

Menstruation

Q1. What is (Haiz) or menstruation?

A1. When a female becomes a teenager, the blood that comes out from her private part (vagina) on a fixed time basis is known as menstruation or period (Haiz). A menstruating woman is not considered dirty or sinful, as is the case in some other religions and cultures. It is natural and normal for every girl from about nine to sixteen years of age to start menstruating. Another word for menstruation is "period". A female usually has a period every 28 days (once a month), but this cycle often varies from about 25 to 35 days, women have different patterns. A menstrual period usually lasts between three and six days, but may be a day or two longer. When one starts having periods they are often rather irregular. One may have one and then not have another for a few months. After a while they will probably settle down. Use a diary to mark down the days when one has one's period over the next six months and one may begin to see a pattern. A female should be able to work out the average length of time between periods, which will help her to know when to expect them. Once a female starts menstruating she is physically capable of having a baby. The cycle is repeated over and over again until about 54 years of age.

Q2. At what age does menstruation begin?

A2. Menstruation or period begins when you are at least nine years old. It ends when a woman is about fifty-five years old.

Q3. What happens just before a period?

A3. You may feel tense and irritable just before a period. Some girls feel tired and are unable to concentrate. Some feel weepy and depressed. Some girls get angry. It is normal to feel tired or even dizzy when your period is just starting or is at its heaviest. This is known as "PMS" or "Pre-menstrual syndrome".

Q4. Are you sick when you have a period?

A4. Definitely not. It is normal for all females to have them. Some girls get abdominal cramps, or a headache, or feel a little bloated at the beginning of a period, but this is perfectly normal and will disappear in a day or two. Period pains can be worse if you are worried and tense. Some girls try to hold on to the blood flow because they are worried about soiling their clothes.

Q5. How can you prevent your clothes from getting soiled when you have your periods?

A5. There are special soft, absorbent pads (sanitary towels), which fit on the inside of your panties, called sanitary pads. They absorb the blood. You can also use tampons, which are inserted into the vagina. If your blood flow is very heavy, you may find that a little blood leaks around the edges, so it can help to wear darker colored pants, which won't show the blood. Sometimes you will need to change your pads two or three times a day, but if it is heavy you will have to change every couple of hours.

Q6. What can you do if you have period pains?

A6. The best thing to do is relax, preferably in a warm place. If you are at home, curling up under the duvet with a hot water bottle and relaxing for a while can help. Some schools have a sick room to sit in or you can take a painkiller to help you relax.

Q7. What are the colors of menstruation?

A7. A period generally begins and ends with a slight, brownish discharge. In between, the blood becomes redder and the flow heavier. There are six colors of menstruation: black, red, green, yellow, brown and clayey. The white discharge is not menstruation.

Q8. How long does menstruation last?

A8. The time period for menstruation is at least three days and three nights, meaning a full seventy-two hours. The maximum is ten days and ten nights. Periods generally start light and are heavier for just a couple of days.

Q9. What is (Istihaza)?

A9. (Istihaza) is the blood that is discharged due to some illness.

Q10. If the blood is discharged before the age of nine years, is it regarded as Haiz or not?

A10. No. It is called Istihaza.

Q11. What happens if the blood stops just less than seventy-two hours?

A11. Then, it is not a period but Istihaza.

Q12. What happens if the blood flows for more than ten days?

A12. If this is the first instance that blood is discharged, then for the ten days it is regarded as menstruation and the rest it is Istihaza.

Q13. What happens in a case if the usual time for menstruation is five days, but the blood is discharged for ten days? Would all these days be regarded as menstruation or not?

A13. All the days are recognized as menstruation.

Q14. What happens in a case if the usual time for menstruation is five days, but the blood is discharged for twelve days? Would all these days be regarded as menstruation or not?

A14. The first five days is menstruation and the other seven is Istihaza.

Q15. What happens if there is no regular pattern in the menstrual cycle, for example, sometimes the blood is discharged for four days and sometimes for five days?

A15. Whatever amount of days was the last period, this will be counted on this occasion. It is not necessary that blood continue to be discharged all the time. If it starts and stops it is still recognized as menstruation.

Q16. Can you miss your period?

A16. Yes. You can also miss your period if you lose a lot of weight, are very stressed (for example, before exams), when traveling or during a family crisis, or if you are regularly involved in strenuous physical activity (for example, if you are an athlete) or hardworking.

Q17. What must you do with the pads that you used?

A17. You must dispose of it immediately and not store it under the bed or in the cupboard. Wrap them up well in paper and put them in the nearest bin. Only flush pads in the toilet as a last resort. Try to avoid this as it can clog the system.

Q18. What other changes take place in a girl's body?

A18. In the year or two before your periods start, you will have become aware of changes in your body. You will become more aware of your body. At the start of puberty, a girl often starts to grow very suddenly, both in height and weight. Her face becomes fuller, and her voice a little lower. Her breasts start to develop and pubic and underarm hair starts to grow. She will find that she perspires much more than she used to. If you are having any worries about periods or changes that are

happening to your body, it helps if there is someone to talk to. Talk to your mother, an older sister, aunt or madressa teacher. You should not be ashamed or embarrassed to consult with them.