

DYSMENORRHEA

More than one half of women who menstruate have some pain 1-2 days each month. Usually, the pain is mild. But sometimes the pain is so severe it keeps them from normal activity. Pain this severe is called dysmenorrhea. This pamphlet explains:

- Symptoms and causes
- Treatments
- How you can relieve the pain

The Menstrual Cycle

- A menstrual cycle starts with the first day of vaginal bleeding. It ends with the first day of vaginal bleeding the next period. An average cycle lasts about 28 days.

Causes of Menstrual Pain

- The uterus is a muscle. Like all muscles, it can contract and relax. During your period, it contracts more strongly. Sometimes when it contracts you feel a cramping pain.

Symptoms of Dysmenorrhea

- Cramps or pain in the lower abdomen or lower back
- Pulling feeling in the inner thigh
- Diarrhea
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Dizziness

Treatment

- The treatment for dysmenorrhea may include medications and techniques to relieve pain. If the cause of dysmenorrhea is found, the treatment will focus on removing or reducing the problem. Your doctor may suggest hormones or medications that relax the muscles of the uterus. In some cases, you may need surgery to remove the cause of pain or reduce the pain. Some complementary and alternative treatments may help. In some cases, a mix of treatments work best.

Finally...

- Pain during the menstrual period is a common problem for women. Most pain is mild and can be treated with over-the-counter medications. Sometimes, the pain is severe and requires further treatment.

- If you have severe menstrual cramps or cramps that last more than 2 or 3 days, see your doctor. He or she will work with you to help you find a way to relieve the pain or treat the cause.

* Please see brochure in link