



Why Is My Period Late?



Stress:

When you're under physical or emotional stress, your body produces the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol. Elevated levels force the brain to decide which bodily functions are essential and which are nonessential until the stressful event is over.

Illness:

Think back to the time you should have ovulated. If you were sick, whether with a simple cold or something more serious, the stress could have put your body into that “which function is most important” phase mentioned above. So ovulation could have been delayed or didn't happen. That means your period will also be late or nonexistent. If illness around the time of ovulation caused your skipped period, it will likely return once things are back to normal.

Weight:

Your weight can affect your hypothalamus, a gland in your brain responsible for regulating various processes in the body — including your menstrual cycle. Extreme weight loss, a low caloric intake or being very underweight stresses the hypothalamus, and your body won't release the estrogen needed to

build the lining of the uterus.

On the other hand, being overweight or gaining a lot in a short amount of time can cause your body to produce too much estrogen. The overload may cause you to go for months without ovulating or cause the endometrial lining to overgrow and become unstable, resulting in heavy, irregular periods. Usually, gaining weight if you're underweight or losing if you're overweight should help your periods to return to normal.

Excessive Exercise:

Of course working out is good for you. However, when you overdo it (and possibly also restrict meals to lose weight), your body doesn't produce enough estrogen to complete the menstrual cycle.. Working out excessively without taking in enough calories can cause disruptions. Some signs that you're overdoing it include extreme or rapid weight loss; decreased physical performance; or forcing yourself to work out through injury, illness or severe weather. Slowing down a bit and, if you need to, gaining a little weight should get things back on track.

Change In Schedule:

Believe it or not, switching things up — for instance, working the night shift instead of the day or vice versa, or travelling across the country — can throw off your body clock, which regulates your hormones (including those responsible for your period). Sometimes this results in a missed or delayed period, but it should return when your body gets used to the change or your schedule goes back to normal

Breastfeeding:

If you're breastfeeding you may not see your period for some time, since prolactin — the hormone responsible for breast milk production — also suppresses ovulation. Many people don't have a period for months (or at all) while breastfeeding. But lack of a period doesn't mean you can't get pregnant.

Remember, ovulation occurs before you get your period. It's possible for you to ovulate and then get pregnant before you ever see your period. So if you don't want back-to-back babies, use protection. Your period should return within about six to eight weeks after weaning your child. If you haven't had a period three months after you stop breastfeeding, talk to your doctor.

Perimenopause:

The average age of menopause is 51. Anywhere from two to eight years before menopause, a person experiences what's known as perimenopause, which is the period when the body gradually makes less estrogen and moves toward menopause. During this time, it's not uncommon to have changes in the menstrual cycle — periods may come more or less frequently, be shorter or longer, or be lighter or heavier. But you'll also likely experience hot flashes and night sweats, sleeping difficulties, vaginal dryness and mood swings. If you're concerned about your symptoms, your doctor can check your hormone levels with a blood test.

Medication:

Probably the most common medication to cause menstrual changes is birth control.

Sometimes, though, the birth control suppresses the hormones so much that you have very light bleeding or no period at all during that week off the pills. And some pills are even designed to stop your period for a longer amount of time (three months or more). Other hormonal birth controls, such as the Depo-Provera shot or the Mirena IUD, thin the lining of the uterus to such a degree that there may be no lining to shed monthly as a period.

Emergency contraception, or the “morning after pill,” can also affect when you ovulate (or stop it altogether), so if you've taken it recently you may experience a late or skipped period (bring this up with your doctor).

Some other medications that can cause a delayed or missed period are antidepressants, some antipsychotics, corticosteroids and chemotherapy drugs.

Hormonal Imbalance:

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is a condition where the sex hormones are out of balance, causing cysts on the ovaries and preventing ovulation from occurring regularly. In addition to missed or irregular periods, PCOS can also cause excess hair growth, acne, weight gain and possibly infertility. Your doctor can do a blood test to check your hormone levels if you think PCOS may be the reason for your menstrual problems. If PCOS is the cause, your doctor may recommend birth control to regulate your periods.

Thyroid Disorder:

When the thyroid, the gland responsible for your body's metabolism, doesn't function properly, it can cause abnormal menstrual changes. An overactive thyroid (called hyperthyroidism) can cause periods to be lighter and less frequent; additional symptoms include weight loss, rapid heartbeat, increased sweating and trouble sleeping. An underactive thyroid (called hypothyroidism) may also cause periods to be less frequent but heavier; it may also cause weight gain, fatigue, dry skin and hair loss. A blood test can help your doctor determine if you have a thyroid disorder.

If you have any further questions regarding missed periods or would like to see a health care provider regarding any sexual health matter, please contact us.

Sexual Health Questions? We have Answers!

Location:

47 St. Clare Avenue, St. John's, NL, A1C 2J9

Hours:

Monday: 9am – 4:30pm
Tuesday: 9am – 4:30pm
Wednesday: 9am – 4:30pm
Thursday: 12pm – 6:00pm
Friday: 9am – 4:30pm

Phone:

709-579-1009
Toll Free: 1-877-NO MYTHS
(1-877-666-9847)

Website:

www.plannedparenthoodnlshc.com

Email:

pp.nlshc@gmail.com

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