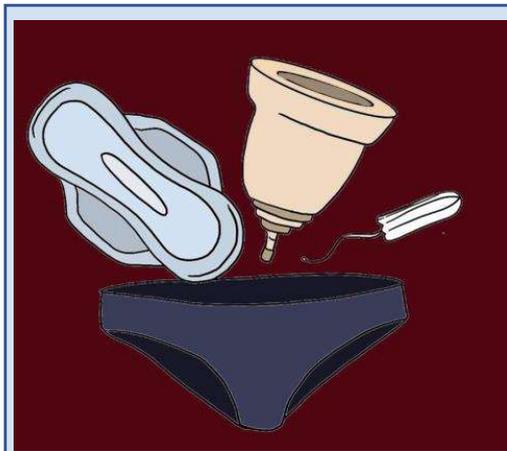


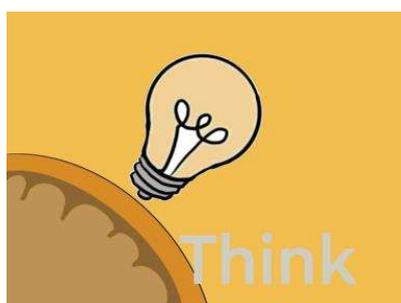
# Periods/Menstruation



Having periods, or menstruating, usually starts during puberty, which may be any time between 8 and 15 years old. Each girl's body has its own schedule. A period is when blood and tissue from your uterus comes out of your vagina. The first thing you may notice is some blood in your underwear. Most women and girls have their period once every 28 days or so, but this can vary.



Some autistic women and girls may find the sight, smell or sensation of blood uncomfortable, while others may not notice it at all. It is important to take into account the person's individual sensory profile when talking about her experience of having her period. Hormonal changes during menstruation may also affect how the person responds to the sensory experience of having her period, how she feels and how she is able to communicate her needs and feelings.



For an autistic woman or girl, her sensory processing will affect how she experiences emotion, pain and hormonal changes associated with her period. Instead of standard sanitary products (tampons and sanitary towels, pads and liners), she may find period pants work well for her because they do the same job but look and feel like normal pants and can be worn for most of the day.



It's a good idea to develop a routine for managing our periods so that we make time for self-regulation, changing our sanitary protection or period pants, taking pain relief and so on. Learning what's "normal for me" during our period means we have a better chance of noticing when something changes or is different. That way, we can seek help or more information if we need to.