



Title: Menstruation

Level: SECOND

Links to Curriculum for Excellence

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
I recognise that how my body changes can affect how I feel about myself and how I may behave. HWB 2-47a I can describe the physical and emotional changes during puberty, understand why they are taking place and the importance of personal hygiene. HWB 2-48a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes the physical and emotional changes during puberty including erections, wet dreams, pubic hair, masturbation, menstruation, hormones, mood swings.

Learning intentions

- Children learn the correct names for parts of their body, including male and female genitalia, and their functions.
- Children recognise that body changes with puberty impact on feelings and behaviour.
- Children understand the importance of personal hygiene.

Success criteria

- I can name parts of my body.
- I can talk about the different parts of my body and what they do.
- I can describe the changes that take place with puberty.
- I understand how to maintain personal hygiene.

Resources to support this activity

- PowerPoint Slides
- True or False activity (from Hey Girls)
- Menstruation what to expect (duration 3 minutes 18) by amaze.org <https://youtu.be/DBe7-PHRav8>
- Period hygiene: Tampons, Pads and Menstrual Cups (duration 2 minutes 9) by amaze.org <https://youtu.be/kmWbOC8Fbb0>
- Pads and tampons – enough for one of each per pupil. Take them out of the packaging so they are not branded. It is best to ensure a variety of brands, a mix of wings /no wings, day /night, different absorbencies, applicator / non-applicator
- Some ‘blood’ (black currant squash, or tomato juice) plus one beaker or measuring jug per group. Scissors.
- [If possible] one menstrual cup, one reusable pad, and one pair of period pants

Whenever you use content on a platform like YouTube please cue the film you intend to play in advance, check it is the film you want to view, and skip adverts.

NOTE: This activity consolidates and builds on learning from the earlier Second Level work under the topic My Body. It is important for all pupils to understand menstruation regardless of gender. Modelling positive conversations about this natural process can help dismantle the stigma around periods, and reduce teasing. **Learning about menstruation can be revisited and further enhanced by using the resources produced by Hey Girls** who have created free resources, lesson plans and supporting material all available here: <https://www.heygirls.co.uk/education/schools/>

Activity

1. **Introduce the session** as being about how the female bodies change as children grow up. Acknowledge that children have heard about periods in previous lessons, but today you will be discussing them in detail. Use the slide to clarify that children are talking about having periods, also called menstruation. Perhaps the children would like to share what they remember learning previously.
2. **Watch the film** *Menstruation: What to expect* (duration 3 minutes 18) <https://youtu.be/DBe7PHRav8> and chat about any questions that come up.
3. **Period hygiene.** Move on to think more about period hygiene. Watch *Period hygiene: Tampons, Pads and Menstrual Cups* (duration 2 minutes 9) <https://youtu.be/kmWbOC8Fbb0> and chat about any questions that come up.
4. **Period products.** Explain to pupils that the rest of the lesson will be spent exploring the products people use on their period. Explain that everyone uses the products that work best for them. There is no right or wrong. Most young people start by using pads, and are unlikely to start using tampons or menstrual cups until later on. However, it is important for pupils to know these options exist. To start, at the front of the group/class demonstrate how pads and tampons work.
5. Hand out pads and a tampons – it is best if the children can see a variety of products, so ensure that each small group has a mix of brands, shapes and sizes, applicators and non-applicators. Give each group a beaker with black current squash / tomato juice or alternative red liquid. Allow pupils to make a mess exploring how products work. Encourage them to unroll tampons and cut open the pads (wet and dry) to see how they work, before cleaning up.
6. If possible, explain reusable period products, and pass around samples of both a menstrual cup and a reusable cloth pad. Explain how they work, and that children may choose to use these in future. Encourage discussion about the potential pros and cons of different products – including ease of use, cost, environmental sustainability etc.
7. **Play a game of True or False.** The 12 statements are on the slides (and at the end of this activity plan) and explore learning so far. Do this as a full class, perhaps children can discuss each statement with a shoulder-partner for a short time before the response is given. This activity ©Hey Girls CIC 2019. Reproduced with kind permission of the owner.
8. **Use the final slides to highlight two important factors:**

- Toxic Shock Syndrome is a rare but serious illness that you can get if you leave a tampon in for a long time. Always use the lightest absorbency for your flow and change tampons every 4-6 hours (maximum 8 hours). If you have a fever and think you might have toxic shock, go to the doctor
- Never flush period products down the toilet. Always put them in a bin

When explaining, using the lightest absorbency means finding the tampon that offers the right absorbency for your flow, rather than the longer absorbency. This is because keeping a tampon in place for too long a period of time risks toxic shock syndrome.

9. **Free products.** Remind the children that all schools are now providing free period products as part of the Scottish Government's provision of sanitary products policy. Explain to children where they can access these at school.
10. **Leave time for questions.** Perhaps set up a question box, or organising a smaller session with groups of girls later on if you feel creating a space for discussion would help.

Connecting with home

The text below could be used to communicate with home about this activity,

The children have previously worked on the topic of **my body**, learning about how their body changes with puberty. To help the children revisit and build on learning about periods/menstruation we will be talking again about the topic. We will be looking at the products people use on their period. If you would like to help your child continue their learning at home, you may find the following books and websites useful.

This is a good article to read yourself or with your child: <http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/puberty.html>

The local library should be able to get these books for you:

- Usborne Facts of Life: Growing Up ISBN-10: 0746031424
- What's Happening to Me (Girls Edition) Facts of Life (Usborne ISBN-10: 0746069952) also available digitally ISBN-10: 0746069952
- What's Happening to Me (Boys) Facts of Life (Usborne ISBN-10: 0746076630)

More information:

- About period pants: <https://www.netdoctor.co.uk/healthy-living/a26337163/period-pants/>
- About menstrual cups: <https://www.netdoctor.co.uk/healthy-living/a28492238/menstrual-cups/>
- What tampon absorbency ratings mean: <https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-do-tampon-absorbency-ratings-mean-2721890>

TRUE OR FALSE Activity (on PowerPoint slides):

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1. A period is when someone pees blood. FALSE: period blood does not come from the urethra (pee tube). It is part of a separate bodily system and comes from the womb, leaving the body through vagina.
2. A period is when someone loses a lot of blood each month. FALSE: the average blood loss is around 1-2 egg cups full, but it can look like more. If someone is losing a lot of blood, they should see their doctor.
3. A period is the name for shedding the lining of the womb. TRUE
4. A period always comes every 28 days. COULD BE TRUE OR FALSE: the average cycle is around 25-35 days – it will be different for everyone.
5. The start of a period is Day 1 of the menstrual cycle. TRUE
6. A period is made up of blood alone. FALSE: period blood is a mixture of tissue, blood & mucus.
7. A period always lasts for 5 days. FALSE: period length varies from person to person, it normally lasts between 3-7 days
8. You can hold in a period like you can hold in a wee. FALSE: the muscles in the vagina are not like the muscles in the urethra, you cannot stop or start period flow at will, it just drips out. This is why period products are used.
9. Period flow is always bright red COULD BE TRUE OR FALSE: Period flow can vary in colour from brown to bright or very dark red. It may depend on the day of your cycle.
10. Most people with a female body have periods between the ages of around 12-55. TRUE: there is variation in ages, but most biological females will have regular periods between these ages.
11. Periods are natural and a normal part of growing up for anyone with a female body TRUE
12. All period products are thrown away after use FALSE: some period products are disposable (used once and thrown away) and some are reusable (used, washed and used again many times).