



Menstruation and dyspraxia/DCD

We sometimes use the words "monthly cycle" to describe periods — but that can make it seem as if all periods happen like clockwork every 4 weeks! The truth is that different girls have different cycles.

A girl's monthly cycle is the number of days from the start of her period to the start of the next one. On average, it's 28 days. But cycle lengths vary — some girls have a 24-day cycle, some have a 34-day cycle. It's common for girls to skip periods or have periods come at different times, especially in the first few years after beginning menstruation. Other things that affect cycles include diet, stress, exercise, and, occasionally, illness.

So keep a calendar and get to know how your body works.

What Is PMS?

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is the term for the physical and emotional symptoms that many girls and women get right before their periods begin each month. If you have PMS, you might experience:

- acne
- bloating
- fatigue
- backaches
- sore breasts
- headaches
- constipation
- diarrhoea
- food cravings
- depression or feeling blue
- irritability
- mood swings

- difficulty concentrating
- difficulty handling stress
- feeling tense
- trouble sleeping

This is a useful link which looks at the hormonal effects on ADHD but may well be relevant in dyspraxia/DCD.

<http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/5245-3.html>

Managing pre-menstrual syndrome.

Diet

Remember that you can help to alleviate some symptoms by ensuring that you have a healthy diet. Avoid alcohol, eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and avoid processed foods.

Regular exercise.

Exercise is definitely good for overall wellbeing. Even a walk in the park can boost your mood so perhaps there is a walking group you can be part of. It can be difficult to access successful exercise regimes with any kind of disability but you may find some useful information here

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/get-active-with-a-disability-or-a-long-term-condition.aspx>

If exercise really isn't your thing perhaps something creative would suit.

Techniques to help to relieve stress.

Stress can be a difficult to thing to manage. It may be that having a get together with friends will boost your mood, or a gentle exercise class. For tips to manage stress and anxiety see:-

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress/>

Sanitary products.

There is quite an array of different sanitary products and really you need to experiment a bit to see what suits you best.

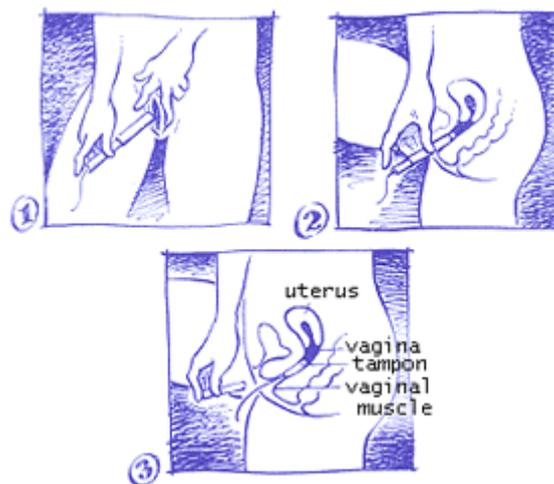
Tampons.

When you are first trying a tampon, purchase a slender design. It may also be useful to wait until your menstrual flow is moderate to heavy as it will allow the tampon to glide in. Wash your hands before you begin and don't have long or jagged finger nails that might do damage.

Stand or sit in a comfy position. Some people like to squat, others to sit on the toilet with their legs splayed apart, other to raise one leg. Find what works for you.

Make sure the string of the tampon is pointing away from you and insert the tampon. You should insert at an angle and not be able to feel the tampon if it is inserted correctly.

You may find a little lubrication (such as KY jelly) is useful.



(youngwomanshealth.org)

Change the tampon at least every 4-6 hours to avoid TSS (Toxic Shock Syndrome) which is an uncommon condition caused by a build-up of bacteria. You may find applying a panty liner is a good idea until you get used to how your body functions, just to avoid embarrassing accidents.

Choose the correct tampon. There is no need to use those for heavy flow when you are experiencing lighter days.

Video here <http://www.newhealthadvisor.com/How-to-Put-In-a-Tampon.html>

Re usable menstrual cups.

Some ladies find these a very effective and satisfactory alternative to tampons. Like a little half-moon shaped cup that are folded and inserted into the vagina where they sit under the cervix and catch the flow rather than absorb it. They can be removed easily with a little pull tab, rinsed and reused. They come in two sizes generally and can often be left in place for up to 12 hrs. They are not linked to toxic shock syndrome.

You can watch a video here:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TR0d8gCq2so>

Pads.

Super, slender, overnight, with or without wings, deodorant, maxi, mini . . . pads may seem a bit confusing at first because there are so many different kinds. But the good news is that with all these choices, there's bound to be one that works for you.

There are reusable (washable) pads but these may not be the right choice as they require frequent washing.

Change your pad frequently (at least every 3-4 hrs) to eliminate any unpleasant odours.

Notes.

Try a variety of products to discover the best thing for you.

Talk to a trusted friend, family member (perhaps the nurse at your GP surgery). Try not to be embarrassed as this is something common to women.

- Make a note on a calendar when your period is due so that you are not taken by surprise.
- Red paper clip reminder- you may find it useful to attach a clip to your handbag a couple of days before your period is due to remind you to put some sanitary towels or tampons into your bag.
- Pack a small wash bag with products ready so that you are not caught short at the beginning of a busy day. It also enables you to have your products discreetly packed away.
- Dark underwear may be useful as it will not show stains and a pair of black shorts to wear at night time might be a consideration.

- Whatever product you choose to use remember that practice makes perfect, so try things when you are period free.
- Stick-on pads may be easier to manage than tampons (but pads with wings can be trickier!).
- Some girls prefer to 'be prepared' and carry with them some clean pants with pads already attached. They then change their whole pants, putting soiled ones into a discrete bag to take home. This is a good strategy if you get anxious about changing sanitary wear in public toilets.
- Set a timer on your phone if you are likely to forget to change your product.
- Have some wet wipes handy
- Pain relief and a hot water bottle or heat pad might be useful if you suffer pain.
- Be aware that your mood may be changeable.
- Keep clean - a nice hot shower can be comforting as well as hygienic.
- Remember that you can still get pregnant if you practice intercourse during a period.

Further information available from:

Dyspraxia Foundation, 8 West Alley Hitchin Herts SG5 1EG

Helpline Tel: 01462 454986

Admin Tel: 01462 455016

Fax: 01462 455052

Web: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

© Dyspraxia Foundation

Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of items in DF Fact Sheets, however users are urged to check independently on matters of specific interest. The Dyspraxia Foundation encourages the reproduction and distribution of this fact sheet. If portions of the text are cited, appropriate reference must be made. Fact sheets may not be reprinted for the purpose of resale.