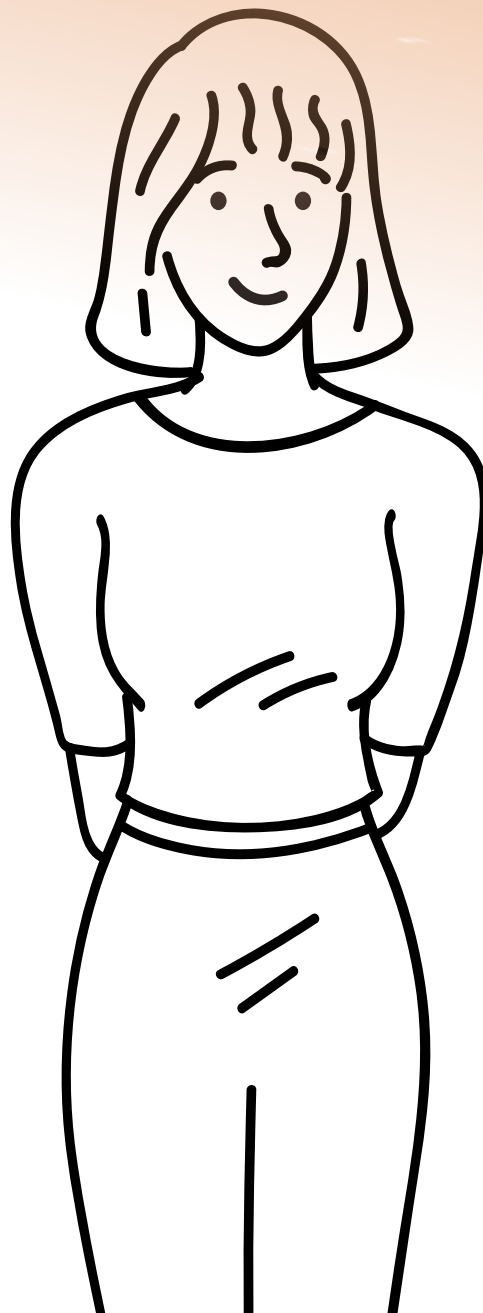


Understanding your period

Stage 3

GIRL TALK





Girl talk

PERIODS. THERE WE'VE SAID IT.

Whether the word fills you with giggles or makes you cringe with embarrassment, it's important to remember that it's completely natural and happens to all girls!

This is your guide to all the details so you can understand exactly what's happening to your body. From physical changes to picking products, we have covered all the bases.

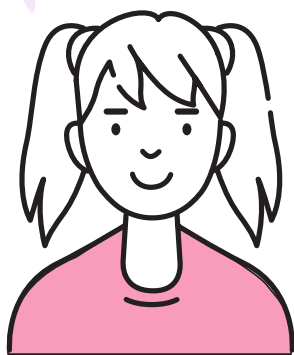
So, during these activities ask questions, discuss facts and most importantly have fun so you can feel comfortable about your periods.

LET'S START TALKING

Girls have a lot to say (and ask) when it comes to periods. Check out some thoughts below from girls just like you and discuss with your class.

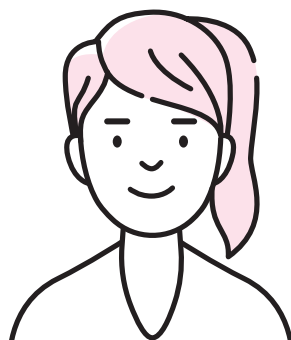
"I woke up in the morning after having cramps the night before. When I went to the toilet I saw a little bit of blood in my undies. Everyone was asleep so I woke up my big sister and told her, she came with me to tell Mum."

Zoe age 11



"My mum helped me to pick some tampons so I could swim even when I have my period. Now I'm not worried about people being able to tell when I have my period."

Mia age 13



"I'm 14 and still haven't had my period. I'm a little bit scared about it, will I know when I'm about to get it?"

Livy age 14





Your period, what is it?

WHAT EXACTLY IS HAPPENING TO YOU?

During your 'monthly cycle' tissue, blood and other biological matter forms, lining your uterus in preparation for pregnancy. If you do not become pregnant, the body no longer needs the lining and so it will break down and be released through your vagina - this is known as your **period**.

It may seem scary and strange at first but don't worry it happens to all girls and is a major part of puberty. It is also known as **menstruation**.



BRAINSTORM

Take charge and get informed about what is happening to your body. You might be feeling embarrassed, confused, excited or scared - they are all very common reactions! You might have heard something about periods and want to know if it is true. It's important to talk about any questions you might have so that it starts to feel normal for you. In the spaces below, write down any thoughts or questions you want answered.

Why is it so hard to say "period"?

A study has found that there are over 5,000 slang terms for 'period' worldwide!
What are some you have heard of?

When will it happen?



IT'S DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

Just like when we first start puberty, some girls may start getting their period a little earlier and some a little later. Typically, girls experience their first period between the ages of 9 and 15.

THE CLUES

It's normal to be nervous about your period suddenly appearing, but the good news is you don't have to live your life in constant stress and panic! Your body gives you clues and warning signs that your period is about to begin.

- It's genetic! Talk to your mum and ask her when she first got her period, it can give you an indication of when you could expect yours.
- It's around a year (on average) since you first noticed pubic hair and had discharge (the whitish stain in your underwear).
- Your discharge changes colour and becomes more reddish brown, this means your period is very close. (Vaginal discharge is very normal and can change in appearance throughout your cycle. Discharge is a great lubricant and protective shield and keeps infections away as well as a way for your body to get rid of dead cells and bacteria. Normal discharge is usually clear or creamy, or perhaps with a slight yellow tint to it. It does not have an offensive smell or cause irritation. If you notice a change in your discharge, let a trusted adult know or visit the doctor.)

Girl Power

Although some girls are excited about getting their first period, others can be scared and nervous. It's important to be supportive and not embarrass each other. If you happen to get your period at school, approach a teacher or staff member you feel comfortable around - they will be happy to help you, remember they've all experienced it as well!

LET'S TALK

In small groups, discuss who you could approach for help or support when experiencing your first period. Think of some ways you could start the conversation. Consider if it happens at home or at school.



Let's talk



The menstrual cycle

HOW LONG DOES A CYCLE LAST?

A complete menstrual cycle usually takes about 21 to 32 days, this can be shorter or longer for different girls and is not always monthly, especially when you first start having your period. The cycle is broken up into **four different phases**.



DID YOU KNOW...

Fertilisation is when an egg that is released from the ovary joins with a sperm in the fallopian tube. When an egg is fertilised it travels to the uterus where it is possible for it to grow into a baby.

Ovulation only takes 24 hours!

Your diet can affect your period. Eating too little can affect your hormones and cause your periods to stop.



It is important to get familiar with your cycle and work out what is normal for you. Every girl's menstrual experience is different- what may be normal for you might not be for someone else.

The average woman will have around 400 periods in her lifetime!

The first disposable menstrual pad was introduced in 1897 and was a large pad of material worn inside the underwear.

The menstrual cycle

PHASE 1

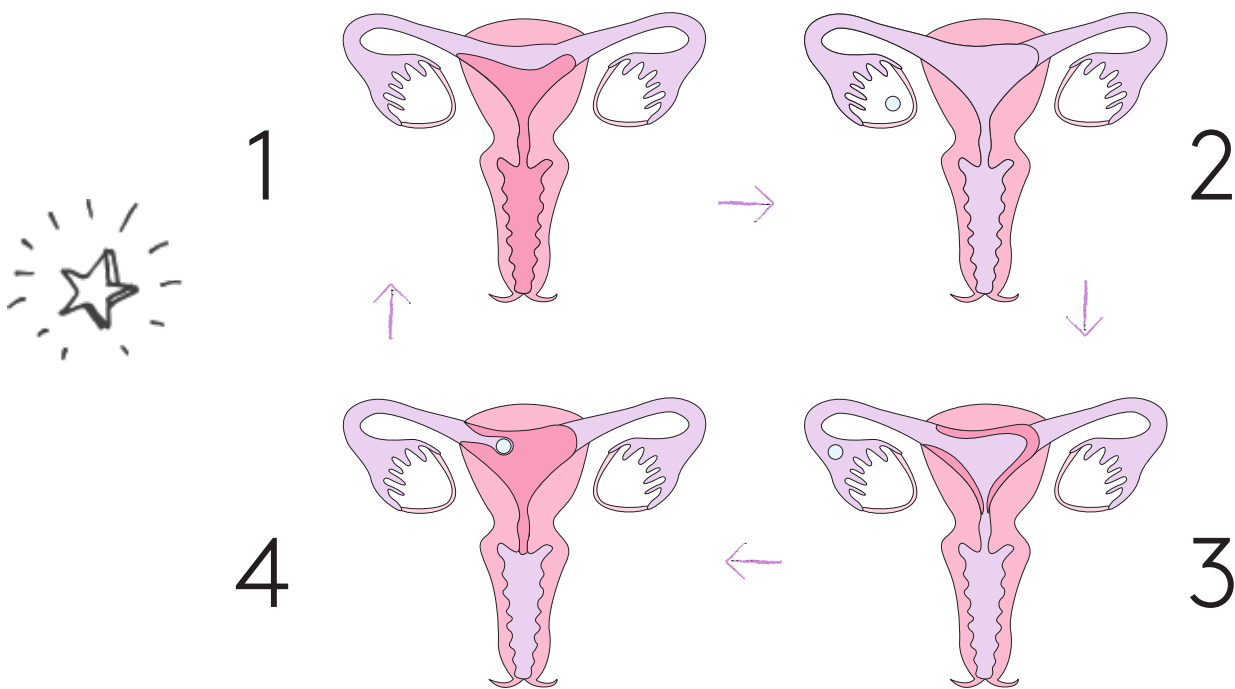
MENSTRUAL

The first day of your cycle is measured from the first day of your period. The thick lining of your uterus and the unfertilised egg are shed through the vagina as menstrual blood- your period. This phase can last between 2-7 days.

PHASE 2

FOLLICULAR

Your period finishes and a rise in oestrogen levels can cause smoother skin and bigger breasts as it prepares your body for pregnancy. In this phase an egg (ovum) ripens on an ovary and the lining of your uterus builds up.



PHASE 4

LUTEAL

The longest phase of your period. If an egg has been fertilised, it will travel to the uterus and embed itself in the lining to start growing. If not, the egg and the uterus lining will start to disintegrate. Sudden drops in oestrogen and progesterone may cause mood swings and you may experience cramps as your uterus contracts, ready for the menstrual phase again.

PHASE 3

OVULATION

This phase only lasts 24hrs with your oestrogen levels peaking and the egg (ovum) being released into the fallopian tube. The lining of your uterus continues to thicken and you may feel temporarily bloated during this phase, but this doesn't last.

Premenstrual stress

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Right before your period you may experience some symptoms of **premenstrual stress** (PMS), also known as **premenstrual tension** (PMT). **premenstrual stress** is caused by your hormones fluctuating and it is completely normal.



THE SYMPTOMS

Can you identify 10 symptoms of **premenstrual stress** from the list below?



DEPRESSION



EXCESS ENERGY



BLOATING



FOOD CRAVINGS



TIREDDNESS



DIARRHOEA



SORE BREASTS



WEIGHT GAIN



CRAMPS



IRRITABILITY



CONSTIPATION



UNCONTROLLABLE LAUGHTER

Nearly all girls will experience one or more of these symptoms at some stage. The good news is that most of them will be mild. If you feel as though the symptoms are more than you can cope with, talk to a trusted adult who can give you strategies to deal with each one.

COPING WITH PREMENSTRUAL STRESS

Discuss some coping strategies you can use when dealing with symptoms of premenstrual stress.







Picking your products

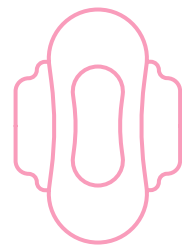


MANAGING YOUR PERIOD

Are you wondering how to stay comfortable during your period? There are different types of products to choose from to help manage your period. Some girls prefer to use just one, others use all three - read on to discover the right fit for you.

PADS

Most girls choose to start with pads. Made from absorbent materials, they draw in fluid to keep you dry and comfortable during your period. There are different pad options out there to suit everyone's needs.



SO HOW DO YOU FIND THE RIGHT PAD FOR YOU?



USING A PAD

Pads have a sticky back so that you can secure them to the crotch of your undies and know that they'll stay there; most come with 'wings' which wrap and stick to the underside of your underwear to help hold the pad in place.



Used pads should be disposed of properly in the bin, female bathrooms even have special sanitary bins in each cubicle that you can use.

Disposing of a used pad can sometimes be a bit tricky! That's why Libra came up with the Roll. Press. Go wrapper. Here's a simple trick you can try:

First, take out a clean pad and use the wrapper to roll up the used pad. Then press to seal the edges until you have a neat, little pack ready to be discreetly dropped in a bin that won't unravel.



In small groups or as a class explore the features of the Libra sample products that have been provided to you in the school resource kit.

Check out the whole range at lovelibra.com

Picking your products



LINERS

Liners are very handy to use to keep you feeling fresh everyday. They can be applied and disposed of just like pads.

Use liners when:

- You're expecting your period
- At the end of your period
- As a backup when using tampons
- Daily for everyday freshness
- During sport to absorb sweat



**Unless you tell someone, no one knows that you have your period!
Pads, tampons and liners stay hidden under your clothes - you'll
hardly notice they are there!**

TAMPONS

Tampons may seem scary at first but are comfortable when inserted properly. They can also be very handy, especially for activities such as swimming.



USING TAMPONS

Tampons are inserted into the vagina and absorb the lining as it sheds (your period). When using tampons for the first time, make sure you read the instructions carefully before you begin. It may take a few tries before you feel comfortable using them. Libra Girl tampons are perfect to start with. They are intended for first time users and are smaller in size compared to standard tampons. It is important to change your tampon every 4 hours and NEVER leave it in for more than 8 hours.



**Recommended for
first time users**

Toxic shock syndrome

TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME

Tampons are associated with toxic shock syndrome which is a very serious illness that, although extremely rare, can cause death. It's important to have a good understanding of what causes it, how you can recognise it, and how to reduce the risk.



WHAT CAUSES TSS?

Toxic shock syndrome is caused by a buildup of the bacteria staphylococcus aureus and has been connected with leaving tampons in for too long or forgetting to remove them.

DO TAMPONS CAUSE TSS?

The simple answer is no. Tampons do not carry the bacteria which cause TSS. However, tampon use has been associated with an increased risk of TSS.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Sudden high fever (39°C plus)
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Generally feeling unwell
- Headache and muscle pain
- Fainting and dizziness when standing up
- Sunburn-like rash

If you experience any of these symptoms while using tampons remove the tampon and head straight to the doctor or emergency room. It may not be TSS but if it is, early treatment can save your life.

YOUR CHECKLIST FOR REDUCING RISK

- ☐ Use a suitable absorbency for your flow - no more
- ☐ Change your tampon every 4 hours and NEVER leave it in for more than 8 hours
- ☐ **DO NOT** use tampons overnight
- ☐ Wash your hands well before inserting or removing a tampon
- ☐ Don't use a tampon if the wrapper has been damaged - it might be dirty

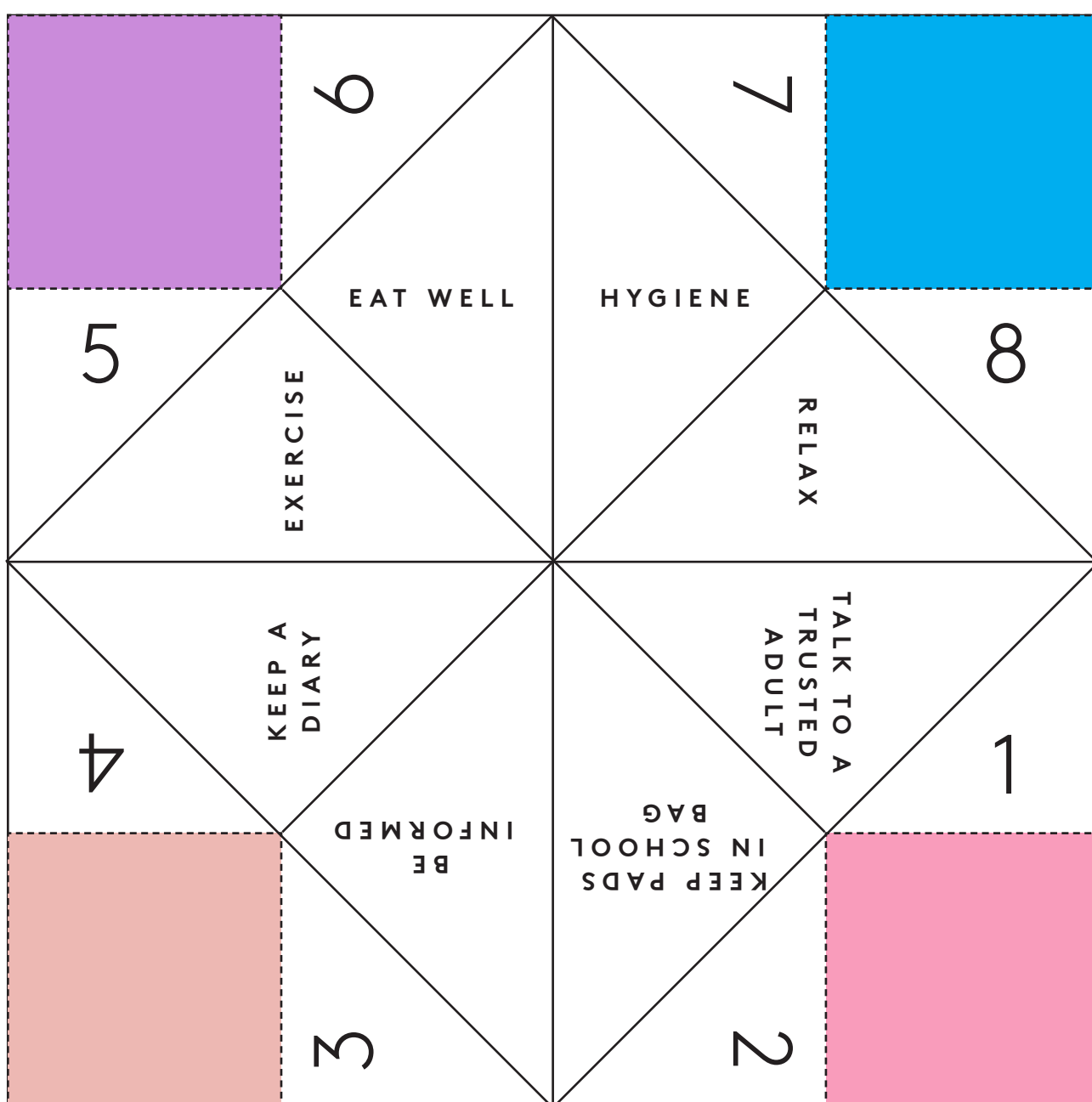


Taking care of you



BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Managing your period can sometimes be a pain, luckily there are lots of strategies you can use in order to take charge and not let your period get in the way. Cut out and create the chatterbox below; discuss each strategy that you uncover in small groups.



Find out more



WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

If you still have questions about your periods it's important to ask your mum or another trusted adult. You can also visit www.lovelibra.com/libra-girl/ for more information.

We've got you covered

We have a range of sample kits available for you for free! Order yours today through our website: www.lovelibra.com/libra-girl/

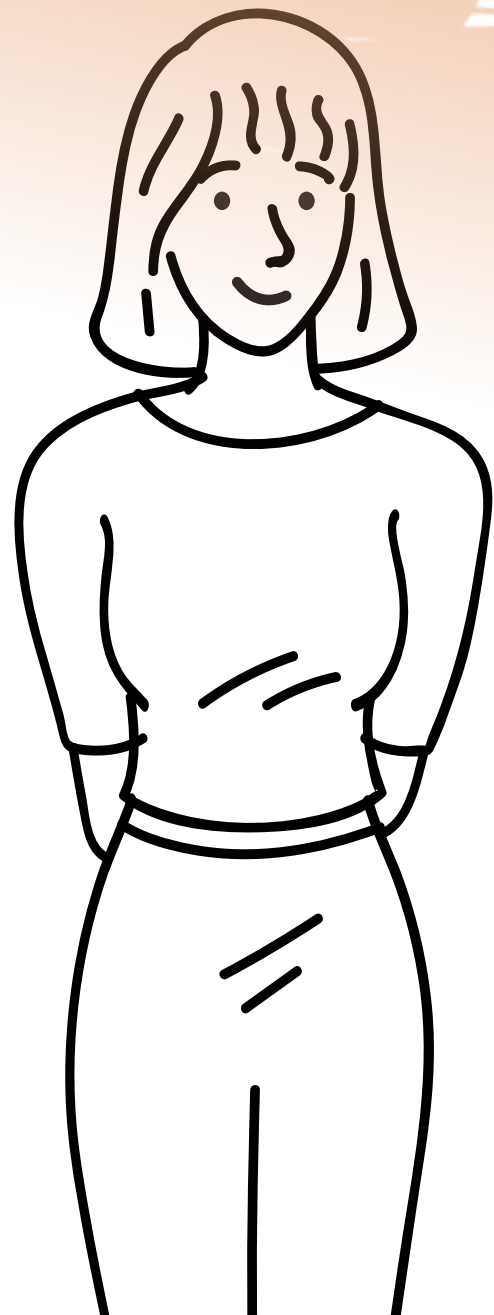
With over 40 years of experience, Libra has developed a range of period products with an emphasis on ultimate comfort and absorbency.

At Libra, we believe you should "period your way", whether that's running a marathon or curling up on the couch and we're here to support that by providing the right product for you. If you get your period, we've got you covered.

Check out the Libra range on our website www.lovelibra.com/au/products/



Libra® GIRL



Libra® GIRL