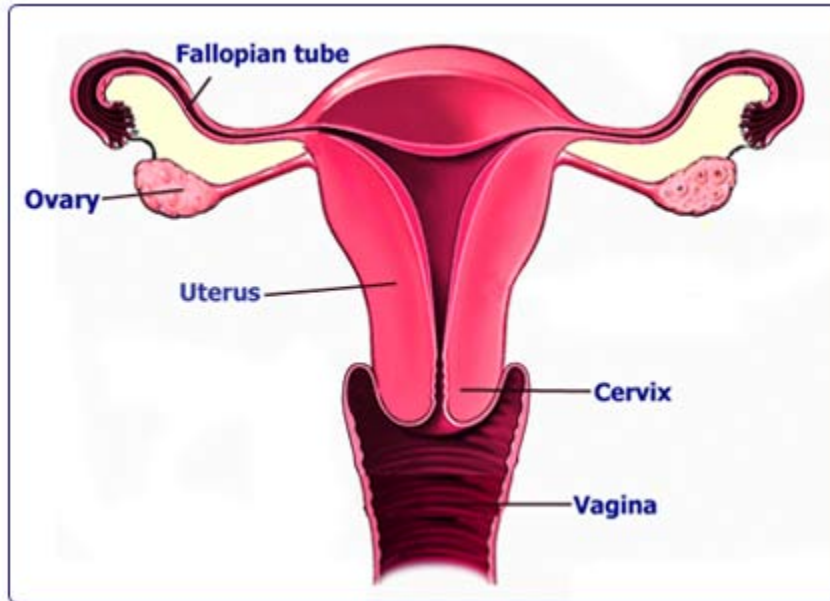


The female reproductive system



Menstruation

A **period** is the common name for **menstrual (monthly) period**. The **onset of menstruation** is known as **menarche**. The last menstrual period is commonly abbreviated in doctor's notes: **LMP 2/52 ago** means the last menstrual period was two weeks ago. The **menstrual cycle**, or length and frequency of periods, is usually written in the form 4/28, which means lasting 4 days and occurring every 28 days. If a period lasts more than four or five days it can be described as **prolonged**. The term **heavy periods** means excessive blood loss – menorrhagia, often with the **passage of clots** – coagulated blood. The term **period pains** means dysmenorrhoea, or painful menstruation.

The time when a woman stops menstruating, normally at about the age of 50, is called the **menopause** or **climacteric**. In everyday English it is known as the change of life, or simply **the change**. Symptoms of the menopause include **hot flashes** – sudden sensation of heat – and **night sweats**.

A gynaecological consultation

A gynaecologist is talking to a 30-year-old woman.

Gynaecologist:

Are your periods **regular**?
 How often do you **get** them?
 How old were you when you started to get them?
 When was your **last period**?
 How long do the periods last usually?
 Would you say they are **light** or **heavy**?
 Do you **get clots**?
 Do you get **period pains**?
 Is there any **discharge** between the periods?
 What colour is it?

Patient:

Yes.
 Every four weeks.
 About 12.
 A week ago.
 4 or 5 days.
 Light.
 No.
 Not really.
 A little.
 White.

Contraception

For women, methods to prevent pregnancy include the **oral contraceptive pill** (known as **the Pill**), the **diaphragm**, and the **intrauterine device (IUD)** or **copper coil**. **Condoms** are available for both men and women.

Write a simple English phrase for each of the medical terms below using your medical knowledge.

- 1 hysterectomy
- 2 menorrhagia
- 3 salpingitis
- 4 cervical biopsy

Read the conversation between the gynaecologist and the patient from the above text, and complete the notes about the patient:

menarche:
 menstrual cycle:
 LMP:
 menorrhagia?
 dysmenorrhoea?
 discharge?

Now note the questions that the doctor asked.

menarche:
 menstrual cycle:
 LMP:
 menorrhagia?
 dysmenorrhoea?
 discharge?

Complete the case report. One word is needed twice.

Case 15

A 45-year-old woman had been having (1) _____ periods lasting for 8 days, with the passage of (2) _____, for 9 months. There was no bleeding between (3) _____ or after intercourse. Her (4) _____ were not particularly painful. She had not noticed any hot (5) _____ or night sweats, and her general health had always been good. She had taken the (6) _____ contraceptive (7) _____ until a year previously, when a copper (8) _____ was fitted. She had had a normal pregnancy when she was 25.

Express your idea.

What is the attitude to contraception in your country? At what age do you think females should be prescribed contraceptives?