

Heavy periods



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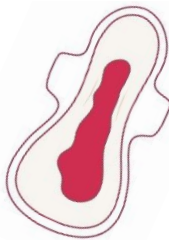
Having heavy periods is also called having heavy menstrual bleeding.

Heavy bleeding during your period can be very upsetting.

It is one of the most common reasons for people who have periods to see their doctor.

You may be experiencing a heavier than 'normal' period if you are:

- bleeding through your clothes
- passing large **clots** - a **clot** is a thick blob of blood, larger than a 10p
- having to change your period product more often
- having to use 2 different products at the same time
- having heavy periods every month that stop you doing everyday activities



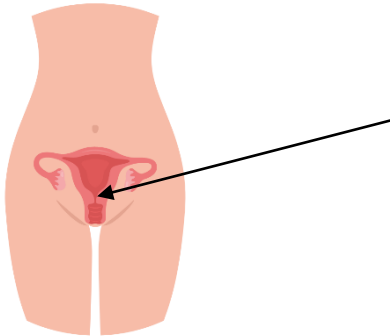
Speak to your doctor if:

- you have heavy periods
- you have heavier periods than you have before



The doctor can check if there is a health condition that might be causing your heavy periods.

When you see your doctor about heavy periods they will do a pelvic examination.



They will look at your vulva, vagina and **cervix** - the opening between the vagina and the womb.

As this is an intimate examination, the doctor who does it will have another person there.



You can ask for a female doctor to do the examination.

If there is not a female doctor available, you can ask if there is a female health professional who could do the examination.



Sometimes other tests might be needed.

Your doctor will discuss this with you and you can [ask questions](#).

It can be helpful to keep a note of:

- the dates your periods start and end
- your **symptoms**



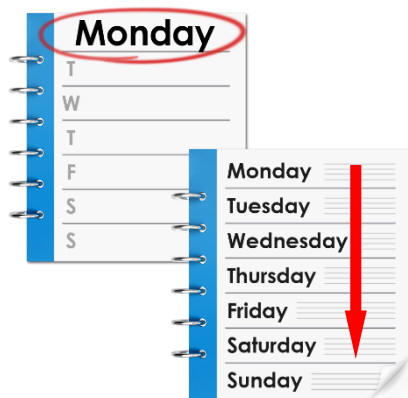
A **symptom** is a sign that you have an illness or health condition

You can keep a note of this information using a calendar, a diary or an app.

You can then discuss this with your doctor and ask questions.

If you are seeing your doctor there are some useful things to think about before your appointment like:

- the day your last period started
- how many days your period usually lasts



- what was the shortest time between your periods (from the first day of one period to the first day of the next)
- what was the longest time between your periods (from the first day of one period to the first day of the next)



- how often you need to change your period products on a heavy day



- if you are over 25, when you had your last **smear test**

A **smear test** checks the health of your **cervix**.

Treatment

Heavy periods do not always need to be treated, but if they do, treatments include:



- some types of contraception like an [intrauterine system](#) or the [contraceptive pill](#)
- medicine to help reduce the amount of menstrual bleeding



- painkillers like ibuprofen that you can buy from a chemist



- medicines from your doctor



Your doctor might recommend you have a blood test.

This can show if you have [iron deficiency anaemia](#) which can be caused by heavy periods.

Other health conditions

Heavy periods can be caused by another health condition including:



- [endometriosis](#)
- [pelvic inflammatory disease](#)
- [fibroids](#)
- [adenomyosis](#)
- [polycystic ovary syndrome](#)
- [an underactive thyroid](#)
- [an overactive thyroid](#)

If your doctor thinks that your heavy periods might be caused by another health condition, they may refer you for scans and tests.



This will help to confirm what your health condition is and decide on the best treatment.



It's ok to ask any questions about your care to help you get the information you might need.

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