

# The Menstrual Story

Preparing for a guest 🛏



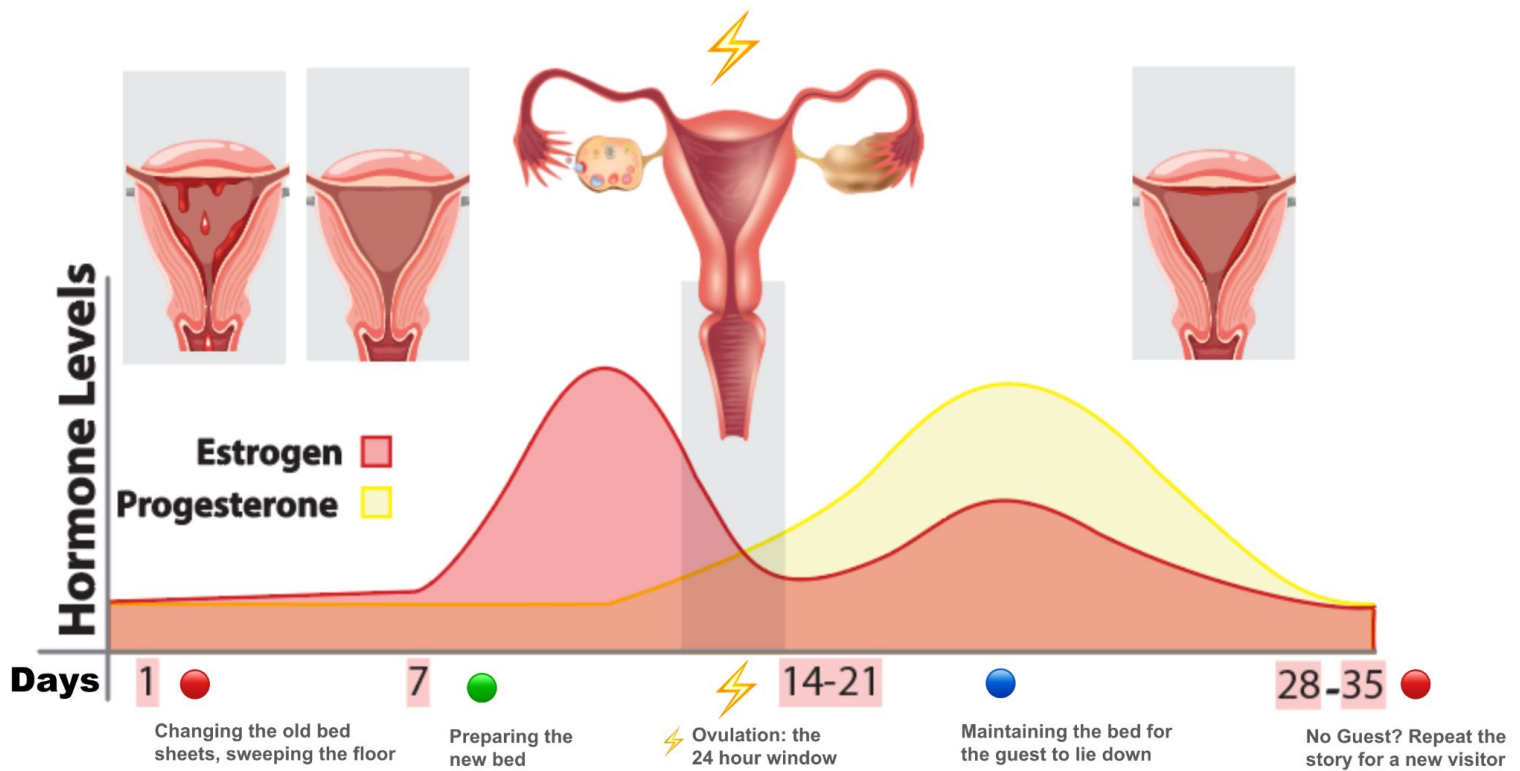
## Preparing for a guest

Think of the **womb lining** like a **guest room** being prepared for a **special visitor**.

Let's imagine you are expecting an **overnight guest** at your home. What do you do before they arrive?

First, you **clean the room**, making sure to **remove all the dust**. Then, you set up a **comfortable bed** - but not just the mattress. You also add **fresh, clean sheets** to make the space inviting.

Just like this, the **body prepares the womb** each month. It clears out the old lining, **creates a fresh, clean space**, and gets everything ready—just in case a “special visitor” (a pregnancy) arrives.



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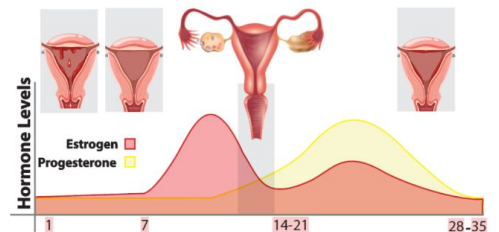
## The Role of Hormones in the Menstrual Cycle

How does the body **know** when to prepare for a special visitor? This happens automatically, thanks to **hormones** released by a small gland in the brain called the **pituitary gland**.

In this image, you can see **two key hormones - Estrogen and Progesterone** - rising and falling at different times. Just like flipping a **light switch**, these hormones **signal the body** to perform specific tasks throughout the cycle.

### Two Hormones That Regulate the Cycle:

- **Estrogen** – Prepares the womb’s lining (like putting fresh sheets on a bed).
- **Progesterone** – Maintains the lining in case a pregnancy occurs.



Think of these hormones like **two sisters working together** - one is **making or preparing the bed**, while the other **keeps it ready**. When hormones both go down, this signals to the body to start all over ... change the bed sheets, or in this story, the womb’s lining, to make ready the guest room again for a potential visitor.

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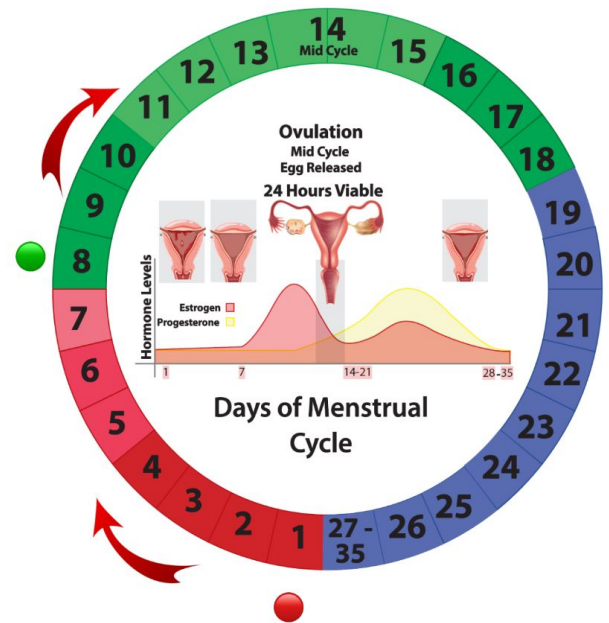
# How Hormones Work in the Menstrual Cycle

## ● Days 1-7: MENSTRUAL PHASE

- Both hormones are **very low**, signaling the body to **shed the old lining**—this is the **menstrual period** (changing the “sheets” of the bed).

## ● Day 8 Onward: GROWTH PHASE

- ■ **Estrogen starts to rise**, telling the body, “It’s time to set up a fresh bed!”
- The **uterine lining begins to rebuild**, and the **developing follicle (ripening egg)** moves toward the surface of the ovary.



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# How Hormones Work in the Menstrual Cycle

## ⚡ OVULATION (Day 14 or Mid-Cycle):

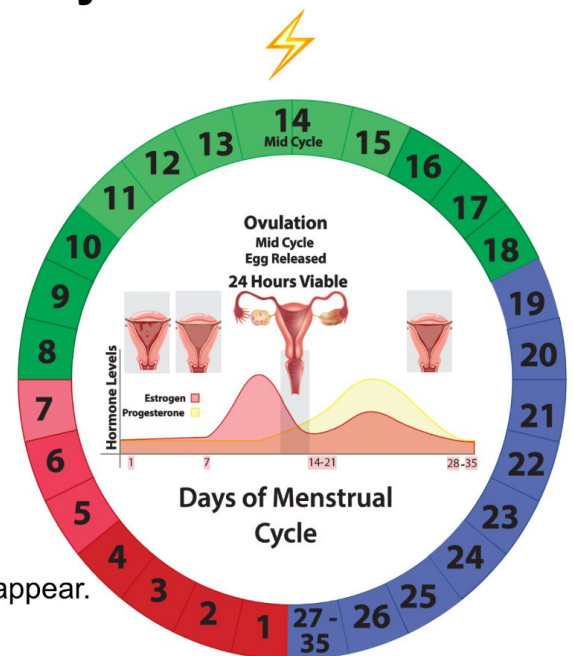
- ■ **Estrogen sharply decreases**, creating a **valley** in the hormone graph.
- The brain signals the **ovary to release the egg**, a process called **ovulation**. ⚡
- The egg is pushed toward the **fallopian tube**, where fertilization **could** occur.

 **Eggs are like milk:** 

Only fresh for 24 hours - if not fertilized by sperm, they spoil and disappear.

 **Sperm are like bread:** 



Last longer (5-7 days) and can be waiting several days before the egg is released.



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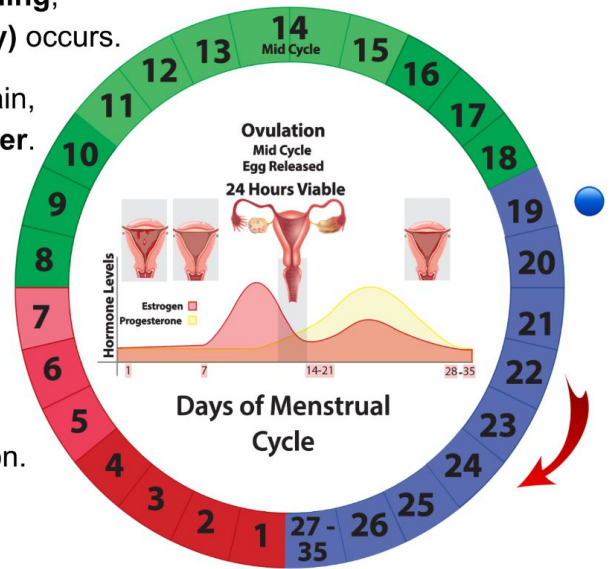
# How Hormones Work in the Menstrual Cycle

## ● Days 19 - 35: WAITING PHASE

- ☐ **Progesterone rises**, signaling the body to **maintain the lining**, keeping it ready in case a **special visitor**  (**pregnancy**) occurs.
- If  **no pregnancy happens**, both **hormones drop** again, leading back to **menstrual phase** - and the cycle **starts over**.

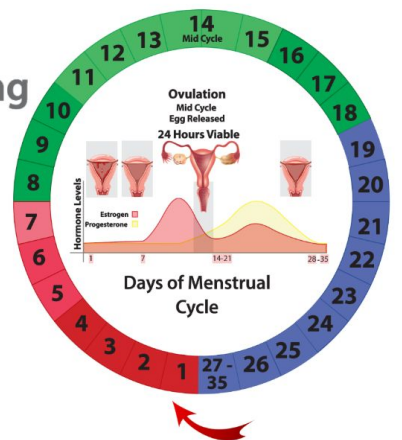
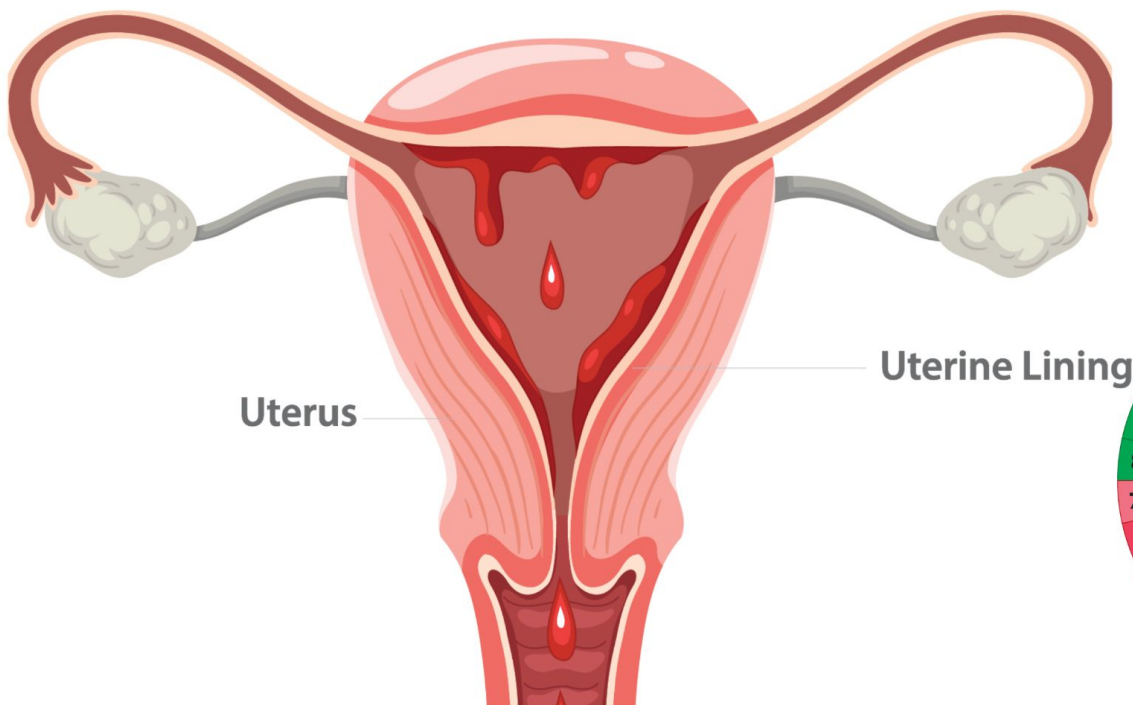
These fluctuating **hormones** can also cause various other effects on the body including:

- ◆ **Mood changes** – Irritability, anxiety, or mood swings (PMS).
- ◆ **Bloating & water retention** – Due to hormonal shifts.
- ◆ **Breast tenderness** – Sensitivity or swelling before the period.
- ◆ **Fatigue** – Low energy, especially before and during menstruation.
- ◆ **Cramps** – Uterine contractions caused by prostaglandins.
- ◆ **Headaches** – Often due to estrogen drops.
- ◆ **Increased appetite & cravings** – Common before menstruation.



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## ● Menstrual Phase



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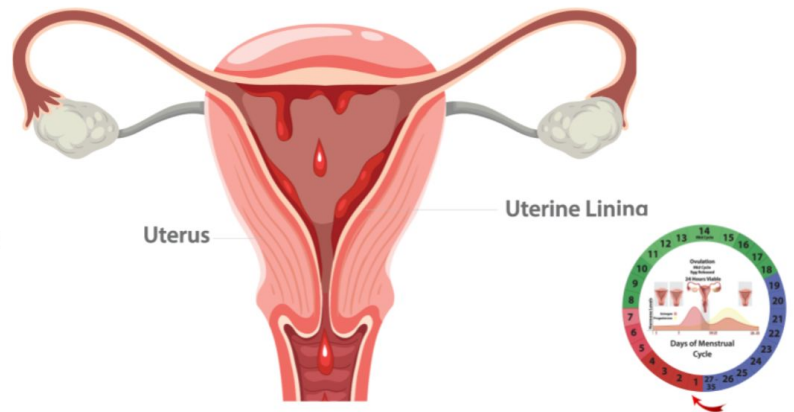
## ● **Menstrual Phase**

### Day 1: The Body's Monthly Reset

Just like preparing a guest room for a visitor, the body **cleans out the old to make room for the new**.

At the **beginning of the menstrual cycle**, the **womb sheds its old lining**, which is no longer needed. This process is what we experience as a **period** - the body's way of **sweeping out the past cycle's lining** to start fresh.

Think of it as **removing the old sheets and dusting the guest room**, making sure everything is **clean and ready** for the next cycle.



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## ● **Menstrual Phase**

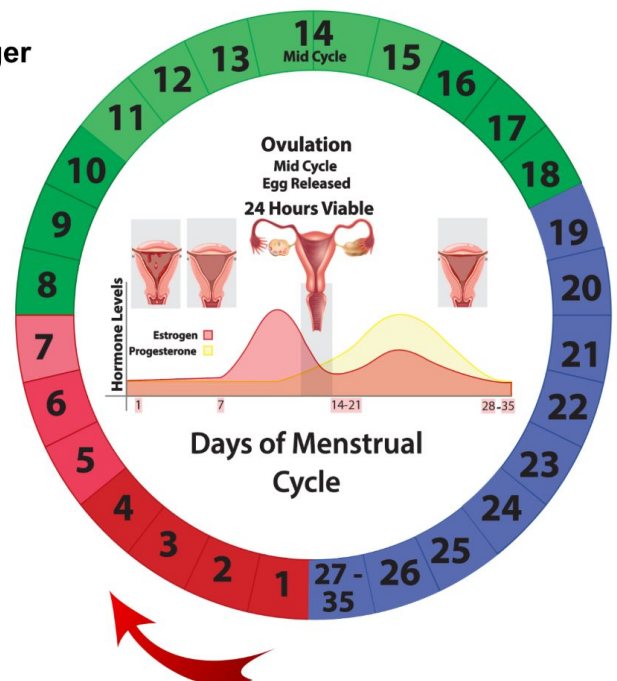
Every woman's cycle is **unique**—some experience their period for **just a few days (1-4 days)**, while others may have a **longer cycle**.

- **Darker red** indicates **heavier bleeding** at the beginning.
- As the period progresses, the flow **gradually lightens**, often ending with a **small discharge**.

This natural **cleansing process** ensures the womb is **ready for the next cycle**.

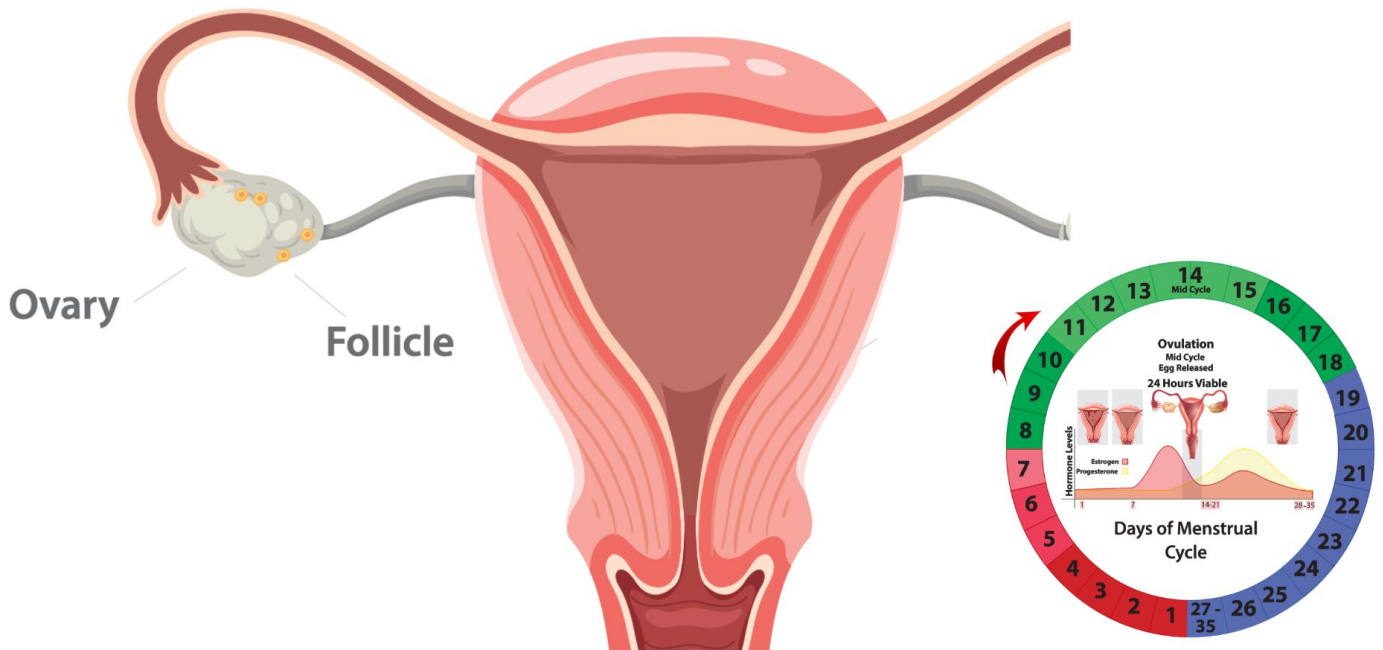
The normal amount of blood loss during a menstrual cycle is typically **30 to 80 milliliters (ml)** (about **2 to 5 tablespoons**) over **4 to 7 days**.

- **Light flow:** Less than 30 ml
- **Average flow:** Around 30-50 ml
- **Heavy flow:** Closer to 80 ml



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## ● Growth Phase



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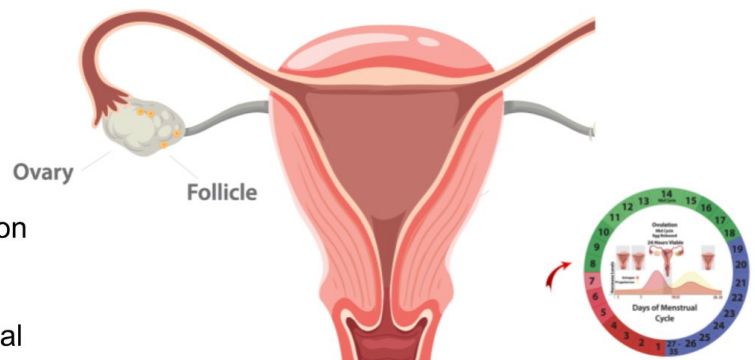
## ● Growth Phase

After the period ends, the **womb is clean and empty**, just like a **guest room after the old sheets have been removed and the floor has been swept**.

In this image, you can see the uterus **before the new lining begins to grow**. Just as you would prepare a fresh bed for a visitor, the body **starts rebuilding a soft, nourishing lining** in preparation for a potential pregnancy.

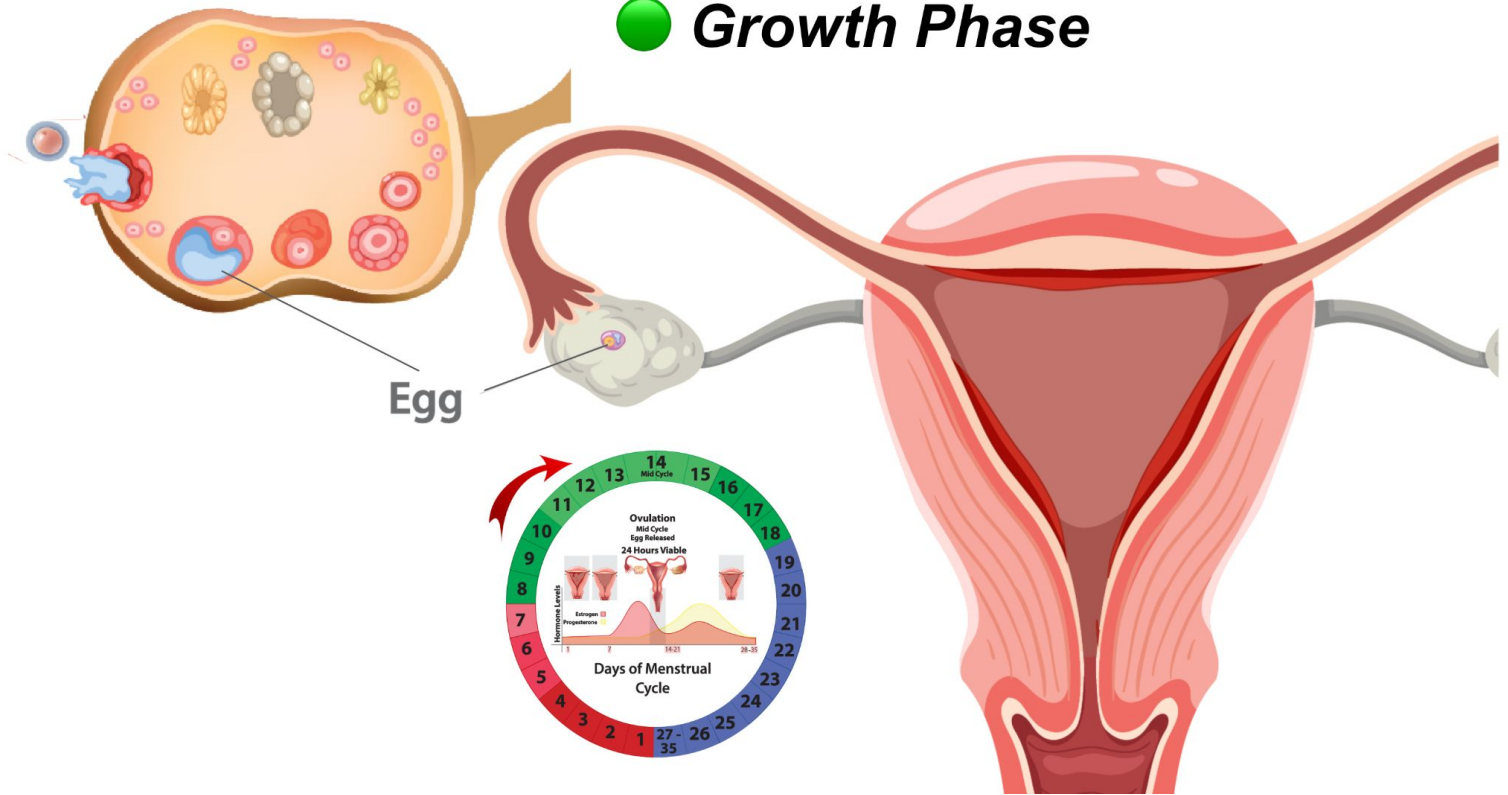
This process begins around **Day 8** of the menstrual cycle (as shown in the green section of the “**Days of Menstrual Cycle**” circle).

At this stage, the **follicles in the ovary are developing**, getting ready for ovulation later in the cycle.



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## ● Growth Phase



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The lining continues to thicken (more sheets and blankets being added to make the visitor bed so comfortable,

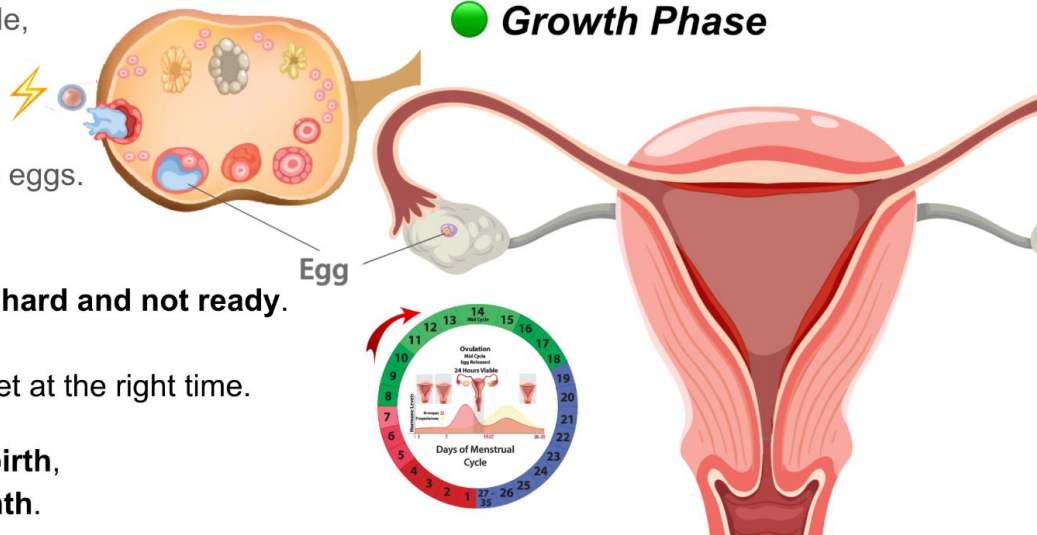
Meanwhile the “kitchen” (ovary) has also received its own hormone message to begin to ripen one of the eggs.

### 🌿 Think of it like ripening fruit:

When a mango or date is unripe, it's **hard and not ready**. The ovary selects **one egg** to ripen, just like fruit becoming soft and sweet at the right time.

- The ovary **stores eggs from birth**, but only **one ripens each month**.
- As it matures, it fills with **fluid**, forming a **small water-filled sac** inside the ovary.
- When the **sac bursts** ⚡, the **egg is pushed out** - like **popping a water balloon**. The egg then travels through the fallopian tube. This is call ovulation.

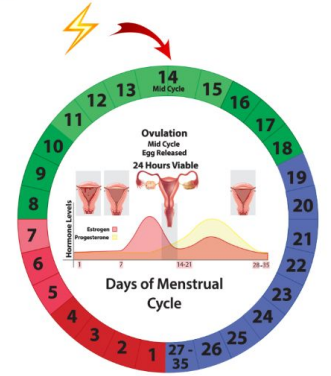
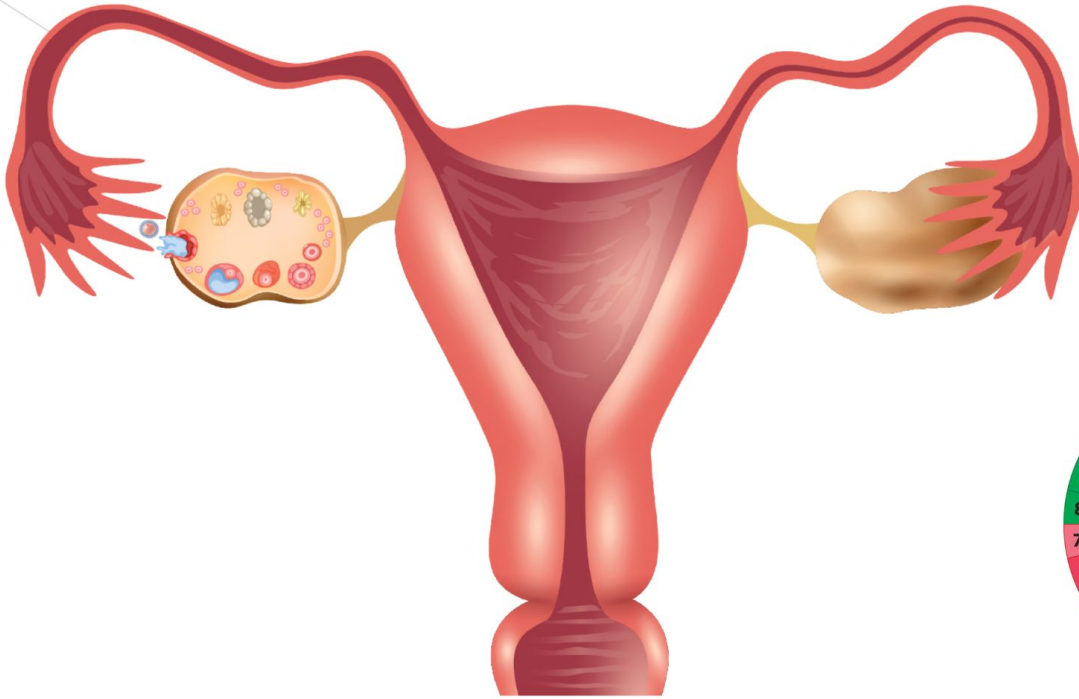
## ● Growth Phase



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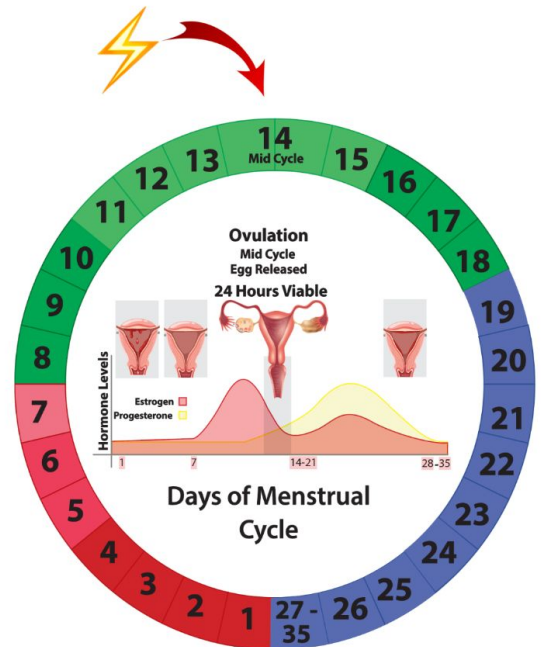
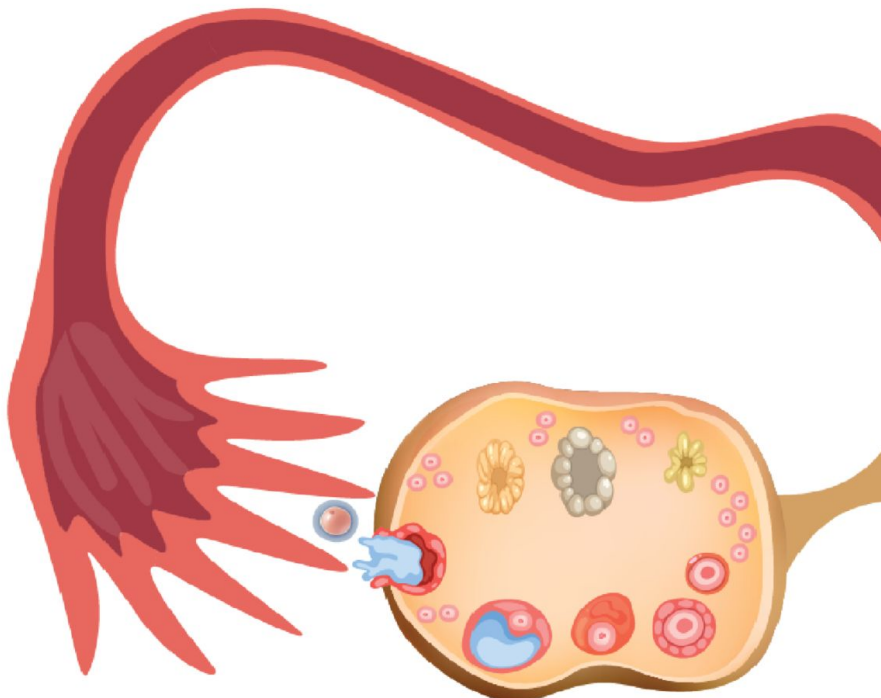
# ⚡ Ovulation - Release Phase

Fallopian Tube



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# ⚡ Ovulation - Release Phase

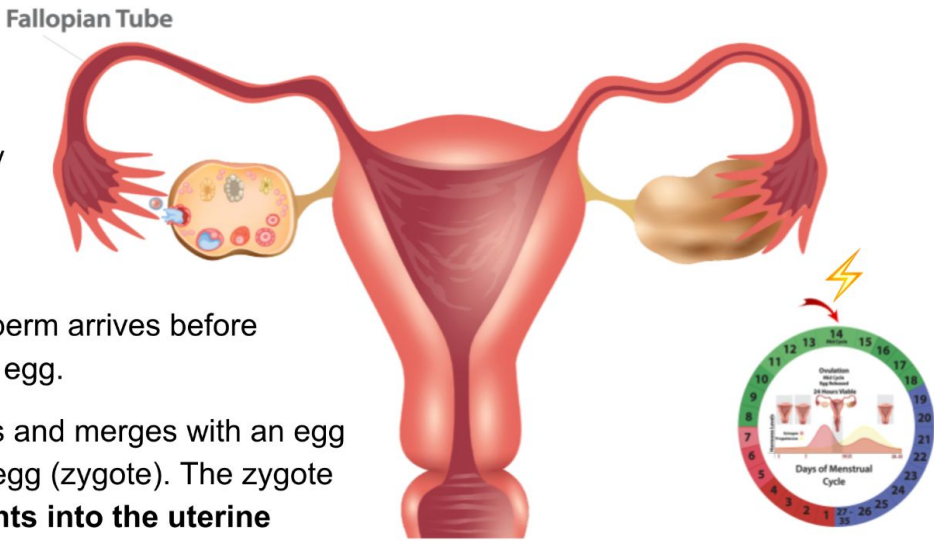



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# ⚡ Ovulation - Release Phase


Estrogen peaks just before ovulation, then drops

A **mature egg is released** from the ovary into the fallopian tube, where it can be fertilized.



 Pregnancy can happen if sperm arrives before ovulation and is waiting for the egg.

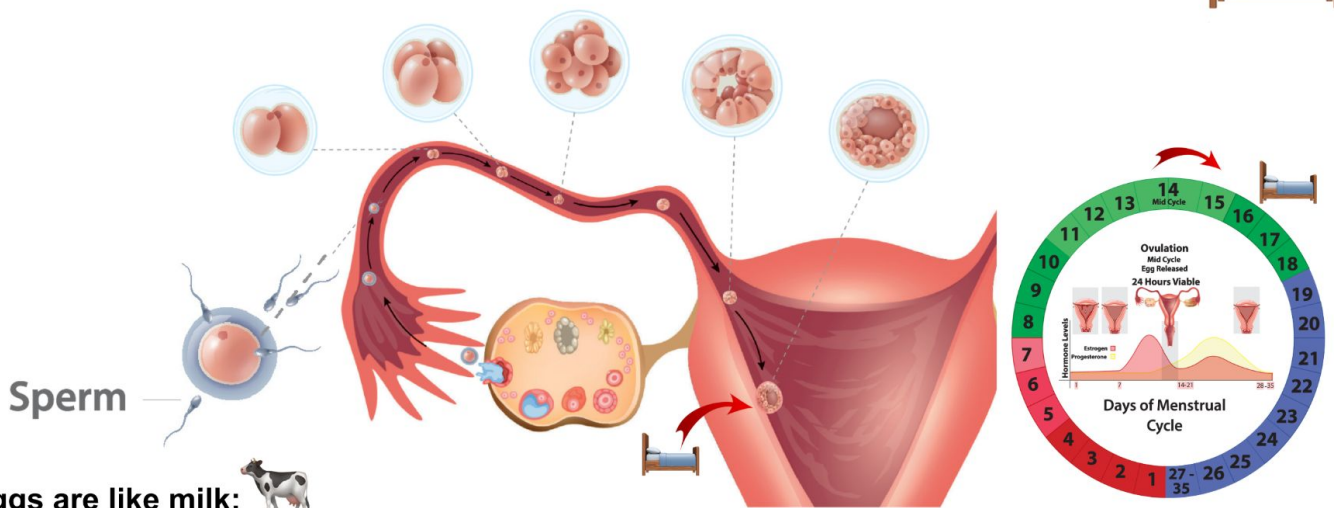
**Fertilization** occurs when a sperm meets and merges with an egg in the fallopian tube, creating a fertilized egg (zygote). The zygote then travels to the uterus, where it **implants into the uterine lining**, beginning pregnancy.

 If fertilization does not occur, the uterine lining continues to thicken but will eventually shed, restarting the cycle.

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The fertilized egg zygote then travels to the uterus, where it **implants into the uterine lining**, beginning pregnancy.

**The Guest has arrived and settles into their nice bed!**



 Eggs are like milk: 

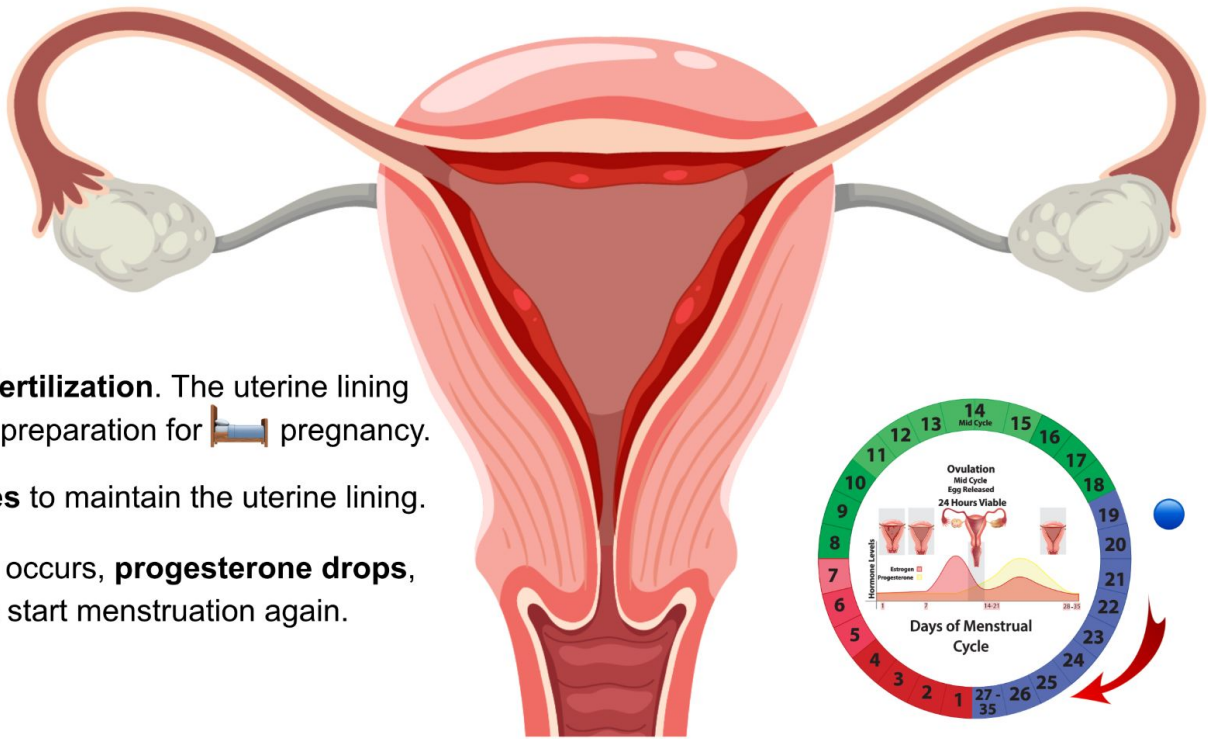
Only fresh for 24 hours—if not fertilized by sperm, they spoil and disappear.

 Sperm are like bread: 

It lasts longer (5-7 days) and can be **waiting** for the egg to be released.

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## ● The Waiting Phase

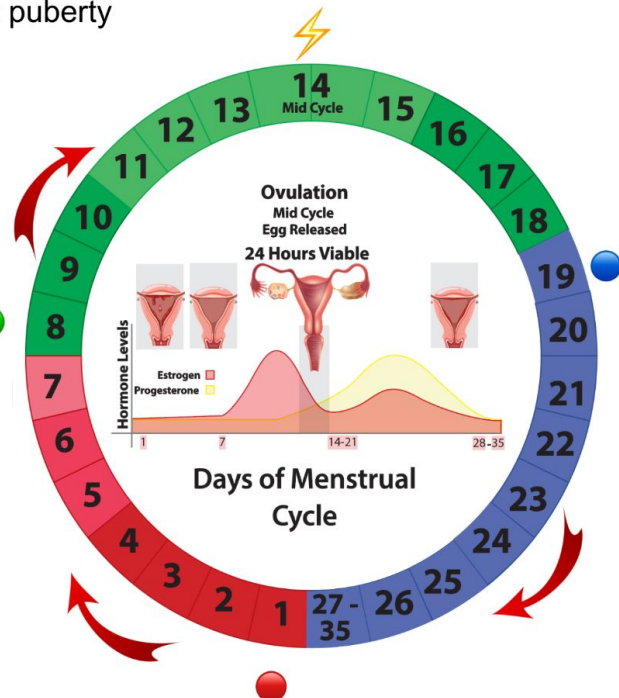
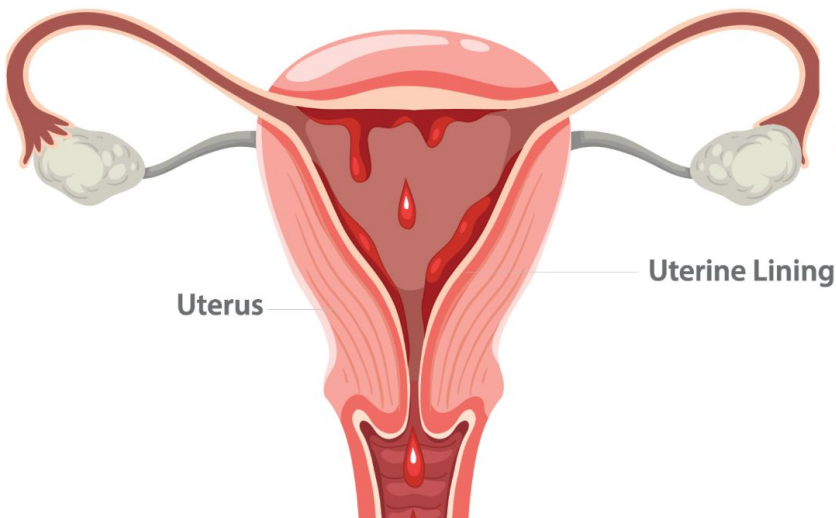


- The body **waits for fertilization**. The uterine lining **becomes thicker** in preparation for pregnancy.
- **Progesterone rises** to maintain the uterine lining.
- If no pregnancy occurs, **progesterone drops**, signaling the body to start menstruation again.

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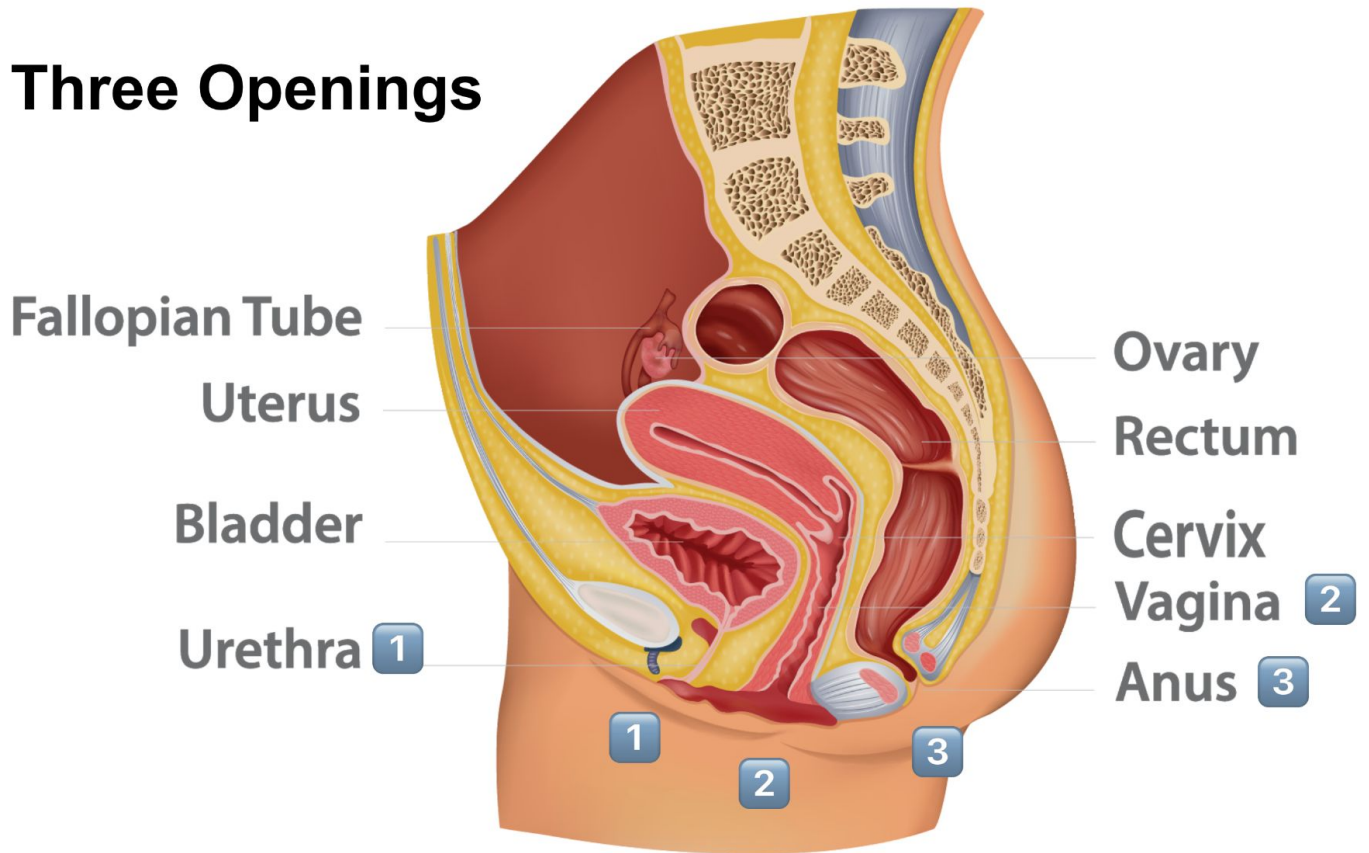
The womb refreshes itself every month, ensuring it remains clean, nourished, and ready - just in case a pregnancy occurs.

This natural cycle is a healthy and essential process that begins at puberty even in young girls as early as 9 or 10 and continues throughout a woman's reproductive years.



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# The Three Openings



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## Understanding the Three Openings in the Female Body

This image shows the **three separate openings** in the female body, each with its own function - like different shops with their own entrances and exits.

**1 Urethra** – This is where urine (pee) exits the body. Both men and women have a urethra, which helps the body get rid of waste from the bladder. Just like when we wash dishes, the body discards what it doesn't need through urine.

**2 Vagina** – This is the passage that connects to the **uterus**. It plays a role in **menstruation (periods), childbirth, and sexual intercourse**. The uterus builds a special lining each month in case a pregnancy occurs. If not, the body naturally sheds this lining through menstruation.

**3 Anus** – This is where solid waste feces (poop) exits the body. Everyone - men and women - have this opening to remove waste from food digestion.

◆ **Menstruation is NOT dirty.** The **real waste** (toxins) the body removes with urine and feces, while menstrual blood is simply the body's way of renewing itself.

This **natural process** allows the body to **prepare for life** and maintain good health!

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# Why Menstruation is NOT Dirty

Menstruation is a **natural and healthy** process that happens when the uterus sheds its lining to prepare for a new cycle. The **menstrual blood is not waste or toxins**—it is a mix of **blood, nutrients, and tissue** that was prepared for a potential pregnancy.

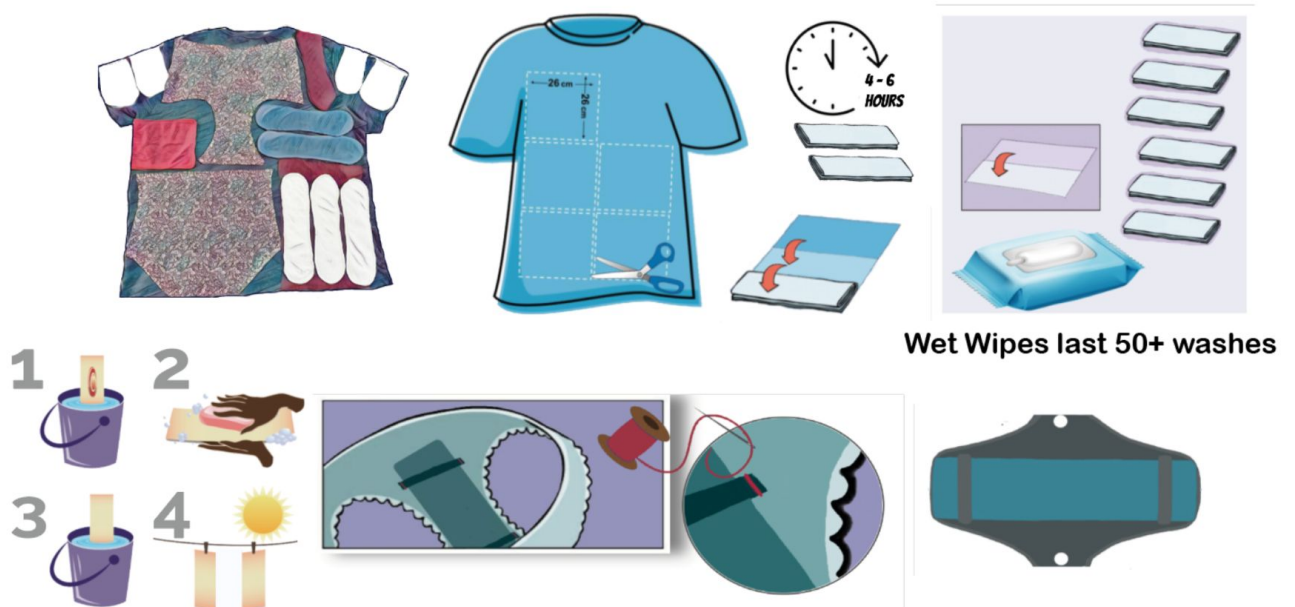
- ◆ **The body is simply renewing itself**, just like replacing old bedding in a guest room.
- ◆ **Menstrual blood is not the same as waste** like urine or feces—it is clean inside the body and only changes once exposed to air.
- ◆ **All women experience it**—it is a normal function of the reproductive system, not something shameful.

The key to **good hygiene** is **changing pads, liners, or reusable products regularly**, just like how we maintain cleanliness in daily life. **Menstruation is not dirty - it is a sign of a healthy, functioning body.**

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## Enjoy being “Fresh and Clean” anytime!

Multiple liners or underwear can easily be made from upcycled t-shirts or available fabrics and allow for customized absorbency.

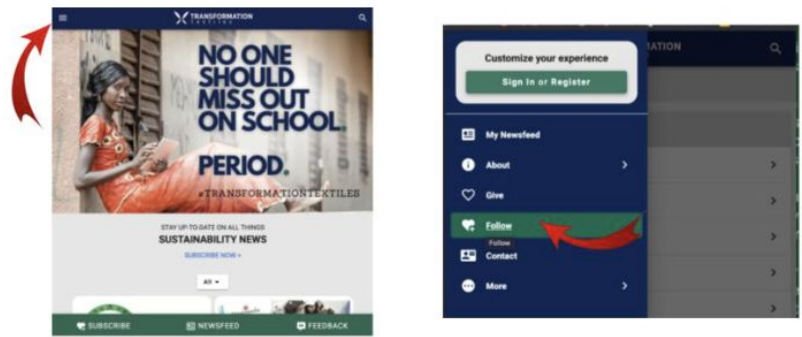


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