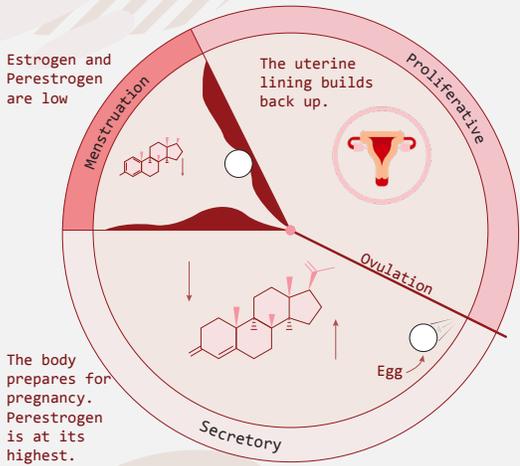


# The Period Stain

## Menstrual Equity in U.S. Public School Bathrooms



### What is a period?

The period or menstruation is a phase in the menstrual cycle where the uterine lining (composed of blood and tissue) is shedding from your uterus.

### What is its purpose?

The menstrual cycle prepares your body for pregnancy every month.

### When do most people get their period?

Those who menstruate get their first period between the ages of 8 and 15. Periods continue monthly until menopause which occurs around your late 40's and 50's

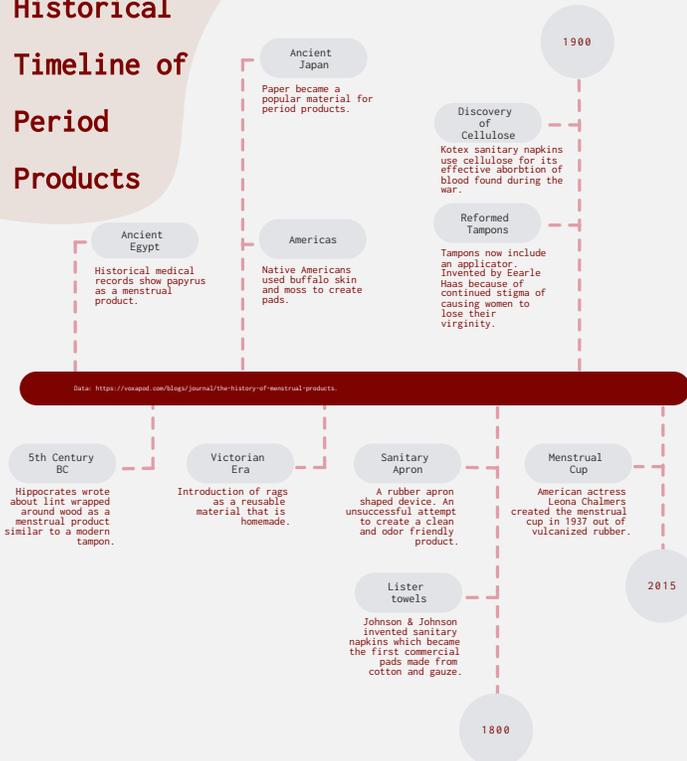
### What happens during your period?

2-3 tablespoons of blood are lost on average, but some people lose up to 2 cups of blood.

You may also experience other symptoms such as:

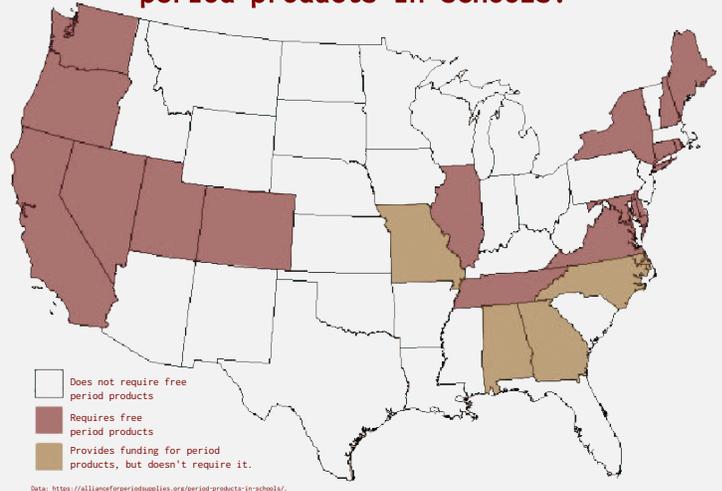
- Bloating
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Joint and lower back pain
- Low energy, fatigue
- Headaches
- Abdominal cramps (the pain varies, but sometimes it is comparable to the pain experienced while giving birth)
- Acne

## Historical Timeline of Period Products



### Period Poverty - The inadequate access to period products and educational resources on menstruation

## Which states passed laws requiring free period products in schools?



## Statistics from menstruating students in the U.S.

- 1 in 5 Teens** Struggle to afford period products
- 4 in 5 Teens** Either missed class or know someone who did because they did not have access to period products
- 3 in 5 Students** Rarely find free period products in school bathrooms
- 17 States** Have passed legislation to ensure students have access to free menstrual products
- 51%** Students have worn period products longer than recommended
- 42%** Say their health teacher looks uncomfortable when discussing menstruation
- 23%** Students have struggled to afford period products
- 57%** Say that the school doesn't care about them because they don't provide free period products in bathrooms
- 58%** Are negatively affected by period stigma

- 70%** Say that the school environment makes them self-conscious when on their period
- 76%** Are taught the biology of a frog more than female anatomy
- 76%** Believe that there is a negative association that periods are unsanitary
- 83%** Hide their period products when they walk out of class to go to the bathroom

# Destigmatizing and Preserving Dignity

## Healthier Social Environments

- Be understanding of the issues people who menstruate face
- Avoid usage of euphemisms that perpetuate the idea that periods are shameful and impure
- Do not berate others because of a natural bodily function

## Education

- Updating sex education to include menstruation for everyone
- Normalize open conversations about menstruation at home and school
- Talking to teens about purchasing period products
- Continue to research the issues at hand



39 States and the District of Columbia mandate some kind of sex education and/or HIV education.

Data: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators/whats-state-sex-education-us>



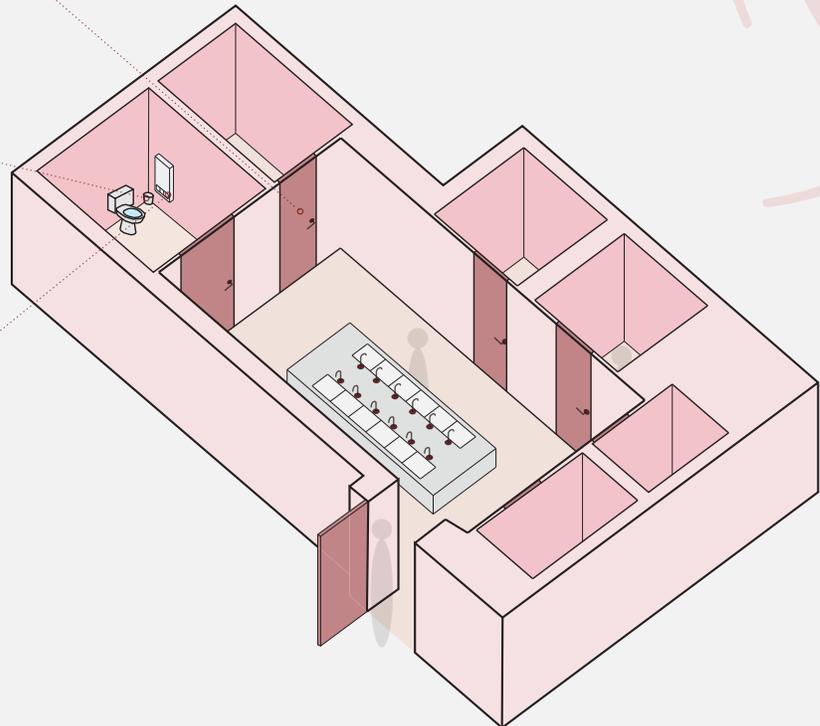
3+ minutes

## Menstrual Equity in School Environments

- At school, nurse's offices are often much too far of a walk from bathrooms. Students waste class time (at least 3 minutes) walking to the office before going to the bathrooms if they do not have any period products. This can be an embarrassing moment especially if students bled through their clothing.
- Cramps and other symptoms can prevent students from making this walk due to pain and discomfort.

## Solutions

1. Canceling heavy reverberation can lessen the anxiety many people face when opening pads. This can be done by using full height partitions which will also provide more privacy.
2. Proper ventilation will ease the anxiety of strong odors during menstruation.
3. Having accessible and sanitary trashcans that are able to hold large amounts of period products for efficient disposal.
4. Disposable wipes for students to use in stalls to promote hygienic habits and alleviates the stress of getting blood on yourself.
5. Providing free period products to students alleviates financial burdens and the fear of not having menstrual products.
6. Ideally, placing individual boxes of products within the stalls will be even better in case students have bled through. Period products are just as important as toilet paper, so why are they not in the same spaces?



These design choices alleviates the stress students face during their period, which will lead to an increase in attendance in schools.

Graphics made by Joby Lin

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