

Tips and Tricks for Coping With Heavy Periods

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

Strategies for school or work

- It's a good idea to keep a bag of emergency supplies in your locker or car in case you need them:
 - 2 extra pairs of underwear
 - An extra pair of jeans or pants as a backup
 - A long-sleeved sweater or jacket — keep this close by on heavier days. In case of any accidents, this comes in handy for a quick fix to tie around your waist
 - Pads, tampons, and panty liners
- Things to avoid when your period is heavy:
 - Thongs or your favorite pairs of underwear
 - Lightly colored shorts, pants, skirts, or dresses

Tips from the pros

“On my heaviest days, I used extra long or overnight pads to help prevent leaking. Once I moved on to tampons it was a little easier but 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—though I still wear a pad with my tampon on the heaviest days and overnight so I don't have to worry as much about leaking. I've noticed that when I have more clots, I sometimes need to change my tampon sooner.”

“During the first few years of my period I tried lots of different brands of pads and tampons in different combinations to figure out what worked best for me. To this day I always use at least a panty liner with my tampon, just in case. Since a tampon is not sufficient for overnight I wear a pad as well. I have even tried the tampons that hold more than the super size, but they were very uncomfortable for me.”

“I carry a little cosmetics bag in my purse during the day. It's full of pads, panty liners, and tampons. 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 during my period to make sure I'll be covered for the next day. I also keep pads and tampons in all of my bags so if I switch bags and forget to bring my cosmetics bag I'm still covered.”

“I use an app to track my period. Depending on the one you pick it can send you reminders that you'll start your period soon so you don't get caught unprepared. You can also track how often you had to change your tampon or pad as well as tracking the days you feel sick or extra emotional.”

Tips and Tricks for Coping With Heavy Periods (cont)

Nighttime Suggestions

Blood can be hard to get out of clothes and sheets so below are some tips from women on how to prevent leaks:

- I used to sleep with an old blanket or a dark-colored towel 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. This helps me sleep through the whole night without worrying 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 helps 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: cold water helps to take out blood stains, as 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 can sometimes be uncomfortable or maybe a feel a little scary, but talk to someone—your mom, grandma, aunt, older sister, friend, someone. You probably know someone who has gone through this—or you can talk to other girls and women in the bleeding disorders community who definitely have some experience with heavy periods. Talking to others will help you to better understand your own body and not feel so alone!