

Tips and Tricks for Coping With Heavy Periods

Here are some tips from young women about how they manage their heavy periods:

Daytime Strategies

- When I am out and about and active, I keep an emergency bag of:
 - At least 2 extra pairs of panties
 - An extra pair of jeans in my car at all times (younger girls may wish to keep these in a locker)
 - A long-sleeved sweater or jacket (in case of any accidents, this comes in handy for a quick fix to tie around your waist)
 - Pads, tampons, and panty liners

I also carry a cute little cosmetics bag in my purse during the day. It's full of pads, panty liners, and tampons at all times. It's discreet, so when you take it to the bathroom, it just looks like a little makeup bag. I actually restock it every night before the next day's work to make sure I am covered. Just be stocked at all times, wherever you're going, so you can avoid a potentially embarrassing situation!

- Things to avoid when your periods are heavy:
 - Thongs and going "commando"
 - Your favorite pairs of underwear, skirts, or lightly colored shorts or pants
 - Swimming

Most other daily activities are just fine. If you don't feel up to doing something, just don't.

- One of the problems I encountered with pads was limited mobility. I was in dance classes, and if I moved around too much the pad would move out of place. I felt I had to constantly check to see if I needed to change; otherwise there was a sponge-like effect when I sat down.

On my heaviest days, I would set alarm clocks during the night to make sure I would get up to change. Once I moved on to tampons I felt safer. I did run into some trouble at the beginning. So, I would suggest using light pads as well as tampons until you know more or less when they need to be changed.

- I've noticed that at the beginning of my period, when I have more clots, I sometimes need to change my tampon sooner. Clots cling to the outside, and I think it doesn't allow the tampon to absorb as well.
- To this day I always use panty liners, just in case. I still have to get up at night to change; a tampon is not sufficient for overnight. I have even tried the tampons that hold more than the super size, but those just left me sore.
- I wear dark-colored pants during my period.

Tips and Tricks for Coping With Heavy Periods (cont)

Nighttime Suggestions

- It's best to try to avoid leaks when asleep because blood can be hard to get out of clothes and sheets.
- For sleeping, I actually put a folded dark-colored towel underneath my bottom just in case I have some leakage.
- To prevent ruining sheets, I used to sleep with an old blanket underneath me to absorb the blood if I bled through my overnight pads.
- I use tampons with panty liners during the day and use menstrual cups at night. They are not comfortable, but I feel fine sleeping through the whole night without having to worry about leakage.
- I have underwear dedicated to wearing at night during my period, so that I don't continuously ruin new ones.

Coping With Cramps

- Disposable heating pads work really well against cramps. They stick under your clothes.
- Exercise. I know, easier said than done; but, exercise can have several benefits. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins, which help counteract the cramp-producing chemicals that are part of the menstrual cycle. Also, engaging in your normal activities can take your mind off the pain.

Some Laundry Tips

- A laundering hint: very cold water helps to take out blood stains, so does hydrogen peroxide. Try to rub out the stain using one or both before washing. Keep in mind that the dryer will set the stain in permanently.
- Fels-Naptha® is a heavy duty laundry bar soap that removes blood. So does dish soap.

Talk to Others

- My advice to you is: I know that this is scary and that it's weird and uncomfortable, but talk to someone—your mom, grandma, aunt, older sister, someone. You probably know someone who has gone through this as well. Talking to others will help you to better understand your body.