



## Period Confidential

*'For me, going on the pill really helped. It just makes periods so much easier now and so much less hassle'*

### What's normal with periods?

The answer is pretty much anything! Starting at ten, starting at fifteen, having one every month, having a few a year, very heavy, very light - women and girls experience all these things with their periods. When you're in your teens it's common to be quite irregular or even miss some.

**How much is heavy?** [Check out this chart](#) which will give you some idea. Remember it always looks like way more blood than it is - most people lose less than an eggcupful each month!

### I have a bleeding disorder, so now what?

If you have a bleeding disorder like von Willebrand's, it's likely your periods might be heavier and go on for longer than your friends. You might feel tired and if it goes on for a while you could even be a bit anaemic (lacking iron in your body).

For girls with bleeding disorders, their **first** period is often very heavy and long. So it's important you know what will happen in advance.

### What can I do?

Your doctor should help you with managing your periods, whether you need painkillers or if you need medication to help reduce the bleeding. They may even tell you to take some iron supplements. **REMEMBER:** everyone is different. What works for your friend could be harmful for you.

If you'd rather not ask the doctor, your school nurse is usually helpful, or you can always get in touch with us here. We can help you get some answers from a nurse who understands bleeding disorders.

You might find that nurses and doctors outside of your haemophilia centre don't really understand your bleeding disorder or haven't really heard of it. This is common too. Keeping reminding every healthcare person that you meet about your condition, and if they prescribe you any tablets or medication get advice from your haemophilia centre.

### Will people know?

Whether you have a bleeding disorder or not, learning to manage your periods can be tricky. If you are bleeding a lot it might affect what type of tampons or pads you use. But everyone will be going through the same thing.

### Will it hurt more?

Women feel all kinds of things during their period: pain, bloating, teariness, grumpiness, even happier! You will find out what is the case for you. Having a bleeding disorder may mean you bleed a bit **more**, and for **longer**, but it shouldn't make it any more painful. If you find it hurts a lot **get some help**. It could be any number of things, and it's not fair if you have to keep trying to concentrate in double maths or whatever when you feel sick or uncomfortable! A hot water bottle might help, or your doctor might give you some painkillers to take.

If your school aren't very sympathetic, you might ask your mum or someone else to have a word with a member of staff. Maybe you could get a 'toilet pass' so you can leave the classroom quickly during your period, without having to explain why in front of everyone!

### My mum said it was normal to bleed a lot.

It's really common for girls to have similar periods to their mothers, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers, especially where there is a bleeding disorder in the family. So they might tell you it's 'normal' to bleed a lot, because that's what happened for them. While it is quite common, if you have a bleeding disorder it's much better to know about it in advance.

## What about the future?

Having a bleeding disorder can become a problem when you have surgery or dental work, but with good planning everything can be managed very simply.

You will also need to think about what happens in future if you want to have a baby. Women with bleeding disorders may bleed after they give birth for a few weeks, longer than usual. This needs to be dealt with quickly as it is tiring enough having a new baby, and you want to keep as fit and healthy as possible.

**Knowledge is power!** If you know in advance your doctors and nurses can look after you properly, and hopefully your operation, root canal, or baby will all be problem-free. That's why if you think you might have a bleeding disorder it's really important to get a proper **diagnosis**.

## Related Links



**Women Bleed Too** Women Bleed Too aims to ensure that bleeding disorders are a recognised condition among women, and that appropriate treatment and support are available to all those diagnosed.

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