

Ritu's Ritu

"Un-spoken Tales"



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Published by: **Aaina,**
70/3530, (Ground Floor)
Jayadev Vihar, Bhubaneswar -751013
Tel-0674-2360630
Email- info@aaina.org.in
Supported by: **Water Aid, India**
Year of Publication: 2014-15

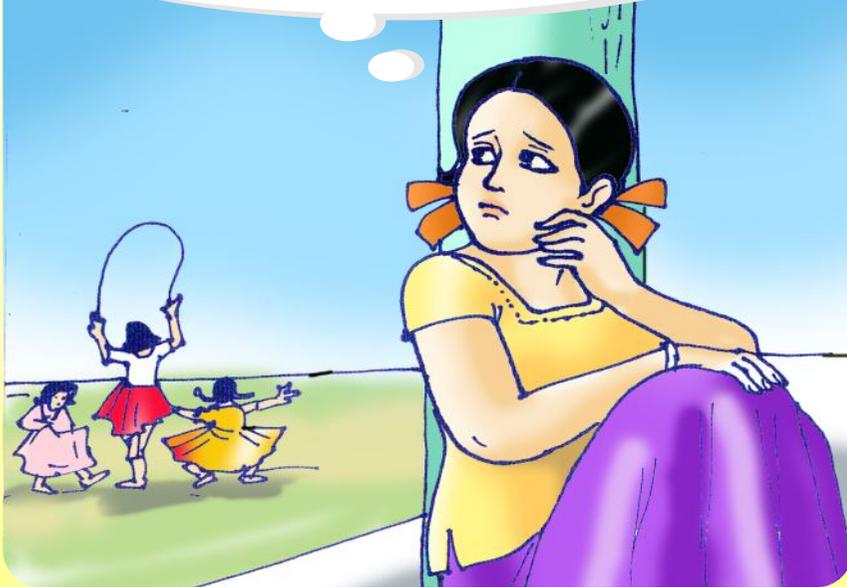
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Printed at- Intecard
442, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007,

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Why is Maa' restricting me from playing ?
All my friends are playing outside.



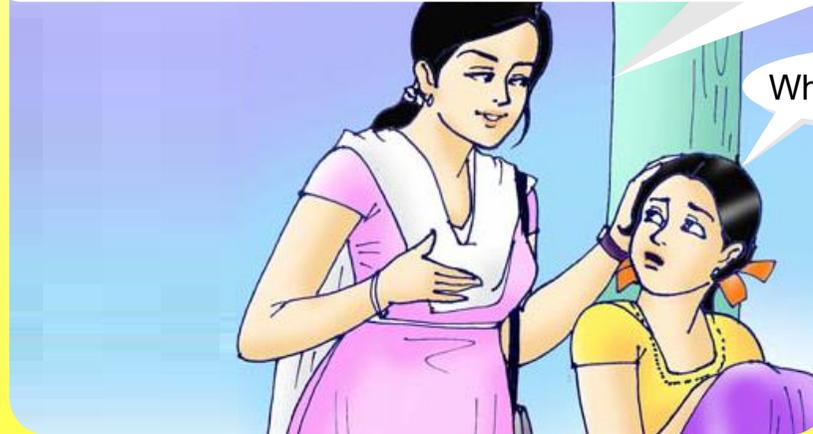
What is up with her...
Why is she sitting alone?



Ghongroo Di, Maa says that I have grown up now and
I should not go out to play anymore.



Oh! Come home in the evening, we will talk it
out and also have cake.



What will I do ?

What does "Growing Up" mean?



Oh! You have come!
I was waiting for you.



Mother , Ritu has come

Oh! How are you !
Is everything fine with you ?
You girls carry on,
I'll get the snacks.

Di, we have come.

You have come at the right time...
Come take a seat.





This doll is so pretty !

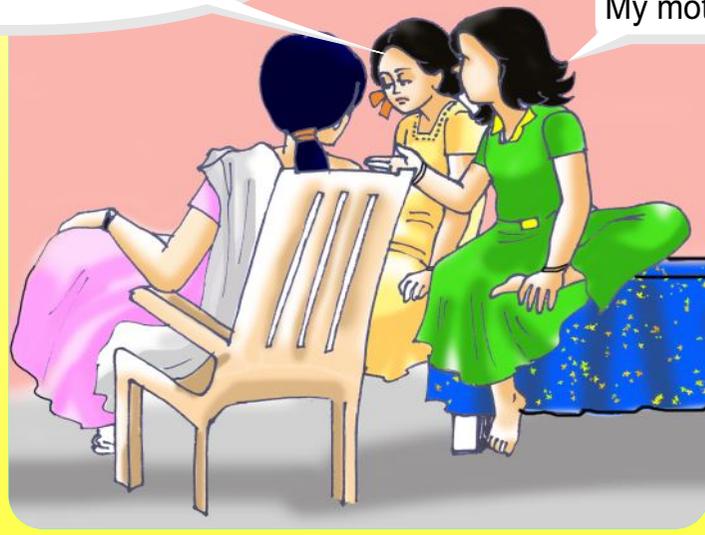
Yes, I used to play with it when I was younger. These days , it is just used as décor.



Growing up is very bad, isn't it Di?

No, not at all. If you don't grow up, how will you come to know about the world?

Then why does Maa' always enforce restrictions on me ?



Really ! Why does Aunty do so ? My mother doesn't tell me anything.

Yes, wait . I will be telling you about the signs of growing up –

Di, me and Bini are of the same age!
Then how is it that I have grown up
and she has not ?



Are your clothes becoming tighter?



Are you interested in looking pretty all the time?



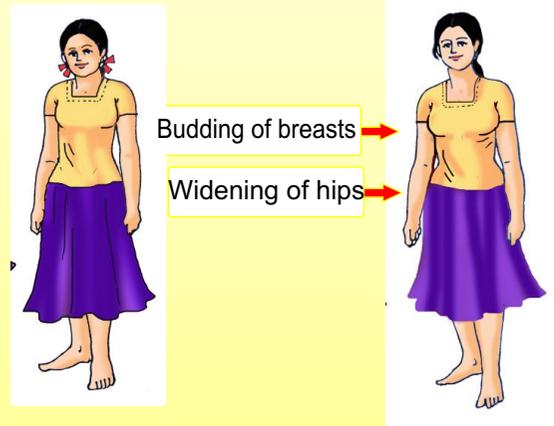
Do you want to spend more time with your friends ?



Are you attracted towards the opposite gender?

Are these the signs of growing up ?

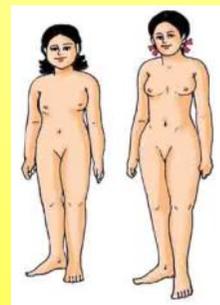
No, these are just the beginning. The actual signs are the physical changes which take place –



Growing taller, Putting on weight



Outbreak of pimples



Growth of pubic hair and hair around the armpits



White liquid discharge from the vagina

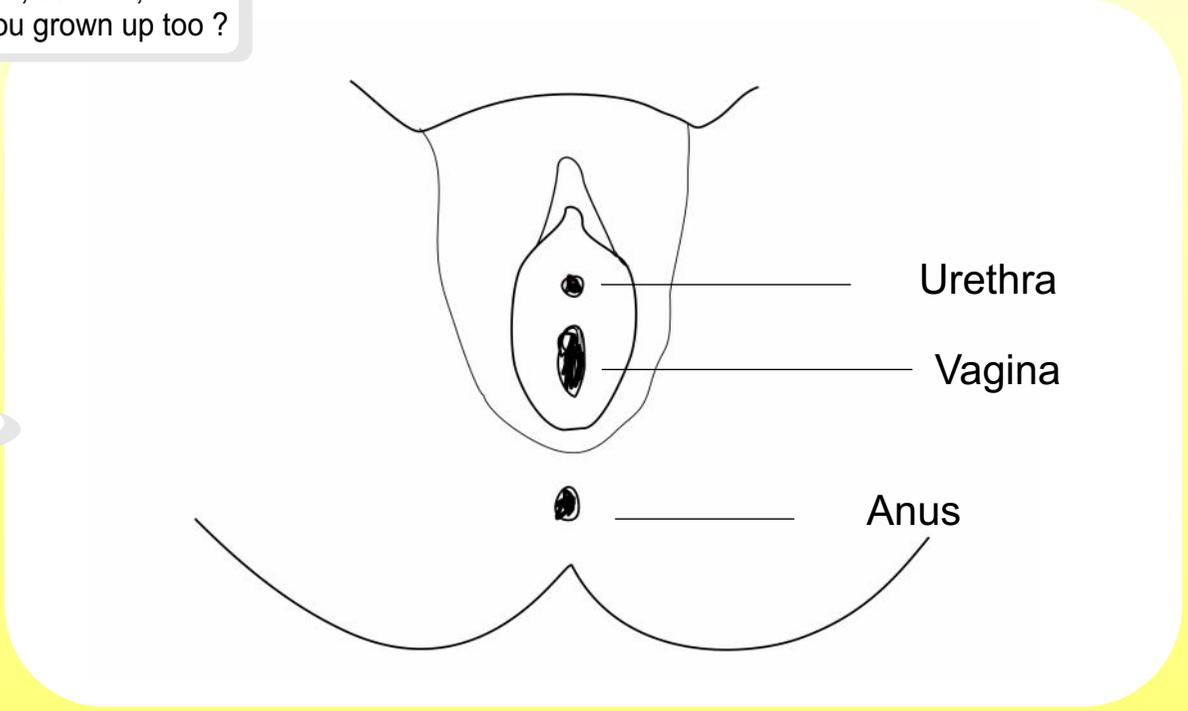
Yes, I am having these signs.
But, what is a vagina ?

It's the opening from where
the urine comes out.

Oh, but Bini,
have you grown up too ?



No, no that isn't a vagina .
Wait I will draw you a picture.



Vagina is located between the urethra and the anus.
This is the path for child birth.

But Di, a lot of restrictions are imposed on girls , when they grow up. But boys aren't restricted from doing anything. Don't they grow up ?

No, no, not at all. Boys grow up too, their body also undergoes changes during puberty –



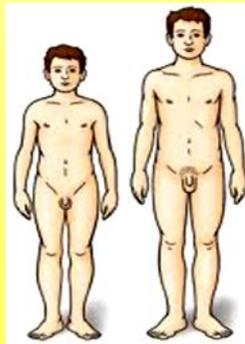
Growing of beard and moustache



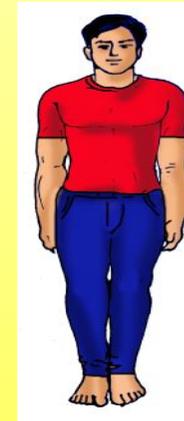
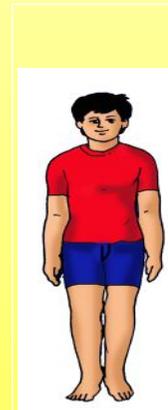
Cracking of the voice



Growth of body hair



Enlargement of the genitalia



Growing taller , putting on weight

Like girls boys also undergo both physical and psychological changes.

What is Period?



Di, if these are the signs of growing up, then what about me ?

Yes.. yes.. I 'm coming to that. We will now talk about periods.



Periods! Di, this is school's affair, Why are you repeating here ?

Oh God ! if you have periods, you will be a grown up and then you can't even go out to play.



No.. no.., When blood comes out through your vagina for the first time, it is said that you are having a period.

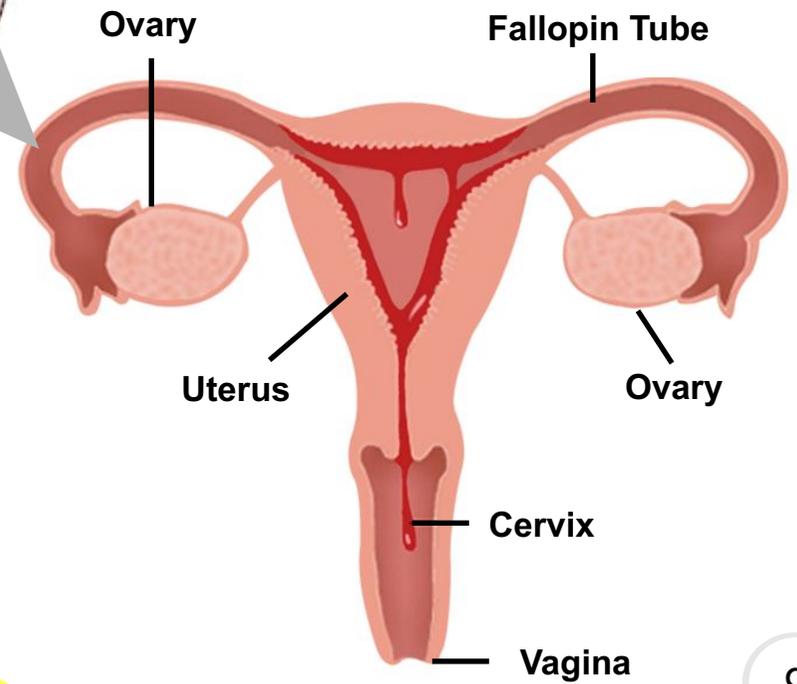
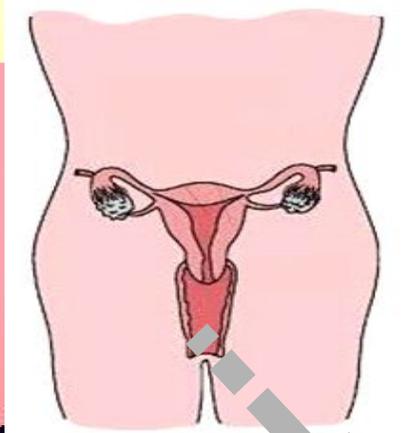
Why will blood come out ? Will we get hurt or what ?

No, it comes automatically..

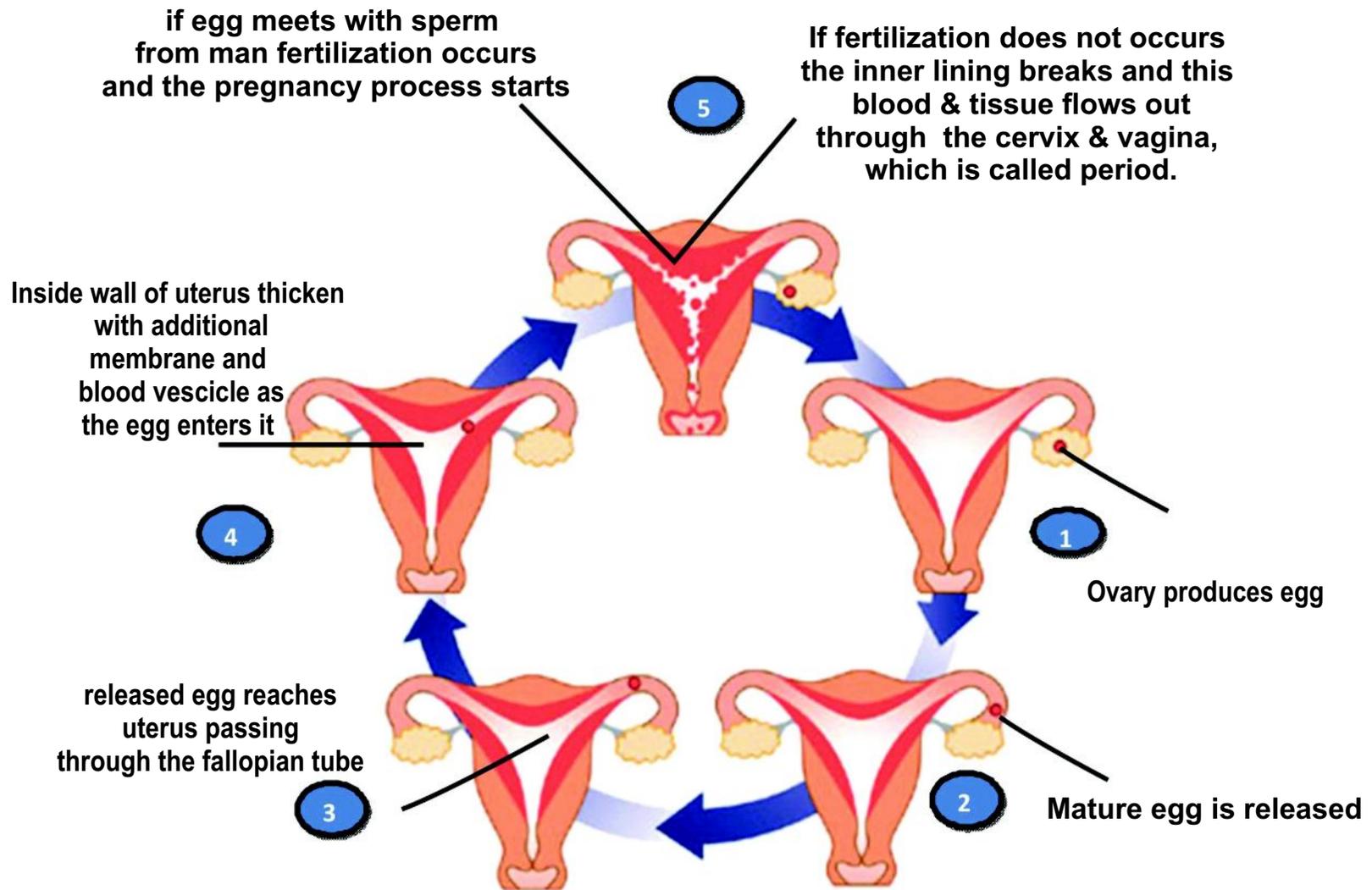


Period is the sign of fertility. Since now a girl has the power to bring forth new life & give birth to a child..

Look here...this is a picture of the female reproductive system...



Menstruation Cycle





Oh! When does this happen, Di?

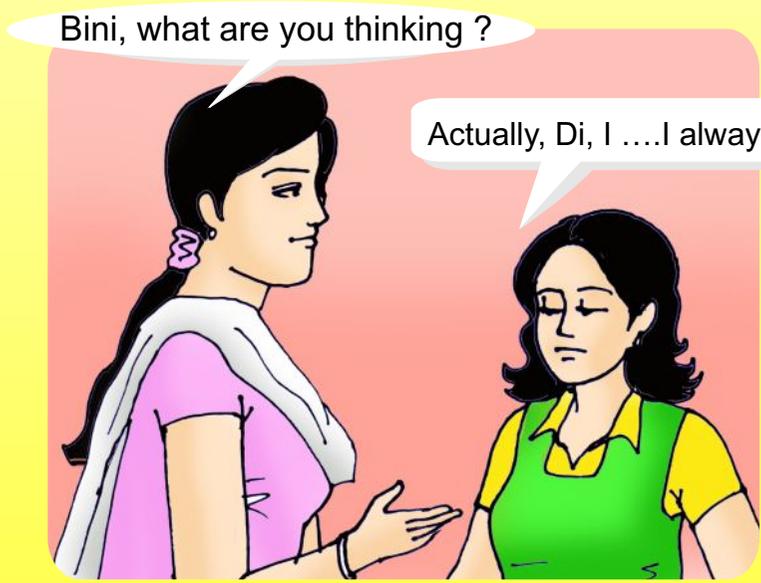
It usually occurs during the age group of 10-13 years.



Does this happen only once?

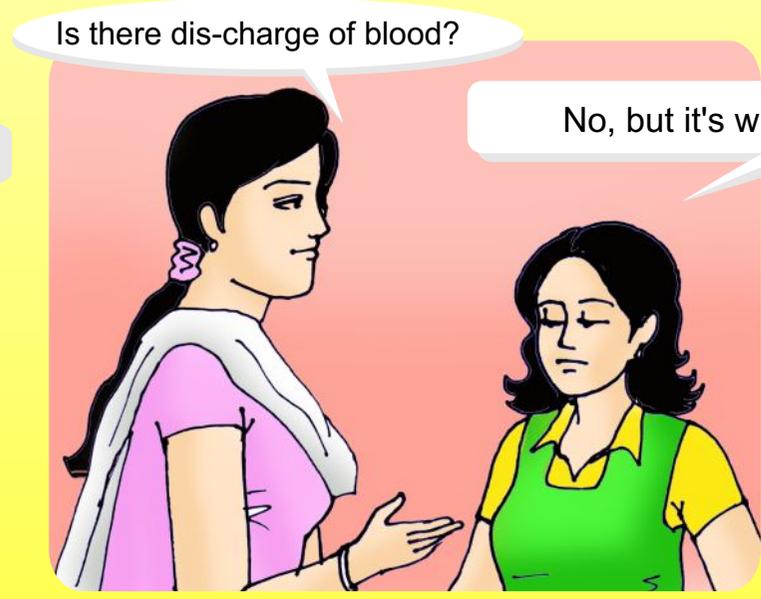


No, after menarche, it occurs every month, mostly after a gap of 28-30 days.



Bini, what are you thinking ?

Actually, Di, II always feel wet ..wet...



Is there dis-charge of blood?

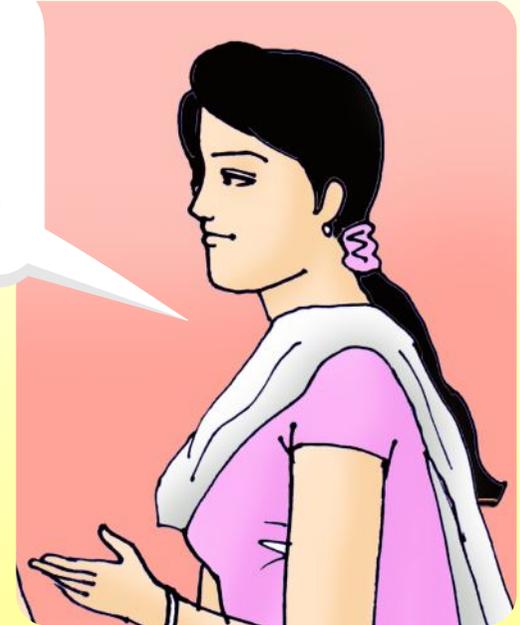
No, but it's whitish...

Oh, that means it's a white dis-charge.
It's a sign before menarche.

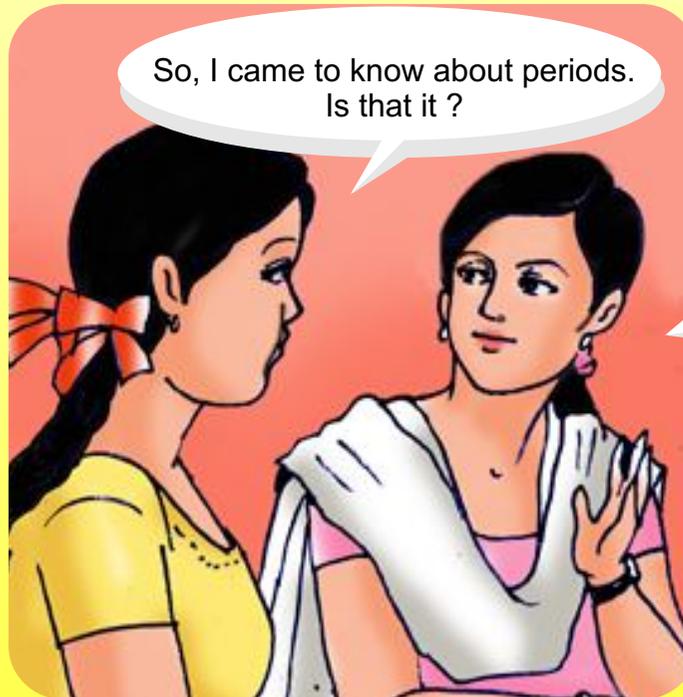
What is
that now ?



It's a natural process.
There's nothing to worry about.
This in fact, helps to keep your vagina clean
and protects you from various infections.
But if the dis-charge is in a copious amount,
then you should consult a doctor.



So, I came to know about periods.
Is that it ?



No..no.., you still have to
know about hygiene and how
you should take care of yourself
during periods.

Health & Hygiene

Tell me.., Ritu.. what do you use during your periods?



Maa' gave me some pieces of cloth from her old saree. But I feel nauseating, while washing and using them.



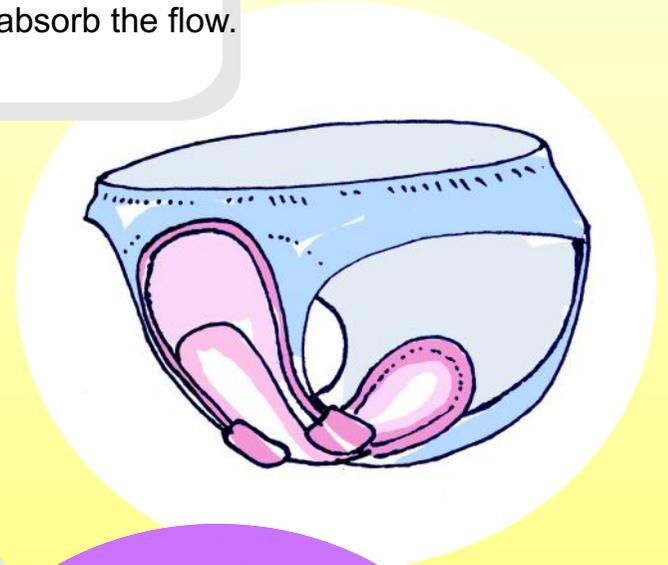
Well, if you don't like that.. then, you can use sanitary napkins too. They are safe and are easy to dispose.

Sanitary napkin! What is that?





This is a sanitary napkin. It has gum behind it and you can stick it onto your Underwear ; it'll automatically stay in place & absorb the flow.

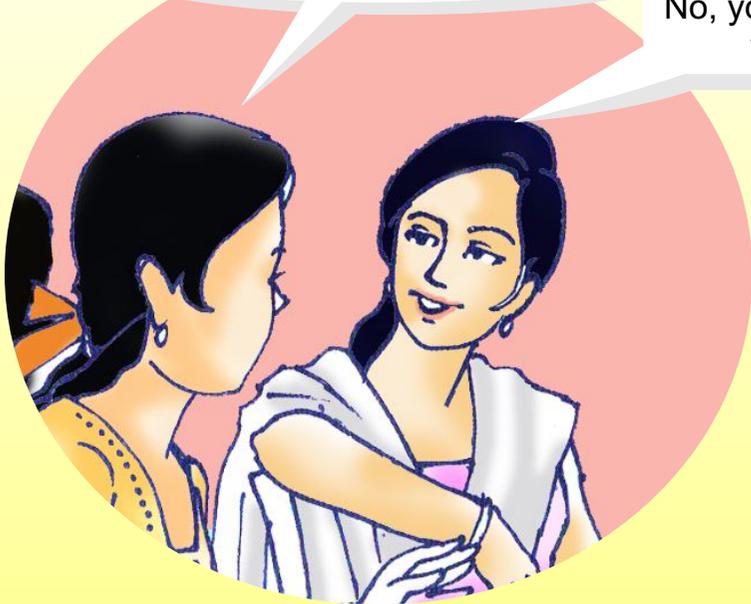


Oh ! This! I have seen it in the store near my house.. but I never knew, what it actually was.



But , Di, do I have to wash this ?

No, you don't have to wash it ,
you can change it –



→ Wrap it up in an old newspaper



You can either burn or bury it



You shouldn't throw it , here and there

How many times a day do we have to change it ?



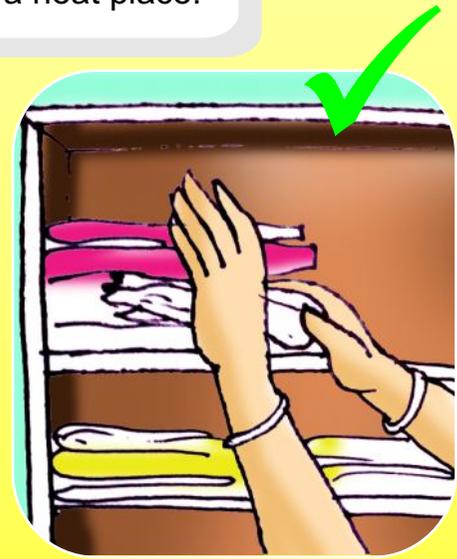
You should change it after every 6 hours – be it cloth or pad. it is Hygiene for health.



But Di, what about the people who don't have money to buy sanitary napkins?



They can use cotton cloth. But they should wash it properly with soap & clean water & dry it under sunlight and keep it in a neat place.





During periods, dis-charge of blood and wetness around the vagina can cause bacterial infections, which can further lead to serious health dis-orders.

Therefore, one should follow the following steps –



Always use clean & cotton cloth



Take a bath properly & regularly. Clean the vagina and the surrounding area



Wash your hands before and after changing cloth or sanitary napkin.

Our Practice & Associated Myths

Ritu, tell me when did you start menstruating ?

I got it during the days when I was absent from school.



But , you told that you had gone to your uncle's place and that is why you were absent.

I lied because Maa asked me not to speak the truth



But then , why weren't you coming to school?

Maa locked me up and didn't allow me to socialize. So...



But, you did nothing wrong ?

That wasn't enough, listen..





Maa asked me not to eat a variety of food – sweets, meat, spices, pickles



I had to eat separately



I wasn't allowed to look at any male



I wasn't allowed to go into the kitchen



I had to sleep alone



I wasn't allowed to eat rice during night

But , these are all old world tales.



this is nothing. There are many myths and restrictions existing in our society in & around period too, like –



A tree dies if touched by a menstruating woman



Women are not allowed to go to places of worship if they are menstruating



If you burn the used cloth or pad, then one will be un-able to bear child



During periods, you are not allowed to take a bath



You aren't supposed to jump over brooms

Facts



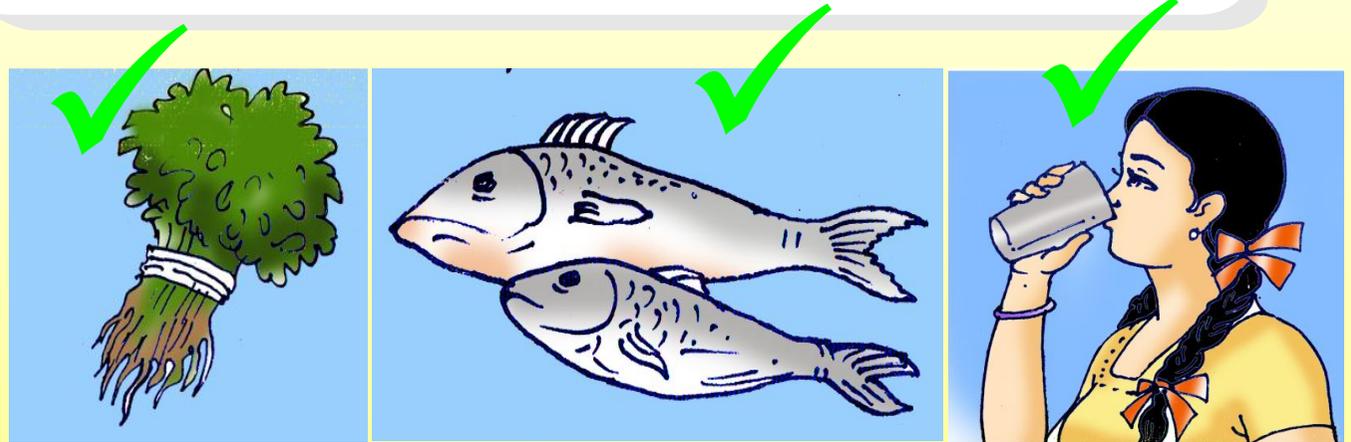
Now you both have come to know that menstruating is a natural process and every woman undergoes it. There is nothing sinful about it, and you don't need to feel bad, hide it or be ashamed about it.

In reality, you can continue to lead your life , as before – playing , going to school, eating together, praying etc.

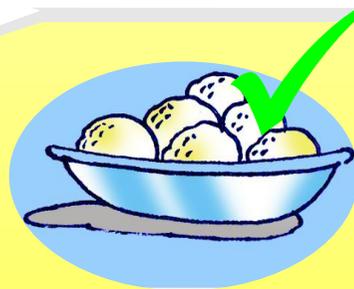




During periods, we should have healthy and nutritious food – food with rich in vitamins and irons i.e. green vegetables, non-veg, fruits and drink lots of water



Di, Maa says that eating sweets leads to more dis-charge of blood.



No food affects your level of discharge; the level varies from person-person depending on the body structure.



Along with eating nutritious food, one should also take care of her health and hygiene.



But Di, why do our mothers believe in these superstitions?



Because, during their time, it was a taboo talking about this openly..They were not able to get accurate information. So, they follow whatever was told to them.

Oh, Ghongroo. Will you just keep on chatting, or will you offer the girls some food , too? Here, I got you people snacks.

Yes, let us eat. And promise me that you will apply whatever you have learnt today and also pass on the knowledge among friends.

But , if I tell all of these to Maa, will she heed me ? Please Di, talk to her.



Why not ? If you talk to her properly, Aunty will definitely understand. I will speak to her.



Yes..Yes.. definitely, we will...





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