

# Menstruation--Missed Periods: Brief Version

## What is a missed period?

Normally women start having menstrual periods when they reach puberty. Then, unless they are pregnant or breast-feeding, they keep having a period every month until they reach menopause, usually in their 50s.

Not having periods, or missing periods, is called amenorrhea. There are different kinds of amenorrhea. One kind is when you have not had a period at all by the time you are 15 years old. The second kind is when you have had regular periods and then stop having them.

## What is the cause?

### If you have never had a period:

If you have never had periods, you may have late puberty. This may happen if you are very thin or very athletic. Or you may have a hormone problem or birth defect.

### If you've had periods before:

A missed period may be caused by pregnancy, breast-feeding, or some types of birth control. It may happen because you are close to menopause.

Your periods could stop for many other reasons.

- You may have a lot of stress.
- You may exercise a lot and be very thin.
- You may have a problem with your glands. For example, you may have a problem with your thyroid gland.
- You may have a problem with your uterus.
- You may be taking a medicine that affects your periods.

Your periods will stop if your uterus has been taken out by surgery.

When you don't have your periods, most of the time it does not mean you have a serious disease. But it's not always easy to figure out why the periods have stopped. You may need to have some tests. Work with your healthcare provider. Do what he or she advises.

## How is it treated?

Your treatment depends on what is causing the problem. You may not even need treatment. Or:

- You may just need to eat and exercise in a different way.
- You may need to learn to manage stress.
- You may need to take hormone medicine, like birth control pills.
- You may need surgery.

Your healthcare provider will talk to you about what treatment will be best for you.

### **When will my periods come back?**

- If you have just stopped taking birth control pills, your periods may come back in a few weeks or months.
- If you have been sick or under a lot of stress, most likely your periods will start again after a few months.
- If your periods have stopped because of weight loss or a lot of exercise, they will most likely come back within a few months after you have gained weight or have been exercising less.

### **How can I take care of myself?**

If you miss more than 2 periods in a row, see your healthcare provider.

If your periods don't come every month, keep a record of them. Write down:

- The dates that they start
- How long they last
- How heavy the flow is
- Problems you may have with them

Try to find out if any woman in your family has had a problem like yours.

Follow your healthcare provider's advice.

### **How can I help prevent missing a period?**

To keep your periods normal, it is important to stay healthy:

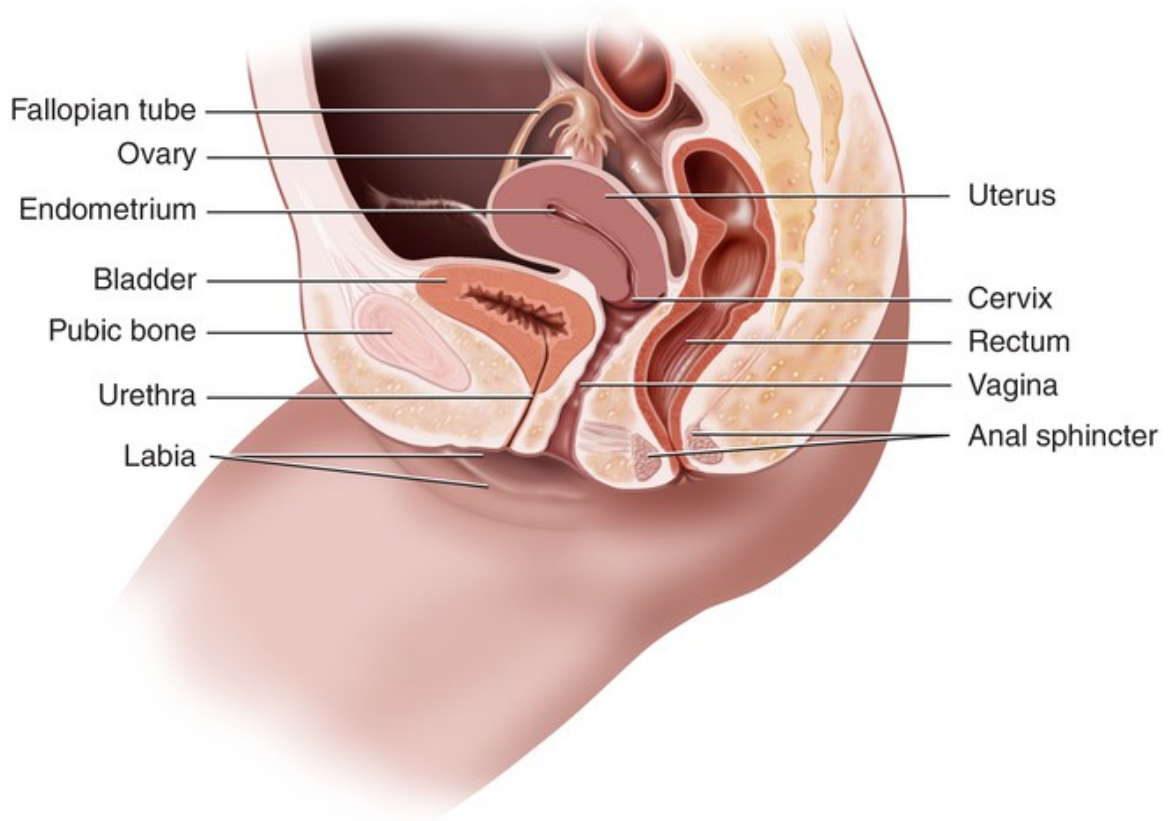
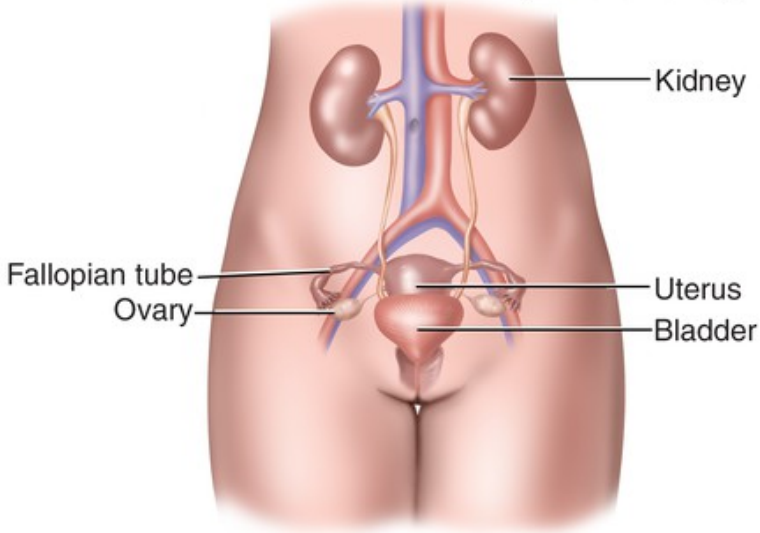
- Eat and exercise to keep a healthy weight.
- Don't use alcohol or street drugs. Medicines like sleeping pills can also make your periods stop.
- Don't smoke.
- Get the help you need to lower stress and problems in your life. Talk to your friends, family, or a counselor for support.

Developed by RelayHealth.

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# Female Pelvis

(Female Pelvis)



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