

# PERIODS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



A period is a normal process that results in changes in your body and can affect how you feel which may impact your performance on the field, in training or your recovery.

By understanding your period, you can – with the help of coaches, physios, and support networks – make informed decisions about training, nutrition, and self-care to support your own health, wellbeing and performance.

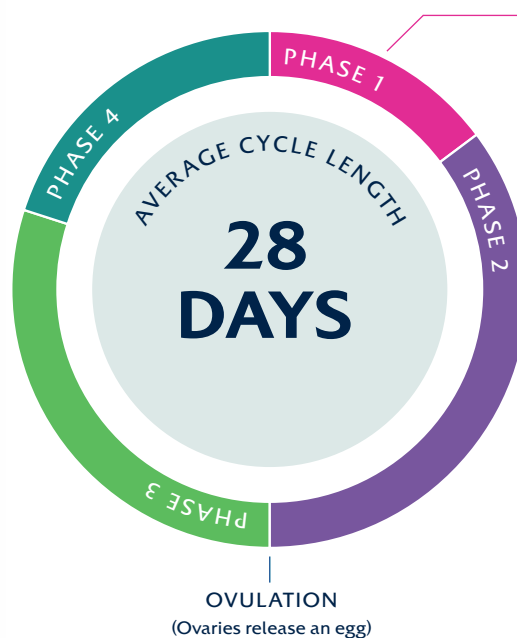
### WHAT'S NORMAL AND WHAT'S NOT?

Menstruation is a normal physiological process where **hormonal changes** trigger the shedding of the uterine lining, resulting in the flow of blood and tissue from the cervix through the vagina.

Most females have their first period between the age of **9 and 14**.

#### CYCLE LENGTH

The average menstrual cycle is around **28 days**, with **21-35 days** considered normal.



#### PERIOD LENGTH

A typical period lasts about five days but can vary between **2-7 days**.

#### BLEEDING AMOUNT

Using **3 to 6** 'regular' pads or tampons daily is normal. Excessive bleeding includes changing products every **1-2 hours**, frequent leaking, or passing clots larger than approximately 2.5cm.

If your cycle length, period length or bleeding amount is **outside of what is 'normal'**, you should discuss this with a health professional.

### HOW DOES THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE AFFECT GAME PERFORMANCE?



**83% – 93%** of female rugby players report period or menstruation-related symptoms.



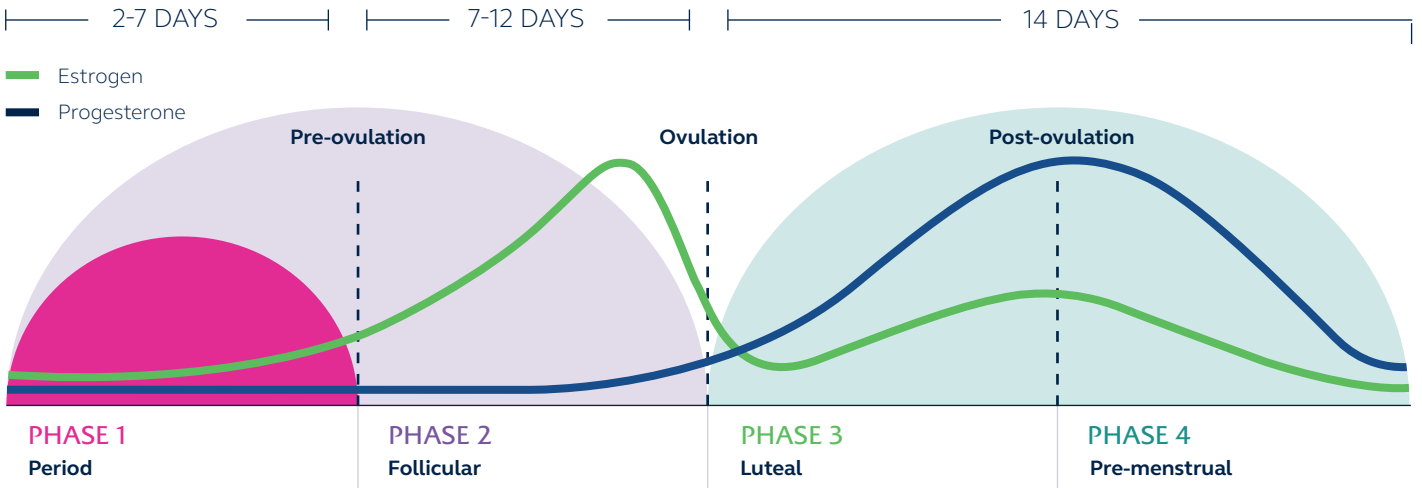
Between **40% – 85%** of athletes say that these symptoms can negatively affect their training or competition performance in some way.



Athletes have said that the **biggest negative impact** is usually felt in the days leading up to their period and the first few days of their menstrual cycle.

# LIFESTYLE ADVICE AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

AVERAGE CYCLE LENGTH 28 DAYS



## COMMON SYMPTOMS YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE

Everyone's menstrual cycle is different, and symptoms and management strategies will vary from person to person. It is good to track your cycle and symptoms to get to know what is normal for you. If you have any changes to your cycle, start missing periods or have any concerns, please seek help from a medical professional.



During **Phase 1** you may:

- have pain
- stomach issues
- experience tiredness



During **Phase 2** you may:

- feel more confident
- be more motivated
- experience ovulation pains



During **Phase 3** you may:

- feel hotter
- have an increased appetite
- weigh slightly heavier



During **Phase 4** you may:

- have headaches
- have breast swelling and tenderness
- feel irritable and anxious
- have constipation

## WHAT YOU CAN DO



If you have these symptoms you can:

- stay hydrated
- avoid caffeine, alcohol, processed food and sugar
- use heat packs
- take anti-inflammatories if appropriate



If you have these symptoms you can:

- use pain relief
- enjoy and make the most out of when you are feeling confident
- light aerobic exercise or gentle stretching may help with ovulation pains



If you have these symptoms you can:

- have cooling strategies when training in hot environments
- be mindful of how your menstrual cycle might impact you before judging yourself for changes in mood or weight
- consider talking to a nutritionist if you notice changes in appetite



If you have these symptoms you can:

- practice relaxation techniques
- hydrate and add fibre in your diet
- avoid processed food
- eat foods that are anti-inflammatory and high in antioxidants

Medication should always be used under the guidance of a registered health professional, and in accordance with applicable anti-doping regulations.



Find out more at  
[world.rugby/womens-health](https://world.rugby/womens-health)



PLAYER WELFARE RESOURCE | PERIODS

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