

Menstruation: Bleeding Between Periods

What causes bleeding between periods?

Bleeding from the uterus between menstrual periods is a common problem. It's especially common if you are a teenager or if you are getting close to menopause. There are many reasons why it may happen. For example, it may be caused by:

- Hormone imbalance
- Polyps, which are growths in the uterus (usually noncancerous)
- Fibroids, which are noncancerous growths in the uterus
- Early pregnancy
- Infection of the uterus, cervix, or vagina
- Use of an IUD or birth control pills
- Endometriosis (tissue from the lining of the uterus that is growing outside the uterus)
- Scar tissue in the uterus
- Chronic medical problems, such as thyroid problems or diabetes
- Some medicines, such as blood thinners
- Stress
- Cancer

The medical term for bleeding between periods is metrorrhagia.

How is it diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider will ask about your medical history and menstrual cycles. Your provider may ask you to keep a diary of bleeding and nonbleeding days with notes about how heavy the bleeding was. You will also have a physical exam.

You may need a blood test or procedure, such as:

- **Endometrial biopsy:** Your healthcare provider inserts a tiny tube through the vagina and into the uterus to take a sample of tissue from the inside of the uterus. The tissue is then examined in the lab.
- **Ultrasound scan:** Sound waves are used to get pictures of the uterus, ovaries, and pelvis. The ultrasound probe may be placed on your lower belly or into your vagina.
- **Sonohysterogram:** An ultrasound scan is done after fluid is injected through a tube into your uterus. This test allows your provider to look for problems with the lining of the uterus.
- **Hysteroscopy:** Your healthcare provider inserts a thin flexible lighted tube through the vagina and cervix and into the uterus. Your provider uses the scope to see the inside of the uterus.

- **Hysterosalpingogram:** Dye is injected into the uterus and fallopian tubes through the cervix. Then X-rays are taken. The dye outlines the shape and size of the uterus and tubes.

Many of these procedures may be done in your healthcare provider's office. Others may be done in an outpatient clinic.

How is it treated?

The treatment depends on the cause of the problem. For example, if you have a hormone imbalance, your healthcare provider may prescribe hormones. If an IUD is causing the problem, your provider may remove the IUD.

Sometimes surgery is needed. Possible surgical treatments include:

- **Dilation and curettage (D&C)**, which is a procedure for opening the cervix and then scraping or suctioning tissue from inside the uterus
- **Hysteroscopy**, which may be done to remove tissue, such as a polyp
- **Hysterectomy**, which is surgery to remove the uterus

If cancer is found, it may be treated with surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy (anticancer drugs), or any combination of these treatments.

How long will the effects last?

How long you have bleeding between periods depends on the cause and treatment.

How can I take care of myself?

Follow the treatment recommended by your provider.

Call your provider right away if:

- You have severe bleeding or pain.

Call your provider during office hours if:

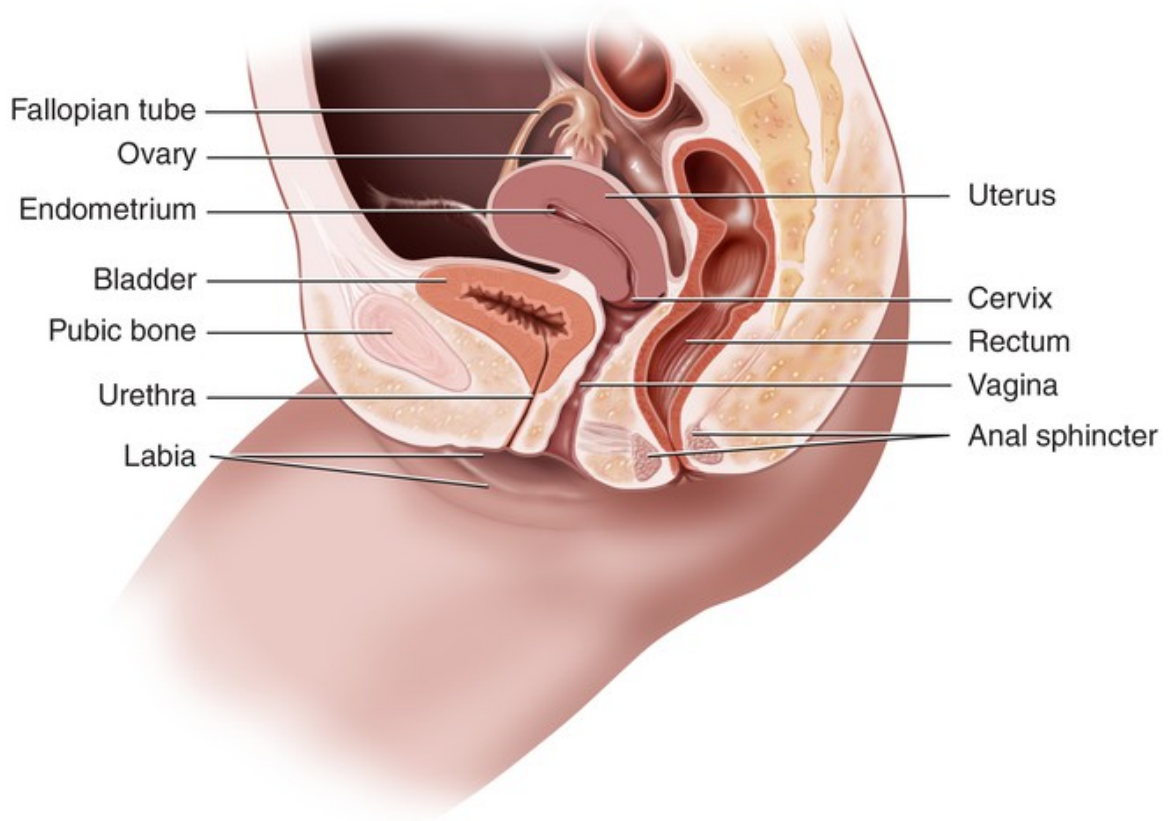
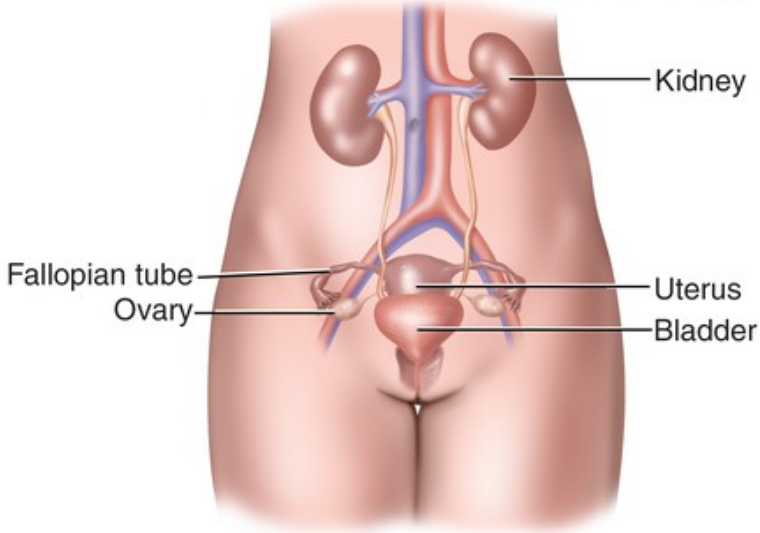
- You have bleeding between periods for 2 months in a row.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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Female Pelvis

(Female Pelvis)



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