we continue to break down barriers and open the conversation about menstruation, we pave the way for a future where all individuals can manage their periods with dignity and confidence.

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