

HAPPY CYCLES GUIDE

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Tips for Teens. Read with a trusted adult 

Having cycles and periods should be easy and pain-free. When our bodies and minds are in good health, we'll have easy cycles that don't cause discomfort. Eating super healthy and yummy food, getting lots of sleep and exercise, feeling joy, and taking time to slow down really helps us have good cycles. But nothing is perfect and sometimes we just need a little help. Here are some ideas for having happy, healthy cycles.

MOOD SWINGS

Stress can cause mood swings by stopping your body's ability to make happy hormones like progesterone. Letting yourself be quiet and do absolutely nothing each day really helps to reduce stress. What makes you feel good and relaxed? Cuddling a pet, taking a bath with essential oils, having a foot rub, or having alone time? There are lots of remedies that can help if you feel down, depressed, or moody during your cycle, such as:

Vitex, black cohosh, maca, St. John's wort, burdock, calcium, magnesium, B6, passionflower, evening primrose oil, and valerian.

Heads up: If you feel depressed, sad, and not interested in normal activities for many weeks in a row, let a trusted adult know and they can help you get the care you need. Everyone gets the blues, but it shouldn't take away your quality of life.

CRAMPS

Cramps thrive on junk food. Candy, fast food, and refined foods all help make certain chemicals that cause cramping in the uterus. Some teens have less period pain by not eating any dairy or gluten. Power yourself and your cycle with healthy, nourishing, and home-cooked meals whenever possible. Here are some awesome remedies to help prevent cramps:

Motherwort and crampbark herbs in tea or tincture, omega-3 essential fatty acids, and magnesium, zinc, and turmeric supplements.

Heads up: If you're in so much pain that you can't get up or walk, feel like you're going to throw up or pass out, or if you're just plain miserable, that's not normal and it might mean that something else is going on that needs medical attention.

SORE BREASTS

It's normal to have some soreness as breasts develop, and with every cycle as hormones shift around. Wearing tight bras or bras with wire can make it worse, so feel free to go without a bra or wear something soft and without wire. You can also take supplements such as the oils of evening primrose, borage, gooseberry, or black current seed. Massaging violet essential oil on sore breasts can also help. You can make your own breast balm or find one online (check on [etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com) or [holysponge.net](https://www.holysponge.net))

Heads up: Knowing the shape and feel of your own breasts is really helpful because you'll know what's normal for you, such as bumps, lump, and tender spots (which are all normal as our tissues change throughout the cycle and feel different), and when something might be off. It's very rare that teens will have a lump that is actually cause for concern. If you're hands-on with your breasts regularly, you'll probably notice if anything's weird.

HEAVY BLEEDING

Heavy bleeding can be a serious issue because it can lead to anemia, fainting, weakness, and feeling pretty horrible all around. Heavy bleeding is generally considered to mean soaking through a pad or tampon every 2 hours, with blood loss greater than 80 mL. There is no instant cure when heavy bleeding hits, but taking 200 mg of ibuprofen every 6 hours should reduce the flow significantly.

Capsicum (pronounced cap-SAY-some) and cayenne are trusty old remedies that also help to quickly stop heavy bleeding. To prevent heavy bleeding, make sure to get enough iron, which can be found in supplement form (iron bisglycinate is a good form to take). Some people find cutting out dairy products from their diet helps to reduce heavy bleeding. Ask a healthcare provider about turmeric, iron, capsicum, and DIM for heavy bleeding treatment.

BLOATING

Sometimes before your period comes you might feel like your stomach area is all full and funny feeling. This is known as bloating, or water retention. While it's not a sign that anything is wrong, it can feel uncomfortable. Luckily, it's fairly easy to treat. Try cutting back on salty foods, since these cause your body's cellular walls to stretch. Lots of natural remedies are found in foods, supplements, and herbs, such as dandelion root, ginkgo, yogurt, apple cider vinegar, parsley, potassium, magnesium, and many more.

IRREGULAR PERIODS

Have you ever gone 3 weeks between periods, and then 6 weeks? Or maybe 2 months? Annoying, right? The good news is that it is totally NORMAL AND EXPECTED for you to have irregular periods when you're a teen! That's because your body needs several years to learn how to do the hormonal dance well without missing a step. While it's expected that adults have fairly predictable cycles, what's expected for you is to have UNpredictable cycles. You can give your body some help with making cycles more regular by getting lots of good sleep, eating healthy foods, avoiding scented beauty products and smelly cleaning products (which mess with your hormones), and making sure you're getting enough relaxation and 

Heads up: If you work out a lot, make sure you eat enough. Lots of exercise and/or not getting enough calories can make your cycles wonky. If you only have a few periods per year, it might be a good idea to talk to a healthcare professional.

Check out these fabulous websites, products, and books for more ideas for happy, healthy cycles!

- HolySponge.net: Cramp balm, sea sponge tampons, cloth pads, and other goodies
- *The Period Repair Manual* by Lara Briden
- Etsy.com: Breast balm, cramp balm, cloth pads, and lots more for menstrual cycle wellness and care
- *Taking Care of Your "Girls": A Breast Health Guide for Girls, Teens, and In-Betweens* by Marisa Weiss, M.D.



DISCLAIMER: Hi there! I'm Caitlin and I'm the author of this guide. I'm a Certified Fertility Awareness Educator, which means I'm a teacher, not a healthcare professional. Please research the suggestions in this guide on your own to see what might be a good fit for you, and be sure to talk to an adult or your healthcare provider before starting any herbal or dietary supplements. And please remember that your body is strong, healthy, and awesome, and you're the person who's in charge of it. Cheers to you! ❤️