

# The Menstrual Cycle?

the monthly process of ovulation and menstruation to prepare a woman's body for pregnancy

## The four phases of the menstrual cycle

### Menstruation: days 1-5

Menstruation is commonly known as a 'period' and starts when an egg from the previous cycle has not been fertilised. When you menstruate, your uterine lining sheds and flows out of your vagina. Each period contains blood, mucus and some cells from the lining of the uterus.

### Follicular : days 6-14

The follicular phase starts on the first day of your period and lasts for 13 to 14 days, ending in ovulation. Usually, one follicle will mature into an egg and simultaneously the lining of the uterus thickens in preparation for an egg and to support a possible pregnancy.

### Luteal: days 15-28

After ovulation, cells in the ovary release progesterone and a small amount of oestrogen. This triggers the lining of the uterus to thicken in preparation for a possible pregnancy.

### Ovulation: day 14

Ovulation is when a mature egg is released from an ovary and moves along a fallopian tube towards your uterus in readiness for fertilisation by sperm.



## What is the Menstrual Cycle

## the monthly cycle that prepares the body for reproduction

Menstruation occurs from puberty onwards (anywhere from age 8 upwards) till the menopause (typically from age 50 onwards). The menstrual cycle is the time from the first day of a woman's period to the day before her next period. This monthly cycle is controlled by hormones oestrogen and progesterone that stimulate a sequence of events to prepare the body for the possibility of a pregnancy. The average menstrual cycle, which is measured from the first day of menstruation is 28 days, but this varies between women and can range from 21 to 35 days,

## Other Symptoms

## symptoms can vary greatly from one person to another

Abdominal and pelvic cramping, lower back pain, bloating, sore breasts, food cravings, mood swings, irritability, headaches and fatigue. Changes in hormone levels before menstruation may also cause some individuals to experience a group of physical and emotional symptoms, also known as premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

## Diet & Nutrition

## Diet and Lifestyle support for the Menstrual Cycle

Diet can play an important role in supporting menstruation. BANT nutrition practitioners assess and identify potential nutritional imbalances to understand how these may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns. Practitioners consider each individual to be unique and recommend personalised nutrition and lifestyle programmes rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

