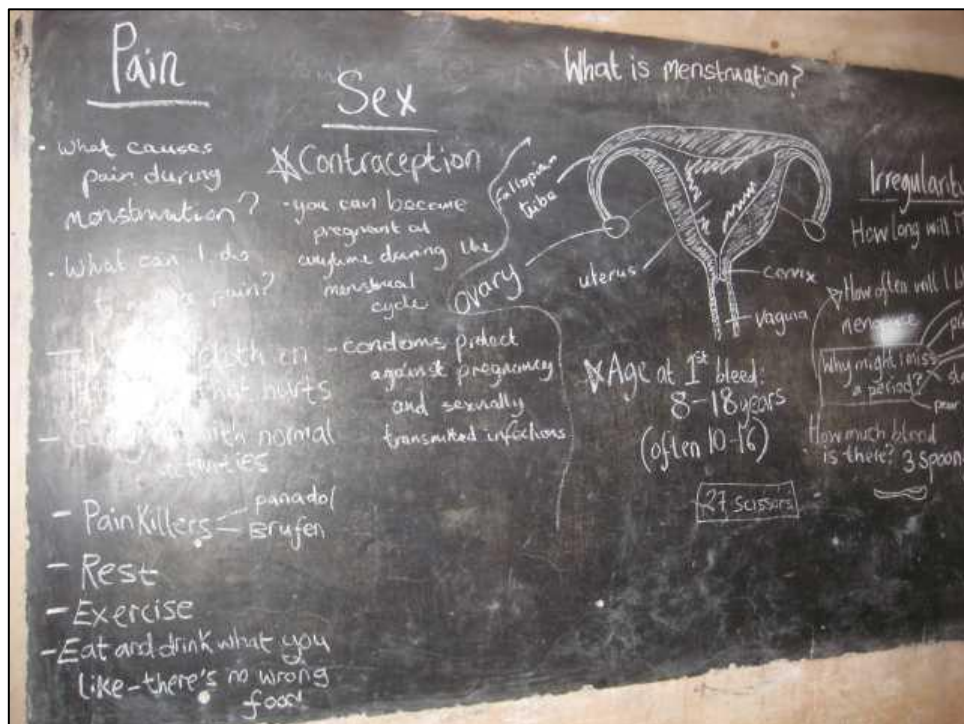




Menstrual Health Education Resource



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Introduction

Irise is a charity and research group working to develop a replicable and sustainable solution to Menstrual Hygiene Management in East Africa. We believe that a successful Menstrual Hygiene Project needs to provide an appropriate product, health education and be tailored to the local community. Our Menstrual Hygiene Toolkit is designed to enable other organisations and individuals to replicate our work.

We ask organisations and individuals using our resources to make a donation to Irise so we can continue providing our support for free to community groups in East Africa. We also ask you to let us know how and where you used them so that we can measure the impact of our work and network groups working on this issue. We are constantly developing our resources so feedback is always welcome.



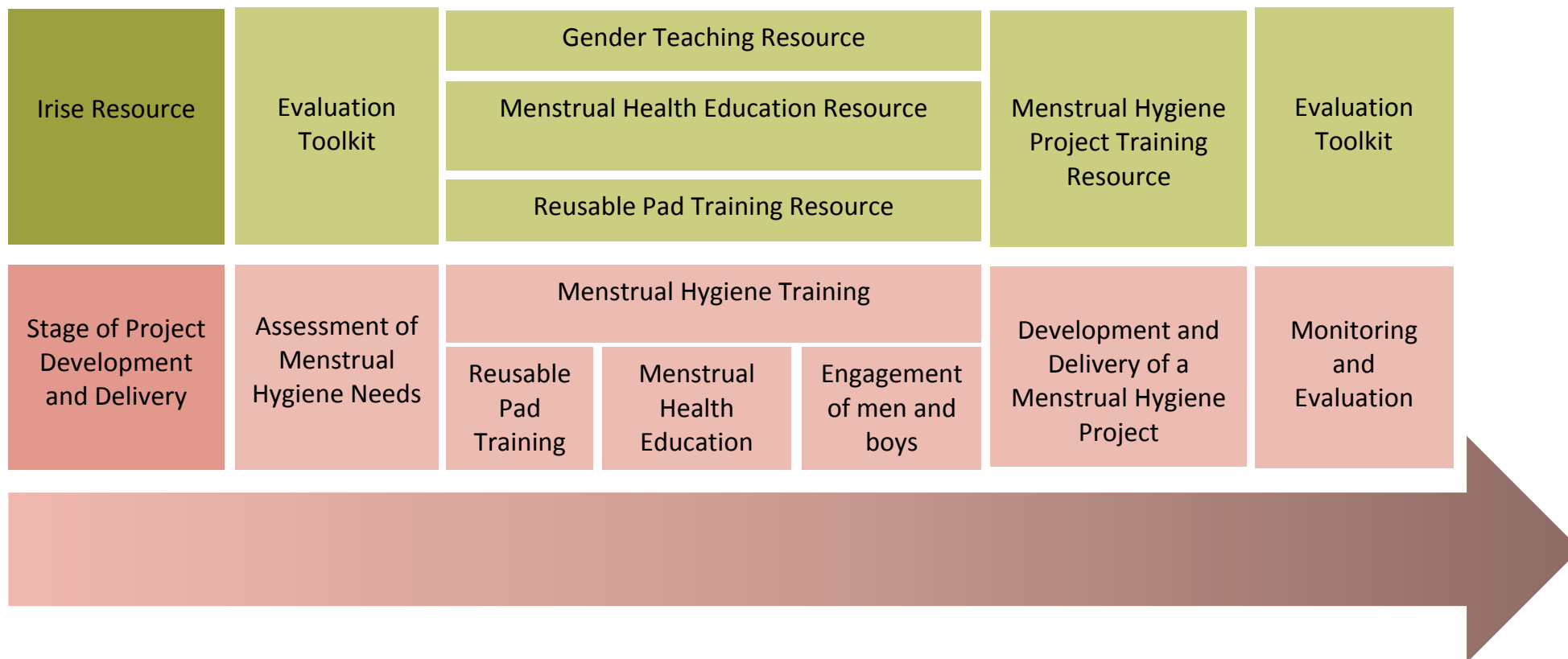
Irise Menstrual Hygiene Toolkit



This resource is part of a set of resources designed to help organisations develop and evaluate a menstrual hygiene project. The table and timeline below summarise the resources available and how they can be used together. All the resources can be accessed at www.irise.org.uk/online-womens-health-library/resources.

Resource	Description
Evaluation Toolkit	...contains tools to help assess menstrual hygiene in the community and to evaluate and monitor the impact of training or project delivery.
Reusable Pad Training Resource	...is a step by step guide on how to make two common reusable pad designs from locally available materials.
Menstrual Hygiene Project Training Resource	...contains training sessions to help a group develop a menstrual hygiene project
Menstrual Health Education Resource	...contains information and ideas about delivering menstrual health education based around common questions.
Gender Teaching Resource	...is designed to help engage men and boys in menstrual hygiene training and projects
Hand outs	
Questions and Answers about Menstruation	...a leaflet containing common questions and answers about menstruation
How to Make an Irise 'Insert' Pad	...a pictorial step by step guide to making this pad to be used in conjunction with the Reusable Pad Training Resource
How to Make an Irise 'All in One' Pad	...a pictorial step by step guide to making this pad to be used in conjunction with the Reusable Pad Training Resource
Videos	
How to Make an Irise 'Insert' Pad	...a step by step guide to making this pad to be used in conjunction with the Reusable Pad Training Resource
How to Make an Irise 'All in One' Pad	...a step by step guide to making this pad to be used in conjunction with the Reusable Pad Training Resource

The timeline below illustrates how the resources in Irise's Menstrual Hygiene Toolkit can support the different stages of project development and delivery.



Menstrual Health Education Resource

Teaching and Training Tips



This resource can be used to develop lessons for schoolgirls or it can be used to train teachers or women's groups to teach girls themselves.

Important points to consider before facilitating a menstruation teaching session with girls:

- The class should be reassured that everything discussed in the session is confidential.
- People leading the session (instructors) should be confident and speak clearly when addressing the class, and should not appear embarrassed or amused by any content that may arise.
- It is a good idea for teachers to attend the session along with their class, partly to maintain order (if necessary!) and partly so they are aware of everything that has been covered in case further discussion or support is required by students.
- The class teacher might also need to translate the session if the students are not fluent in English. In some cases where language is particularly challenging, the girls written questions may need translating too.
- It is better if the teachers are engaged with their class, providing support and encouragement and demonstrating a good rapport with their students.
- Having more than one instructor will mean one can be addressing the class whilst the other is writing on the board.
- Writing pertinent points on the board and drawing diagrams are useful ways to cement knowledge, especially when you don't know if everybody is following verbally.
- Ensure that students are not just diligently copying down everything you write on the board, without understanding the content.
- Remember to regularly ask questions to ensure that all the students are still following the lesson.
- Remember that if a student asks something which has just been covered, it is a sign that the information has not been understood and it would be good to go back and cover the whole topic again, however frustrating this may seem.



The 8 Themes of Menstruation

We gave over 3,000 girls in East Africa the opportunity to ask us questions about menstruation and found that we were asked the same questions again and again. This resource presents information on the eight most common themes we encountered with teaching ideas and helpful hints about delivering menstrual health education to women and girls.

The 8 themes covered are:

1. Puberty
2. Anatomy
3. The Menstrual Cycle
4. Irregularity
5. Pain
6. Menstrual Hygiene
7. Feelings
8. Sex

The ideas included here can be used to help develop a plan for a lesson, addressing all or some of the themes above, and can help you develop strategies to deal with common difficult questions.

1. Puberty

QUESTIONS FROM THE GIRLS

“Why do my armpits and private parts smell?”

“What are the signs and symptoms of adolescence?”

“Why is hair growing in my private parts?”

ACTIVITY BOX

Puberty Game

We have found that many students in East Africa can confidently name many of the physical manifestations of puberty. You can split the class into groups and ask them to list as many as they can in 1 minute. Go through each group's answers and at the end make sure to clarify what the main changes are.

Definition: ‘Puberty is when a child changes to become an adult, and a girl is capable of having a baby.’



Changes that occur during puberty:

Growing taller, getting heavier, breasts getting larger, hips widening, hair under the arms, pubic hair, sweating more, starting periods, pimples/spots, feeling emotional, desire for the opposite sex.

Explain that these symptoms are normal and that everyone grows at their own rate – some girls mature physically in their preteens, others not till their late teens. Highlight that it's not just changes on the outside but changes on the inside too. People can feel confused or lonely at this time when they are no longer a child but not yet an adult.

2. Anatomy

QUESTIONS FROM THE GIRLS

"Why do women bleed but not men?"

"Is menstruation a disease?"

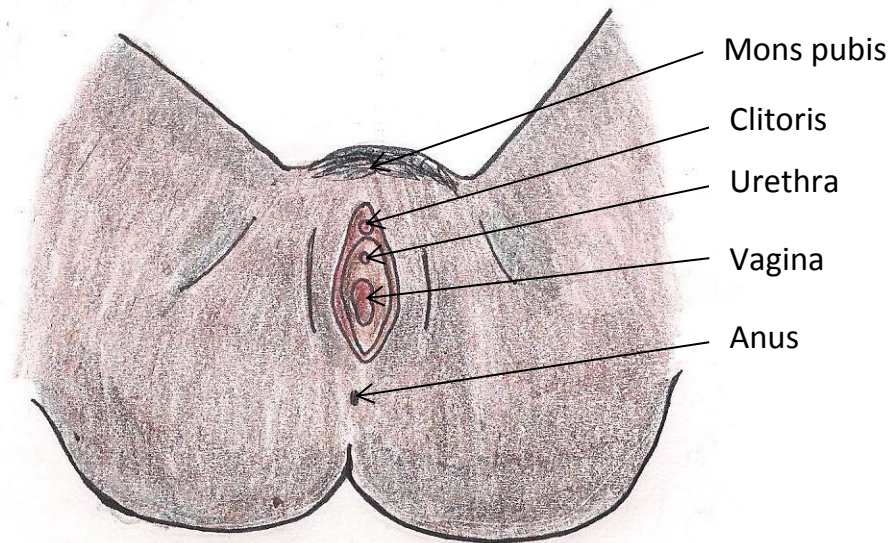
ACTIVITY BOX

Anatomy Worksheet

You may wish to photocopy the anatomy worksheet in the appendix and get students to complete this. You can do this at the end of the session to see if they have remembered what has been taught. It is also a useful reminder for them to take away.

Explain that you are going to talk through the anatomy of a woman's reproductive system first the outside bits and then the inside bits.

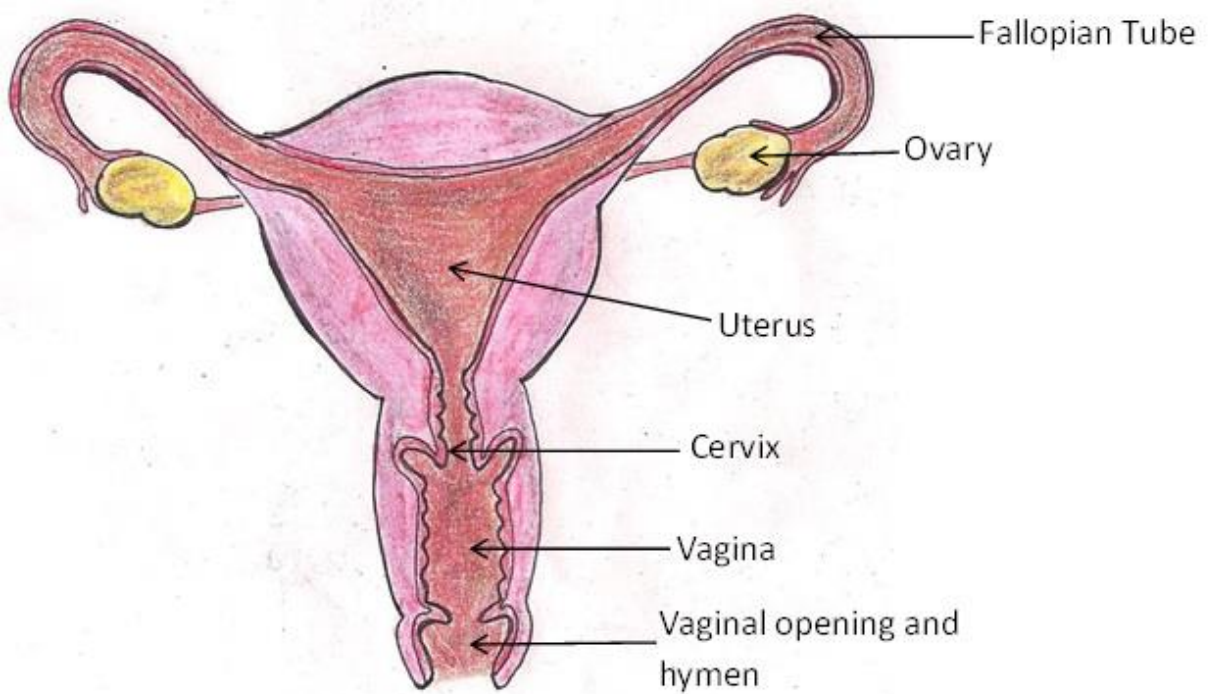
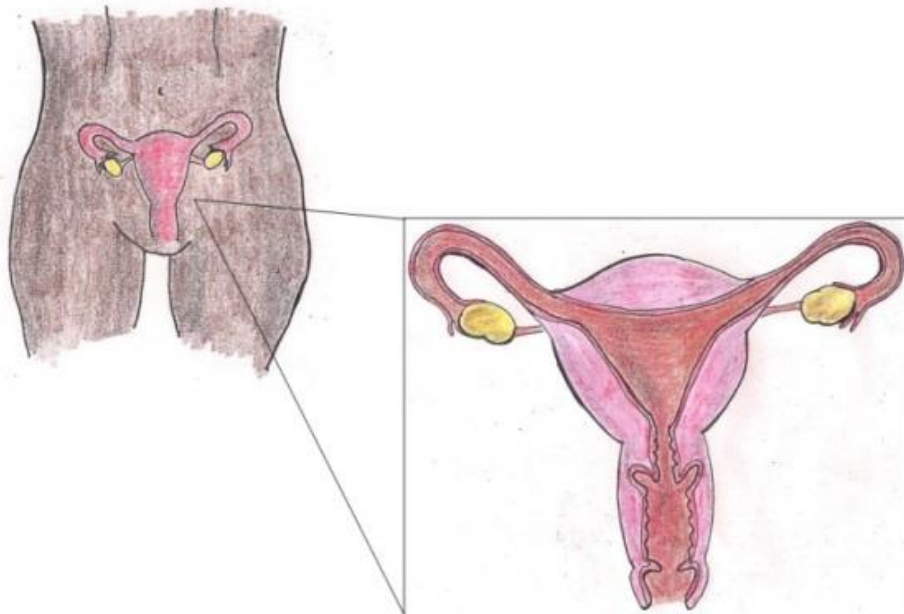
First use a simple diagram to explain where things are between a woman's legs. Explain that the urethra is connected to the bladder which is where we urinate from. The vagina is connected to the uterus which is where we menstruate from and is used for sexual intercourse. Finally that the anus leads to the gut and this is where we pass stool from. Now is a good time to clear up any confusion over going to the toilet whilst menstruating and whether using a tampon interferes with going to the toilet (it doesn't!).



Explain that you are now going to talk about the inside bits, namely a woman's womb or uterus. A uterus is about the size of an orange or a clenched fist. It can be useful to demonstrate this and where the uterus sits in the lower abdomen. Draw a diagram of the female reproductive tract and get the students to label each part. This can even be done as a game with younger students, e.g. Have two opposing teams like a game show. Students are often very good at this activity because they learn all the parts of the body in science lessons so it's a nice confidence booster.

Talk through each part of the female reproductive tract:

- The vagina is the passage leading to the uterus.
- The hymen is a piece of elastic skin that is usually stretched and torn by a man's penis when a woman has sex for the first time. It can also be damaged by injury or physical activity and is **not** a good indicator of virginity.
- The cervix is like the door to the uterus. It has a very small hole in it that allows sperm to pass into the uterus or blood to pass out. When a woman gives birth it becomes more stretchy to allow the baby to pass through.
- The uterus is like a bag. It has thick walls designed to protect a growing baby and it is lined with blood and soft tissue to help a baby grow. If a woman is not pregnant this lining is shed every month.
- The ovaries are little sacks full of eggs. Every girl is born with ovaries full of eggs waiting to be released. When the ovary releases an egg it travels down the fallopian tube to the uterus.





3. Menstrual Cycle

QUESTIONS FROM THE GIRLS

"For how many days does a girl menstruate?"

"How can I know I am starting the menstruation period?"

ACTIVITY BOX

Menstrual Cycle Card Game

Print or photocopy the Menstrual Cycle Card Game in the appendix. Split the participants into groups and give them the four cards each showing a picture of the uterus. Give them a red pen and ask them to illustrate the different stages of the menstrual cycle. Ask for a volunteer to talk through what they have drawn. The four cards should roughly represent the following.

1. An egg starts to develop in the ovary
2. An egg is released from the ovary and the lining of the uterus starts to thicken.
3. The egg reaches the uterus but is not fertilised
4. The lining of the uterus sheds and the woman menstruates

Menstrual Cycle Beads

You can supply women and girls with beads and encourage them to make bracelets representing the menstrual cycle. They can use yellow beads to represent days of the menstrual cycle when they are not bleeding, red beads to represent days when they are bleeding and a white or blue bead to represent ovulation around Day 14. These bracelets can be worn as a symbol of solidarity or sisterhood with women and girls around the world¹.



Act the Menstrual Cycle

Get the class to act out the menstrual cycle whilst you explain it. A ring of girls holding hands could represent the womb, someone can be the ovary, and someone can be the egg. A line of girls could be the fallopian tube, as you explain the menstrual cycle, the ovary could release the egg, who then enters the womb, before being released; signifying menstruation.

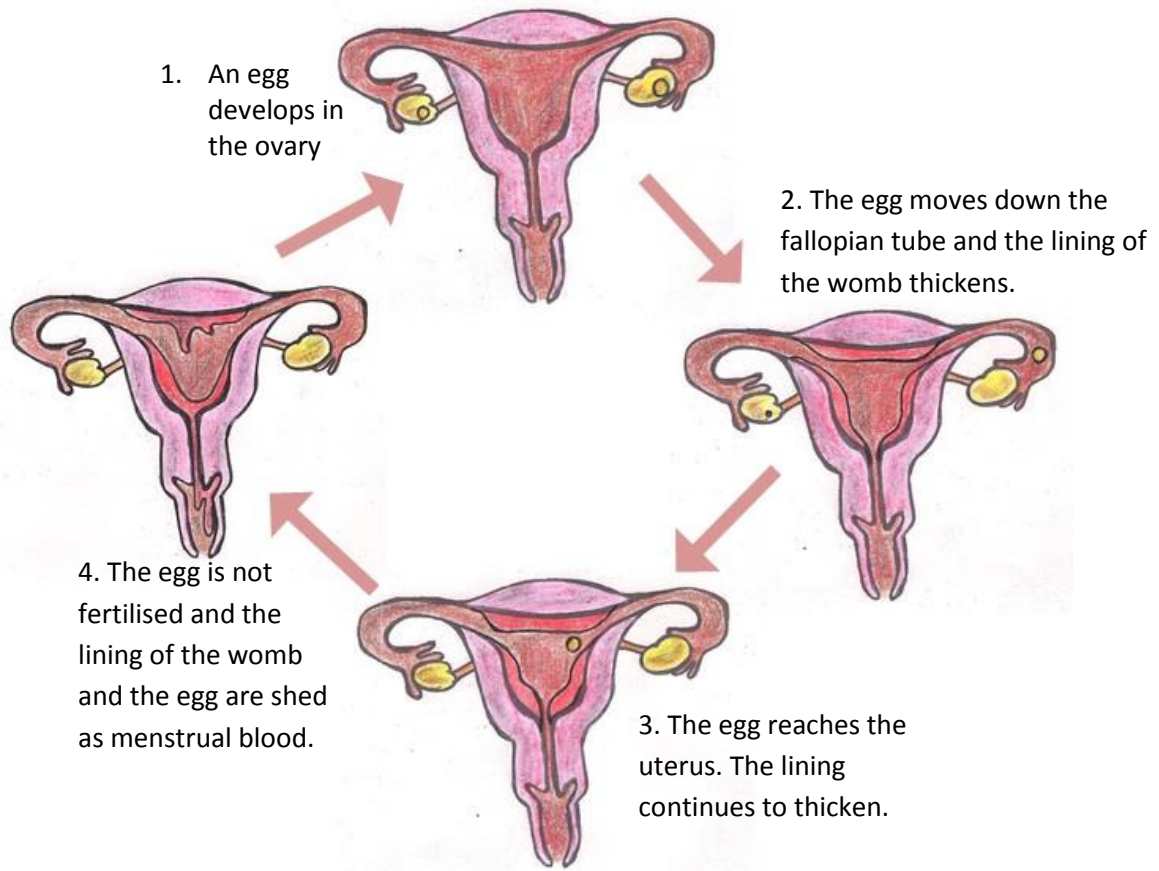
1. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (2013) The Menstrual Hygiene Management Ring [Online] Accessed: 4/12/13 Available: <http://www.wsscc.org/resources/resource-news-archive/menstrual-hygiene-management-ring>



Talk through the menstrual cycle clearly using either the diagrams or the Menstrual Cycle Beads as an aid.

‘Once a month, an egg which has been growing in the ovary reaches maturity and makes its way down the fallopian tube. It is here that the egg may be fertilised if the woman has had unprotected sexual intercourse. Fertilised or not, the egg continues its journey into the uterus or womb. During this time the lining of the womb builds up. It is full of nutrients and blood in case the egg is fertilised and grows into a baby. If there is to be a pregnancy the fertilised egg attaches to the wall of the uterus and it is here, in the uterus, that the egg develops into a fetus and eventually a baby. If there is no pregnancy the thick lining of the uterus and the unfertilised egg are shed out of the body as menstrual blood. The cycle then begins again as another egg starts to mature in the ovary and the uterus grows its thick lining again.’

Explain that the process is controlled by hormones (substances or chemicals that act as messengers in the body). The biology of hormonal control of menstruation is outside the scope of this resource, but is largely determined by the hormones, LH, FSH, oestrogen and progesterone, which change in their concentrations in the blood stream at different points throughout the menstrual cycle.



4. Irregularity

QUESTIONS FROM THE GIRLS

"I am 17 years old but I have not experienced monthly periods. Is something wrong with me?"

"Sometimes a person can get a period for three days and sometime the same person gets a period for five days. This is caused by what?"

"Apart from pregnancy, under what circumstances can one miss her period?"

ACTIVITY BOX

The 'Everyone is Different' Game

Ask the class or group to arrange themselves in order of height. Make the point that there is a large range of heights within the group but that these are all normal or healthy. It is the same with menstruation. Different girls will start their period at different ages and have different cycles. This is normal.



Instructors should emphasize that every woman is different, and what is normal for one person may not be the same as another woman.

'Every woman is different and what is normal for me may be different for you, and that doesn't mean one of us is wrong. Being different is a good thing – some people are fast runners, some people are good cooks; some people are tall and some people are short. What matters is knowing and accepting yourself, including your menstrual cycle.'

Ask the class directly what they think the normal ranges are, and then explain the answer:

- The age at which a girl starts her period (8-18, but usually 10-16)
- The age at which a woman stops menstruating, e.g. the menopause (40-55)
- Length of each bleed (2-10 days)
- Length of each cycle (28 days but may be 3-6 weeks)

Ask the class how many reasons they can think of for a woman missing her period.

This should include:

Stress, inadequate food intake, the first 2 years after starting her periods, lots of exercise, pregnancy, nearing the menopause and medicines.

Instructors must emphasize that scientists do not fully understand the female reproductive tract and that sometimes things happen which we can't explain, for example missing periods here and there. Many of the students will have recently started their periods and they should be reassured that irregularity is normal for the first couple of years because the body settles into its own rhythm. **Mention that some women have irregular periods all their lives and that in most women this has no bearing on their ability to have a baby.**

Girls may have their own ideas about what affects their periods, and it is important to handle them sensitively. **Avoid saying something is wrong**, instead say *'We don't know of any scientific reason for that to be the case'*. For example, many women believe that change of climate affects the menstrual cycle. This can be addressed like this:

'We don't know any scientific reason why a change of climate would affect the menstrual cycle, because the female reproductive system is controlled by hormones from inside the body, not conditions outside of the body. It could be that travel and changing of climate causes stress, which may well affect menstruation.'



Another common belief is that certain foods or drinks can make menstruation heavier/lighter/longer/shorter.

This can be addressed in a similar way:

‘As the menstrual cycle is controlled by hormones, we don’t know of any scientific evidence that specific food and drinks can affect periods. However, being poorly nourished may change the amount of certain hormones your body makes, and this may alter the menstrual cycle.’

5. Pain

QUESTIONS FROM THE GIRLS

“Why do I get a stomach ache every time I menstruate?”

“Is it true that if a girl or a woman feels pain when she is on her period, it is a disease?”

“What can you do in your menstruation period to avoid stomach ache?”

“What medicine can you take to stop pain?”

ACTIVITY BOX

Make a Hot Water Bottle

You may wish to either make a hot water bottle in the session or teach girls how to make one at home. Explain that a hot water bottle can help the clenched muscles causing period pain to relax. All you need to make one is an empty plastic or glass bottle and some old towel or fleece. Use the old towel or fleece to make a cover for the bottle then fill the bottle with warm water. Warn girls not to use boiling water because they may burn themselves and if they are using a plastic bottle as this may melt the plastic.

What symptoms do women and girls experience during menstruation?

Encourage the group to answer this question and write a list of their suggestions.

Add any they have forgotten at the end.

The list should include:

Abdominal pain, bloating, back-ache, headache, tiredness, feeling emotional, breast tenderness, increased/decreased sexual desire or libido.



Facilitators should emphasize that these are all normal. They are not signs of illness or disease. If appropriate, facilitators can draw on personal experiences of period pain to reassure the group. Explain that the symptoms women and girls experience can be split into two groups, those caused by muscles and those caused by hormones. Explain these mechanisms and the symptoms they cause:

'We have already discussed how menstruation happens because an egg has not been fertilised and needs to be pushed out of the uterus along with the thick lining that has been built up. The muscles in the uterus contract in order to push all this out (you may wish to clench your fists together over your abdomen to demonstrate the action of the muscles). This contraction causes stomach pain and back pain. You can relax the muscles by massaging them or applying a warm compress. Ibuprofen is a medicine that works really well for muscle pain. We have also already talked about how hormones or chemical messengers control menstruation. Changes in these chemicals can cause unpleasant symptoms and unfortunately around menstruation there are naturally lots of changes to a woman's hormones. This causes headaches, bloating and breast tenderness. It can also make you tired, emotional and affect your level of sexual desire or libido.'

Ask the class what they do to try to feel more comfortable when menstruating. Make some recommendations for things that could help. This should include: Taking painkillers (paracetamol, ibuprofen), resting when needed, exercising (walking, sports, playing with younger siblings), soaking a flannel in warm or cold water and laying it on the abdomen or using a hot water bottle and confiding in friends. Facilitators can share their experience of easing discomfort. This can help encourage free discussion and create a more relaxed atmosphere.

Make the point that all the symptoms mentioned are a normal part of menstruation. Reiterate that they are **NOT** caused by illness and infection. They therefore should not be treated with antibiotics. This is a dangerous practice as regularly taking antibiotics when they are not needed can make them less effective.



6. Menstrual Hygiene

QUESTIONS FROM THE GIRLS

"If you don't have money to buy pads or sanitary towels what can you use when you are menstruating?"

"How can a woman be clean during menstruation?"

"How can you control your menstruation when you have started while in school?"

ACTIVITY BOX

Menstrual Hygiene Products

Lay out a selection of menstrual hygiene products on the table. You could include a disposable pad, a reusable pad, a tampon, a menstrual cup and some cloth. Ask the girls which ones they have used or heard of. Then go through each item and explain how and where it is commonly used. Many of the girls we have worked with have never seen a tampon before and you may wish to demonstrate how it works using a glass of water. It may also be useful to demonstrate how the disposable and reusable pads fit into underwear.

Ask the class to suggest ideas about different products that women and girls in their community use during menstruation.

This could include:

Sanitary pads, cloth, tissue, sponge and mattress.

Facilitators should emphasize that whatever material is used, the most important thing is that it is changed regularly and reusable items are washed thoroughly.

You may wish to give out the 'Washing and Drying Handout' in the appendix which has instructions on washing and drying reusable products.

The importance of personal hygiene should also be discussed. Girls should try to wash regularly.

Explain that using soap in the private parts can cause irritation so it is best to use plain water.



7. Feelings

QUESTIONS FOR THE GIRLS

"Why is it that some girls cry when they start their menstruation period?"

"Why do girls feel very bad and feel emotional?"

"Why are women unhappy when they are menstruating?"

ACTIVITY BOX

Emotions Game

Get the volunteers from the class to take turns at acting out different emotions for the rest of the group to guess. An alternative is to have photos of lots of different expressions and get the group to guess what expression is being demonstrated.

There are some good online quizzes which can be used as a basis for this

(http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/ei_quiz/).

Discuss with the class the emotions they experience when menstruating.

Reassure them that it is normal to feel out of sorts (angry, tearful, sad, lonely, grumpy, exhausted and fragile) and encourage everyone to confide in friends/sisters/cousins/mother. Explain that it's not them going mad, but that the hormones which control the menstrual cycle affect the way we feel too.

8. Sex

QUESTIONS FROM THE GIRLS

"Are there safe days for girls after or before menstruation?"

"Why do women cry when they have sex with men?"

"I have my friend but my friend has boyfriend. Her boyfriend asked her to have sex but my friend refused. What can my friend do; if she loves her boyfriend so much?"

Sex is a difficult subject to talk about but it is important for girls to know the facts. Explain that you are here to provide them with the facts in a confidential and safe environment. Facilitators should remain non-judgmental and try to give factual answers. Where a value judgment is necessary, responses should be rooted in a human rights based approach and delivered in a culturally sensitive manner.



Sex and Menstruation

Just because a girl has started menstruating does not mean she is ready to have sex or marry. Beginning to menstruate is a physical process, having sex is a physical and emotional interaction with another person. Girls need to be physically and emotionally ready for this.

Sex and Contraception

Be clear that there is no 'safe' time to have sex during the menstrual cycle (even during menstruation) to avoid pregnancy if a woman is not using contraception. No contraception provides complete protection from pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.

With older girls or women you may wish to teach this session in more detail than would be appropriate with a younger age group. The following paragraphs outline details of different contraceptives that women may wish to know more about.

ACTIVITY BOX

Different Contraceptives

Bring along examples of different contraceptives including condoms and the oral contraceptive pill. Give participants the chance to look at the different options and ask questions. You may wish to demonstrate how to put on a condom using a banana.

The Rhythm Method

Some people may have heard of the rhythm method. This is when a couple time when they have sex to try and avoid pregnancy. They avoid having sex during the most fertile time of the menstrual cycle. This is the time after ovulation, usually 14 days before a woman bleeds. This has been used by people throughout history but it is not very effective and there is still a reasonable chance of becoming pregnant. 1 in 4 women will get pregnant using this method over a year².

Condoms

Condoms are a physical barrier placed over a man's penis during intercourse to prevent the sperm entering the uterus. They also protect against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. 1 in 5 women will get pregnant using this method over a year². There is also a female version of the condom that is inserted into the vagina prior to sexual intercourse.



The Oral Contraceptive Pill

These are pills containing hormones that a woman takes for three weeks of every month. These hormones stop the ovary releasing an egg and make it more difficult for a sperm to fertilise an egg. Every three weeks the woman stops taking the pill for seven days and bleeds. Many women like the fact they are able to control and predict their periods. Most women who take the pill do not experience any side effects but it can cause headaches or sore breasts. Women who take the pill are a slightly increased risk of developing a blood clot in their leg or chest and of developing breast cancer. However the pill reduces the risk of developing cancer of the womb and the ovaries. The pill alone does not protect against sexually transmitted infection. 1 in 10 women will get pregnant using the pill over a year².

The Depo Injection

This is an injection of hormones that a woman has every three months. It acts in a similar way to hormonal pills by stopping a woman releasing an egg and making it difficult for sperm to fertilise an egg. In the first months of use the injection can cause irregular or heavy bleeding. Women who have been using it for months often have no periods at all. When women stop using it, it takes about a year for fertility to return to normal. It can also make the bones thin and should not be used for many years if there is a reasonable alternative. 1 in 20 women will get pregnant using the depo injection for a year².

2. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (2011) Effectiveness of Contraceptive Methods. [Online] Accessed: 12/12/13
Available at: www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/UnintendedPregnancy/PDF/effectiveness_of_contraceptive_methods.pdf

Sex and Consent

Introduce the idea that nobody should be obliged to have sex if they don't want to, regardless of whether it's with a boyfriend/girlfriend or husband/wife, and that refusing sex does *not* make someone a bad wife/husband/girlfriend/boyfriend.

In some cultures, women and men may feel obliged to have sex when their partner wants it, particularly inside of marriage. A human rights based approach argues that men and women should have control over their own bodies and that all people have the right to say no to sex.

Explain that sexual intercourse is an act of physical intimacy between two consenting adults and that neither of them should be forced to do something they don't want to do. Facilitators can empathize by saying women all over the world are sometimes expected to do things they don't want to do, whether they are American, Kenyan, English or Chinese: whilst it's often difficult, they have the right to say no.



Closing the session

It is good to round the session off with some positive parting words so that people feel comfortable and positive.

'Thank you again for making us very welcome in your school/organisation. We hope that you have found sharing your ideas and experiences useful as it has been useful and enjoyable for us. We believe that women can gain a lot of support from each other so we encourage you to share your thoughts, feelings and ideas with your friends, your sisters, your cousins or your mothers. If anyone has any more questions then you are welcome to come and speak to us before we leave.'

It is a good idea to leave a hard copy of the teaching resources used during the session with a teacher or person in charge. All teaching resources can also be found on the Irise website www.irise.org.uk.

Instructors may find it useful to speak to the teachers or group leaders at the end of the session for some informal feedback.



Difficult Questions

These are challenging questions that need to be addressed if someone in the session asks them.

Can a tampon take away a girl's virginity?

No. A girl's virginity is not something that can be physically lost like a phone or an item of clothing. A girl 'losing her virginity' refers to the emotional and physical experience of her first sexual encounter. The hymen is the piece of skin covering the vagina. It is sometimes used as a measure of virginity but this is unreliable and inaccurate for a number of reasons:

1. The hymen may be damaged by injury, disease, medical examination or even physical activity.
2. There are different types of hymen. Some are easily damaged some are very elastic and may be relatively undamaged by sexual intercourse.

It is possible but very unlikely that using a tampon will damage the hymen. When the tampon is inserted the hymen stretches to accommodate it

Does the contraceptive pill cause infertility?

Women take the contraceptive pill either to help control their periods or because they don't want to get pregnant. Basically the pill is made up of the hormones (or chemical messengers) that control a women's menstrual cycle. The extra hormones stop the ovaries producing eggs and/or makes it harder for the sperm to reach the eggs. When a woman stops taking the pill her ovaries will start producing eggs again and her fertility will return.

Can the contraceptive pill cause you to have deformed children?

No there is no evidence to suggest this. Women who take the pill are a slightly increased risk of developing a blood clot in their leg or chest and of developing breast cancer. However the pill reduces the risk of developing cancer of the womb and the ovaries. There are also many health benefits for women if they are able to have fewer children and have some time between pregnancies.



Does sex before marriage cause cancer?

There is no evidence to suggest that the act of having sex outside of marriage increases a woman's risk of developing cancer. However having sex with lots of different people can increase a woman's risk of cervical cancer. This is because the virus that causes the cancer can be sexually transmitted. By having sex with lots of people a woman is simply increasing her chances of catching of it. Using a condom can reduce the risk of catching the virus.

What sort of menstrual symptoms are worrying in a young woman?

A small proportion of women and girls suffer from medical conditions that cause them to have severe pain or very heavy bleeding during their period. If a girl feels her pain is much worse than the pain experienced by her family and friends or her periods are very disabling she may wish to see a doctor or nurse. Although some irregularity is normal there are some conditions that mean women and girls may only have periods a couple of times a year. In this situation it would also be wise to seek medical advice, particularly if accompanied by spots, weight gain and hair growth on the face. Bleeding or smelly yellow discharge in between periods can be caused by sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and help should be sought as untreated STIs can cause infertility.

What sort of menstrual symptoms are worrying in an older woman?

Many women find that their periods change after they had had a baby. This is commonly reported and is nothing to worry about. Women should seek medical advice if they experience bleeding in between their periods or if they suffer post-menopausal bleeding.

Can girls develop hysteria when they are sexually frustrated or aroused?

Hysteria was believed to be a psychiatric illness by Victorian psychiatrists. However it is now discredited and is not thought to exist. Sexual arousal is a normal part of an adult sexual relationship. It is normal for women to become aroused and enjoy sex with their partner.

Is it dangerous for a woman to have sex during her period?

No physical damage occurs to the man or the woman if they have sexual intercourse while the woman is menstruating, but some women don't feel like having sex at this time. A woman can still get pregnant if she has sex during her



period. The safest way to prevent pregnancy is to use contraception. Remember, no form of contraception provides complete protection from pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.



Appendices



The following pages contain worksheets and hand-outs that you may find useful when providing teaching about menstruation. They may be freely photocopied and distributed for non-profit means, provided Irise is properly credited as the source.

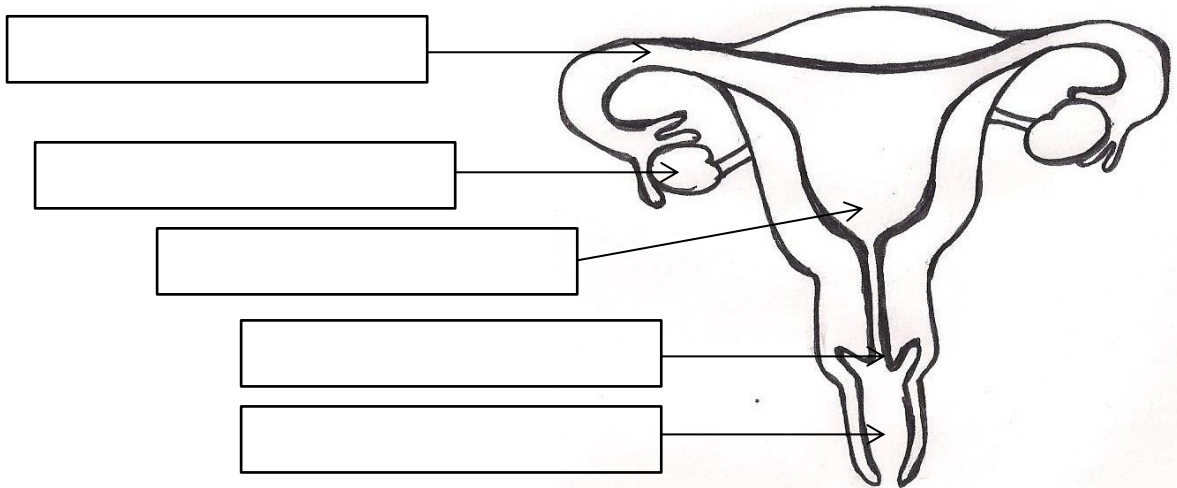
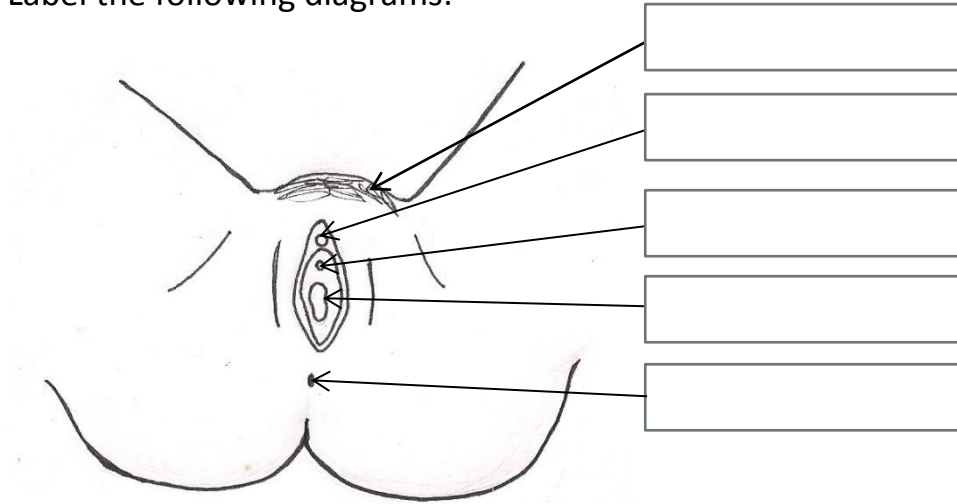
Hand-outs included are:

1. Anatomy Worksheet
2. Menstrual Cycle Cards
3. Using, washing and drying re-usable pads hand-out



Anatomy Worksheet

Label the following diagrams:



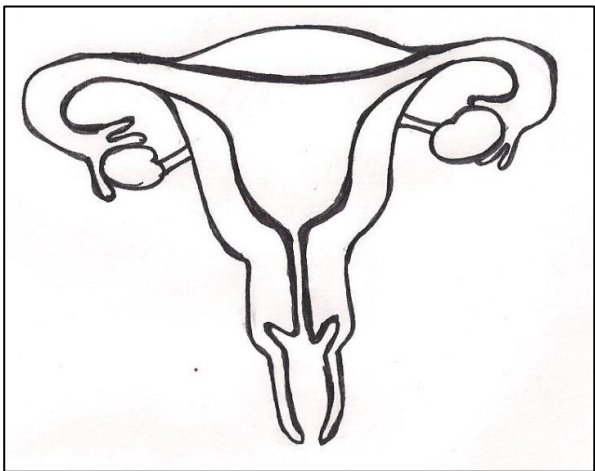
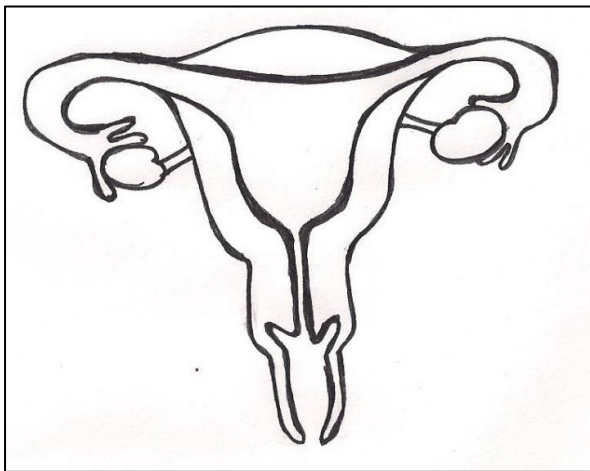
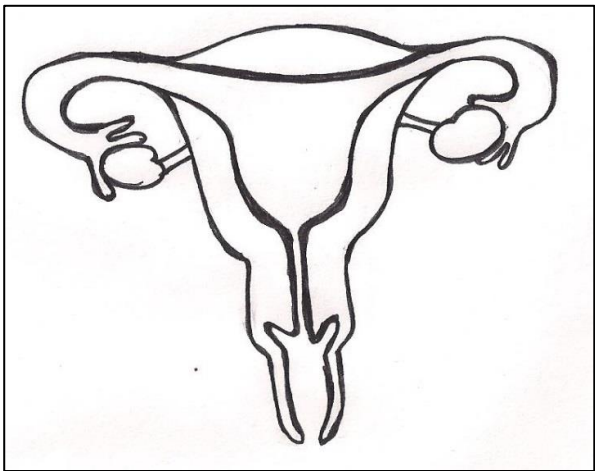
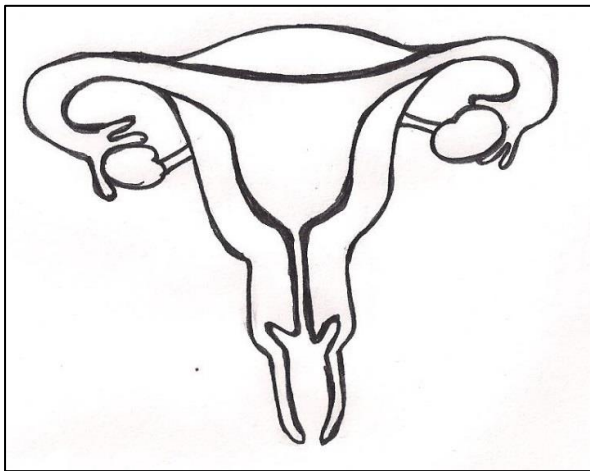
Match the following anatomical parts to their purpose or function:

Ovary		This is the passageway from the womb which menstrual blood passes through (and during labour a baby).
Vagina		This tube comes from the bladder and urine passes through it.
Urethra		This is the entrance to the womb. It normally only has a very small hole but it stretches during childbirth.
Cervix		Contains a woman's eggs and releases one regularly as part of a woman's menstrual cycle.



Menstrual Cycle Cards

Draw the 4 stages of the menstrual cycle on the cards below.

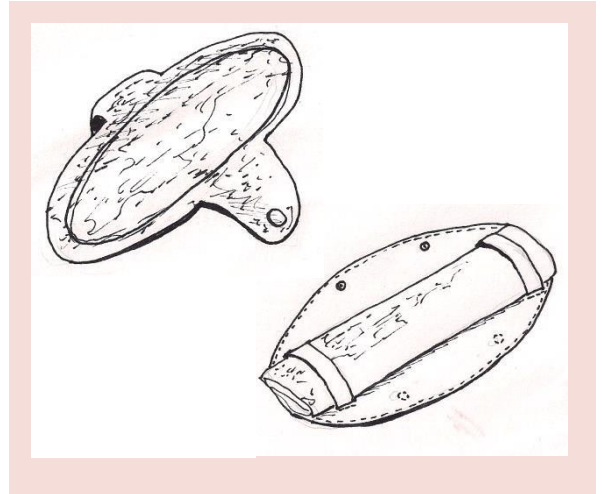




Using, Washing and Drying Reusable Pads

Using...

The pad insert or the entire 'all in one' pad should be changed at least once every 8 hours. Base Pads can be used for longer but should be changed if they become stained by blood.



...Washing...

Pads should be soaked in cold water then washed with soap and water



...Drying.

Pads can be dried outside in the sun.



Wearing a damp or dirty pad may cause irritation or infection



Educate. Empower. Evaluate.