

Irregular Period

Case: F/35, White, Irregular periods with tiredness

Doctor: Okay, Mrs. Garrison, what brought you here today?

Client: I have a problem with my monthly period.

Doctor: When was the last period?

Client: Three months ago.

Doctor: Was it regular before?

Client: Yeah, the interval is usually every 28 days.

Doctor: Do you consider the possibility of pregnancy?

Client: Yes, I'm open to that possibility.

Doctor: Okay, once you have a period, how long does it last? Any changes?

Client: It lasts longer than before, approximately 7 days.

Doctor: How many pads or tampons do you use?

Client: I usually use 3-4 pads in a day but I've noticed more amount than before.

Doctor: When did you have your first menstrual period?

Client: When I was 11 years old.

Doctor: Can you describe any feelings of discomfort during menstruation?

Client: I usually have low abdominal cramping pain.

Doctor: Do you have any other symptoms? Fever? Chills? Night sweats? Weight changes? Fatigue? Cold tolerance?

Client: I have gained weight and I have fatigue too.

Doctor: How many pounds did you gain? And over what period of time?

Client: I gained ten pounds for three months.

Doctor: Okay, do you have headache? Dizziness? Visual changes? Cough? Runny nose? Sore throat? Voice changes?

Client: No doctor.

Doctor: Do you have shortness of breath? Chest pain? Palpitation? Nipple discharge?

Client: No.

Doctor: What about nausea and vomiting? Belly pain? Diarrhea? Constipation? Bloody stools?

Client: No.

Doctor: What about pain in urination? Urinary incontinence? Frequent urination?

Client: No, not at all.

Doctor: Any skin changes? Hair changes? Hot flushes? Vaginal dryness or itching?

Client: No doctor.

Test Your Knowledge

- What are the factors affecting irregular monthly period?
- What's the possible condition if the woman has absence of menstruation?

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Doctor: Have you ever been pregnant? If so how many times?

Client: I got pregnant twice.

Doctor: Have you ever had miscarriages or abortions? How many times?

Client: None at all.

Doctor: Any complications during pregnancy or delivery?

Client: I have never experienced those.

Doctor: Are you taking oral pills?

Client: No doctor.

Doctor: Have you ever had a pap smear? When was the last time? What was the result?

Client: Yes, that was two months ago and the result was negative for abnormality.

Doctor: Do you know when your mother had a menopause?

Client: 53 years old.

Doctor: Are you taking any medications?

Client: Milk of Magnesia.

Doctor: Do you have any allergies?

Client: I am allergic with sea foods.

Doctor: Do you have any other medical problem? High blood pressure? Diabetes?

Client: No doctor.

Doctor: What about psychiatric problem? Thyroid gland problem?

Client: No doctor.

Doctor: Have you ever been hospitalized?

Client: Yes, when I delivered my baby one year ago.

Doctor: Any surgeries before? Any trauma recently?

Client: No doctor.

Test Your Knowledge:

- What is the possible condition that the doctor is trying to figure out in the above assessment?
- Why is it important to ask about taking oral pill?

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Doctor: Now, I'd like to ask you some personal questions which can be helpful to figure this out. Is this okay with you?

Client: Yes doctor.

Doctor: Thank you. Is there anybody in your family having any medical problem? High blood pressure? Diabetes? Cancer?

Client: No doctor.

Doctor: Mrs. Garrison, what type of work do you do?

Client: I'm a part-time receptionist.

Doctor: Is it a stressful job?

Client: Not so stressful.

Doctor: Do you drink? Do you smoke? Do you use any illegal drugs?

Client: I only smoke one pack per day for ten years.

Doctor: Okay, do you exercise?

Client: Yes, three times a week.

Doctor: Now, I'd like to ask you about your sexual life. I know this is very private. But sometimes this can give us a big hint. Do you mind?

Client: No doctor.

Doctor: Thank you. Are you sexually active?

Client: Yes, with my husband.

Doctor: Thank you for answering all these questions. Is there anything that I miss out here? Or anything else that you think I'd better know?

Client: None doctor.

Doctor: Mrs. Garrison, there are some reasons why you are having irregular periods. It could be related with hormonal imbalance, reproductive organ problems or even early menopause, even if there are very low chances in your age group. So I'll run some tests, including pregnancy test, some blood work and even breast exam. And you might have ultrasound later. Is everything clear to you so far?

Client: Yes doctor.

Doctor: Good. It was very nice meeting you, Mrs. Garrison. The nurse outside will help you get those tests done and make the next appointment with me. See you next time.

Test Your Knowledge

- What advice can you give to the patient?
- Is the type of work can put the patient's health at risk?