

Teacher / School Health Office Manual

Supporting Students Through Menstrual Health Challenges | periodhub.health

A Comprehensive Guide for Educators and Health Personnel

Understanding Your Role

Why This Matters

- ❑ Menstrual health affects academic performance
- ❑ Students may miss school due to period-related issues
- ❑ Early intervention can prevent long-term problems
- ❑ Creating supportive environments reduces stigma
- ❑ Proper education promotes lifelong health habits

Your Impact as an Educator

- ❑ Normalize conversations about menstrual health
- ❑ Provide accurate, age-appropriate information
- ❑ Create inclusive classroom environments
- ❑ Recognize signs of menstrual difficulties
- ❑ Connect students with appropriate resources



Essential Knowledge for Educators

Basic Menstrual Facts

- Average age of menarche: 12-13 years (range 9-16)
- Normal cycle length: 21-35 days
- Typical period duration: 3-7 days
- Common symptoms: cramping, mood changes, fatigue
- Individual variation is normal

Signs a Student May Need Support

- Frequent absences, especially monthly patterns
- Visible discomfort or pain during class
- Requests to visit the nurse repeatedly
- Difficulty concentrating during certain times
- Social withdrawal or embarrassment
- Asking to be excused from physical activities



Common Classroom Scenarios

Scenario 1: A student asks to go to the bathroom frequently during your class.

Response: Allow bathroom breaks without questioning. Consider having a discrete signal system for students who need to leave for menstrual reasons.

Scenario 2: A student appears uncomfortable and is holding their stomach.

Response: Quietly ask if they need to visit the nurse or if there's anything you can do to help. Offer a heating pad if available.

Scenario 3: A student asks to be excused from PE class.

Response: Respect their request and offer alternative activities. Avoid asking for detailed explanations.



Health Office Essentials

Menstrual Products

- Various sizes of pads
- Panty liners
- Tampons (if appropriate)
- Disposal bags

Comfort Items

- Heating pads
- Hot water bottles
- Comfortable seating
- Blankets

Hygiene Supplies

- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Tissues
- Spare underwear

Medications

- Ibuprofen (with parent permission)
- Acetaminophen
- Antacids
- Emergency contact information



When to Take Immediate Action

Contact parents/guardians and consider medical attention if:

- Student experiences severe, debilitating pain
- Heavy bleeding that soaks through protection in less than an hour
- Fainting, dizziness, or vomiting
- Signs of infection (fever, unusual discharge)
- Student expresses thoughts of self-harm due to menstrual distress



Communication Guidelines

Talking with Students

- Use matter-of-fact, non-judgmental language
- Respect privacy and confidentiality
- Avoid euphemisms that create shame
- Listen actively to student concerns
- Validate their experiences
- Provide reassurance about normalcy

Communicating with Parents

- Focus on student's academic and health needs
- Share observations without diagnosing
- Suggest resources and support options
- Respect family values while prioritizing student welfare
- Document conversations appropriately



Creating an Inclusive Environment

- **Language matters:** Use inclusive terms that don't assume all students menstruate
- **Privacy protection:** Ensure bathroom and changing facilities offer adequate privacy
- **Flexible policies:** Allow for bathroom breaks and movement during class
- **Educational opportunities:** Include menstrual health in health education curricula

- **Peer support:** Foster environments where students can support each other



Documentation and Record Keeping

What to Document

- ☐ Date and time of student visits
- ☐ Symptoms reported by student
- ☐ Interventions provided
- ☐ Student response to treatment
- ☐ Parent/guardian communications
- ☐ Follow-up actions needed

Privacy Considerations

- ☐ Store records securely and confidentially
- ☐ Share information only on a need-to-know basis
- ☐ Follow school policies on health information
- ☐ Respect student's right to privacy
- ☐ Obtain consent before sharing with parents when appropriate



Recommended Resources

- ☐ periodhub.health educational materials
- ☐ American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines
- ☐ School health organization resources
- ☐ Adolescent health textbooks and journals
- ☐ Professional development workshops
- ☐ Peer educator training programs

Always consult healthcare professionals for medical concerns