

How do I know if my period has really ended?

Once you know how long your average period lasts, you should expect it to end after the same number of days each time. Otherwise, wait until you no longer see any traces of blood or other substances. Some women notice a clear discharge, denoting the end of the menstrual flow. If you are not sure, ask a knowledgeable Muslim woman or a doctor to help you recognize when your menses has ended.

What if I have bleeding at times other than my normal period?

Vaginal bleeding that is considered non-menstrual is called *istihada*. Such non-menstrual bleeding is that which occurs any time that is not part of the normal period. In general, if your period lasts longer than usual (that is 10 days or more), you should make *ghusl* on the tenth day and perform *wudu* for each prayer thereafter. You may also resume fasting. Bleeding that occurs during the middle of one's cycle is also considered non-menstrual and therefore does not require that you stop performing the normal rituals. Bleeding during pregnancy (which is uncommon) is regarded as *istihada* so one should continue praying and fasting in this case as well. Persistent bleeding abnormalities may be a sign of an underlying medical problem and should be brought to the attention of your physician.



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Muslim Women's League

The Do's and Don'ts During Your Period

Since the body is releasing waste throughout the length of the period, it is impossible to try to purify one's self for prayer or any other type of worship. For this reason, Allah has commanded women not to perform certain rituals throughout the duration of their period, but they are expected to resume immediately after their period ends. This can be seen as a mercy from God toward women, as it recognizes the discomfort that menstruating women often feel. The following is a list of things that a menstruating Muslima may participate in:

- Dhikr (to recite the praises of Allah)
- Memorization of Quran only if this is done on a regular basis and she fears that stopping for the duration of her period may cause her to forget what she had learned
- Be intimate with her husband by hugging and kissing
- Perform the Hajj (Sahih Muslim)

During menstruation, it is not permissible to:

- Read the Quran as a form of worship
- Touch a copy of the Quran, unless it is a translated version or includes a translation
- Pray
- Fast
- Make Tawaf (circumambulate around the Kaaba) (Sahih Muslim)
- Sit in the portion of the mosque that is used only for prayer
- Have sexual intercourse with her husband

For more details on what is/isn't permissible during menstruation, seek more information from an imam or knowledgeable Muslim.

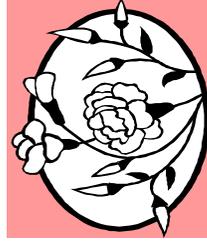
Preventing Your Period

Many Muslim women are interested in ways to delay their periods while on Hajj or during their weddings. There are no Islamic rulings that prohibit the manipulation of the menstrual cycle. Your period can be delayed by taking oral contraceptives (the pill) continuously, that is, by skipping the placebo pills at the end of each pill cycle and starting a new pack right away. In order for this to be successful, one needs to be on the pill for at least one month prior to the time period in question. Delaying one's period in such a manner is medically safe and does not result in any harm to the woman. Birth control pills are available by prescription under the supervision of a healthcare provider, who should be able to answer questions in this regard.

When Your Period Ends

When you are sure that your period has ended you must do *ghusl*, or take a full bath before you will be able to resume praying. In *ghusl*, every part of the body must be washed, including the hair and scalp. After doing *ghusl* you can continue praying and worshipping as usual. If you missed a prayer between the time your period ended and the time of your *ghusl*, you must make it up.

Menstruation



Islamic Guidelines for Women and Girls

Menstruation

What an amazing gift Allah has given women by allowing us to bear tiny human beings within our bodies. Just as amazing as this miraculous phenomenon is the intricate reproductive system He created to allow pregnancy to take place. Your body is constantly adjusting itself and going through several changes in order to prepare this system for a possible pregnancy. The most notable of these changes is menstruation.



Each month, your body goes through a series of changes lasting around 28 days, which make up the menstrual cycle. Menstruation is only a short part of this cycle in which the body releases blood and other substances from the vagina. Menstruation can also be referred to as menstrual period or simply, the period.

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The Menstrual Cycle

Each month, an egg gets released from one of the two ovaries. Once this takes place, certain hormones stimulate the development of the endometrium, which is a coat of nutrients that lines the wall of the uterus. If the woman were to become pregnant, the developing baby would receive its nourishment through this lining.

After ovulation, the egg waits to become fertilized by a sperm. If fertilization does not take place, the egg disintegrates, and the endometrial lining falls off of the uterus. It is now considered bodily waste and can be toxic if kept inside the body. Therefore, it passes out of the vagina in the form of blood and other substances. This constitutes your period.

The First Period: Menarche

For young girls and teens, waiting for the onset of the first menstrual period can cause much anxiety because they do not know what to expect. However, the more a girl knows about the upcoming changes that will be occurring in her body, the more prepared she will feel. Parents are encouraged to openly discuss with their children the changes that will take place during puberty to help alleviate the confusion that many adolescents experience at this age.

On average, a young female may start menarche (get her first period) between the ages of seven and thirteen, although there are many exceptions to this rule. Young women can expect that their periods will not come regularly for the first year or so, since their bodies are still going through several changes. An average period may last from one to ten days. While some may experience symptoms such as cramps and emotional changes, others may feel nothing. Since everyone's body is different, it can be expected that every girl's situation will be very different. However, if you feel that something may not be normal, ask your doctor about your concerns.

What should I use during my period?

There are many products in the market that can be used to absorb the menstrual flow and keep you comfortable and clean. A woman may either choose to use a pad, which is stuck inside the underwear, or a tampon, which is inserted inside the vaginal opening, depending on what is most comfortable for her. Both are safe and permissible to use in Islam.

Be sure to select the proper size and absorbency of the pad or tampon, and change it often to avoid accidents, foul odor, and the growth of bacteria. It is good to keep an extra pad or tampon available in case your period comes unexpectedly. This is especially important if your menstrual periods do not come regularly, or if you are awaiting your first period.

Menarche and Islam

In Islam, contrary to Western society, a female is treated as an adult at the onset of her first period, not at the age of eighteen. Once a girl gets her first period, she is accountable to Allah for all her deeds—both good and bad. Since Allah knows that she is capable and responsible at this age, she is expected to pray daily, fast, dress modestly in accordance to Islamic rules, and conduct herself in an Islamic manner. Furthermore, she should no longer be treated as a child by other adults and instead should be respected and treated as a young woman. That is the honor and right given to you by Allah.

PMS

Premenstrual syndrome is a condition that may occur before the onset of a woman's period, and it affects nearly 30-50% of teens and women of childbearing age. Its most common symptoms are irritability, anxiety, depression, breast tenderness, swelling, mood swings, and food cravings (especially for "junk food"). Menstrual cramps are not a symptom of PMS, but they may also occur before or during the onset of your period. Although doctors have not identified a definite cause and treatment for PMS, there are several measures women can take to minimize symptoms of this condition.

Aerobic exercise

Exercise for fifteen to twenty minutes a day for three to five days a week to reduce stress, improve circulation, and tone your body. Be sure to discuss your fitness program with a physician before you begin.

Nutrition

Some researchers feel that high-fat and high-sugar diets contribute to symptoms of PMS. Limit the amount of junk food you eat and reduce your intake of red meat. Decrease simple sugars, eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods. Caffeine, salt, and nicotine may also increase symptoms of PMS and therefore should be avoided.

Stress management

Remain patient and control your reactions to stressful situations. PMS or not, as Muslims we are always expected to avoid getting angry. Not only will keeping cool allow you to please Allah, it will also reduce the harmful effects of stress on your body.