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Your menstrual cycle is part of your body's way of preparing for a possible pregnancy each month. Understanding how the process works is important, since you can use this information to help to either get pregnant or avoid getting pregnant, to better manage any menstrual symptoms you are experiencing, and understand when there might be a problem. Menstruation is the technical term for getting your period. About once a month, females who have gone through puberty will experience menstrual bleeding. This happens because the lining of the uterus has prepared itself for a possible pregnancy by becoming thicker and richer in blood vessels. If pregnancy does not occur, this thickened lining is shed, accompanied by bleeding. Bleeding usually lasts for 3–8 days. For most women, menstruation happens in a fairly regular, predictable pattern. The length of time from the first day of one period to the first day of the next period normally ranges from 21–35 days.

How does the menstrual cycle work?

The menstrual cycle includes several phases. The exact timing of the phases of the cycle is a little bit different for every woman and can change over time.

Cycle days (approximate)	Events of the menstrual cycle
	The first day of menstrual bleeding is considered Day 1 of the cycle.
Days 1–5	Your period can last anywhere from 3 to 8 days, but 5 days is average. Bleeding is usually heaviest on the first 2 days.

Days 6–14	Once the bleeding stops, the uterine lining (also called the endometrium) begins to prepare for the possibility of a pregnancy. The uterine lining becomes thicker and enriched in blood and nutrients.
Day 14–25	Somewhere around day 14, an egg is released from one of the ovaries and begins its journey down the fallopian tubes to the uterus. If sperm are present in the fallopian tube at this time, fertilization can occur. In this case the fertilized egg will travel to the uterus and attempt to implant in the uterine wall.
Days 25–28	If the egg was not fertilized or implantation does not occur, hormonal changes

signal the uterus to prepare to shed its lining, and the egg breaks down and is shed along with lining.

The cycle begins again on Day 1 menstrual bleeding.

CYCLIC CHANGES IN BREAST

The volumes and spin- lattice (T_1) relaxation times of breast tissues and parenchymal water content were measured non- invasively by magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) in eight healthy women during four to eight consecutive menstrual cycles. Total breast volume, and parenchymal volume, T_1 relaxation time and water content were lowest between days 6 and 15. Between days 16 and 28, parenchymal volume, T_1 relaxation time and water content rose sharply by 38·9%, 15·1% and 24·5%, respectively, and peaked after day 25. Within 5 days of the onset of menses, parenchymal volume fell sharply by 30·3%, while water content declined by 17·5%. Rising parenchymal volume in the second half of the menstrual cycle is not solely due to increased tissue water content and provides in vivo evidence for both growth and increased tissue fluid at this time.

CYCLIC CHANGES IN VIRGINIA

The vagina connects the vulva to the cervix

In a non–aroused state, the walls of the vagina are collapsed against each other

The vagina changes: during sex, throughout the menstrual cycle, and with age and different life stages

People often use the term vagina to refer to the entire female genital region between the legs—but this is incorrect.

Let's first start with correcting this terminology. The vulva is the correct name for the external parts of the female genitalia. This includes the glans clitoris, labia minora and majora, opening of the urethra and vagina (the introitus), and the surrounding tissue.

How the vagina changes with age

The vagina can change a lot throughout a person's life (1,5). An average adult vagina is slightly curved, and can range between 7 to 12 cm in length (1,3,4)—but every body is different, and there's no such thing as a too small or too large vagina.

The vagina is strongly influenced by hormonal changes throughout the body. During the reproductive years after menarche (the first menstrual period) and before menopause, more layers of tissue are present lining the vagina, due to stimulation from higher estrogen levels in the body

The vagina is also influenced by changing hormone levels during pregnancy

How the vagina changes during the menstrual cycle

The vagina also changes in response to hormonal fluctuations of the menstrual cycle. Around mid-cycle, when estrogen is highest, vaginal tissue becomes thicker and fuller

The cervix, at the top of the vagina, moves and changes shape throughout the cycle. Before and after the fertile window, the cervix is low and can be felt in the vagina, with a firm texture, and the hole in the center of the cervix is closed. During the fertile window, the hole in the cervix opens to facilitate the entrance of sperm into the uterus , the cervix rises higher in the vagina, and is softer when touched.

How the vagina changes during sex

The vagina can also undergo more rapid changes, such as during sexual activity. When a person with a vagina is sexually aroused, increased blood flow is directed towards the genitals, causing the vaginal tissue to become engorged with blood, and additional lubrication to be produced. This fluid is called arousal fluid.

During sexual excitement, the vagina expands by lengthening and widening in shape. This is called vaginal tenting and ballooning. This shape change happens as the uterus and cervix are drawn higher into the pelvis, which creates more space and moves the cervix farther away from any semen that is ejaculated into the vagina. This allows time for the semen to mix with

female genital fluids, stimulating the sperm to undergo the physical changes necessary for fertilizing an egg.

The vagina is an incredible organ which changes in response to hormones, life stages, and physical responses.