

Being a Woman



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Being a Woman

This booklet will teach you about:

- Growing up
- Adult life and ageing
- Periods
- Sex
- Self-care

Growing up

As we grow up, our bodies and behaviour change.

During this time, a girl becomes a woman.

Girls start growing up at different ages.

Some girls start growing up early, for example at 10 years old.

Some girls start growing up later, for example at 15 years old.

Growing up is also called puberty.

How does a girl's body change as she grows up?

The girl is growing and developing. The girl's body is changing.

The girl's breasts begin to grow.

The girl's hips get wider and her waist becomes pronounced.

This means

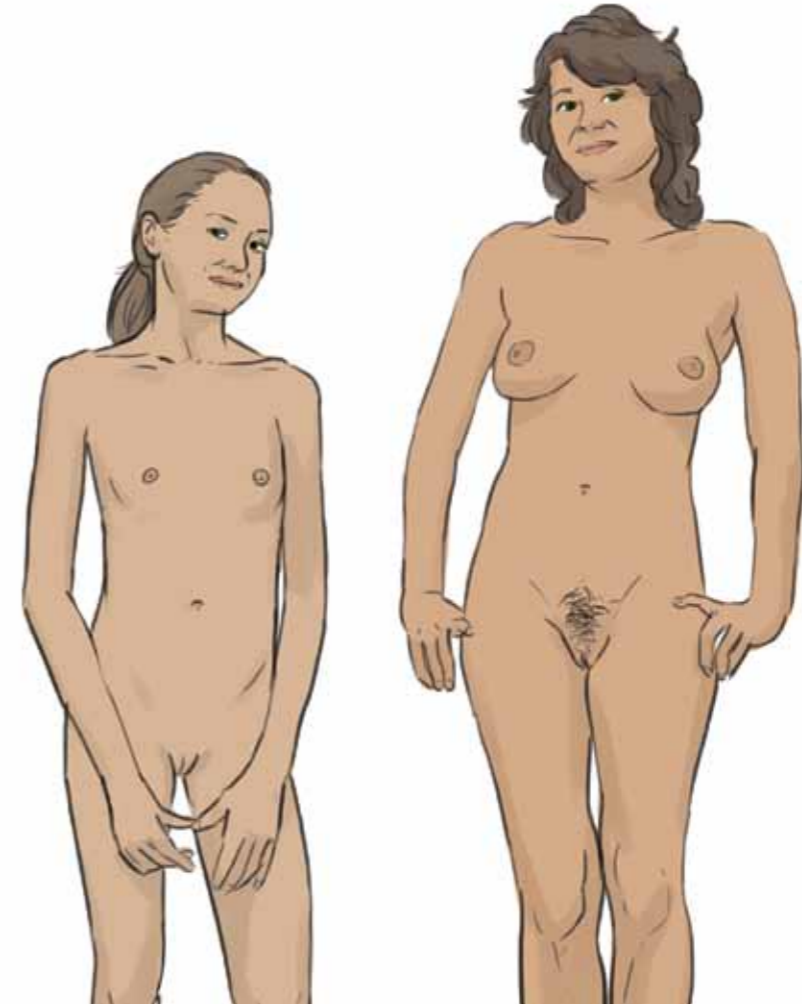
that her waist is narrower than her hips and breasts.

Hair starts growing on different parts of the body.

The girl gets her **period**.

This means that every month she bleeds out of her genitalia.

The woman's genitalia are called the **vagina**.



How does a girl's behaviour change as she grows up?

As they grow up,
girls want to make their own decisions about their life.
This means that they don't want
other people telling them what to do.
Some girls become moody.
They get angry easily.
They start crying easily.
They may argue or even run away from home.
Girls who are growing up
think that looks are very important.
They want to do things their way.

Love

As we grow up, we start falling in love.
As girls grow up, they begin to like boys and men.
Some girls begin to like girls and women.
That is ok.



Adult women

Body

Adult women have breasts.

Adult women have hair under their armpit, between their legs, and on other parts of their body.

Adult women get their period every month.

The body of the adult woman is prepared for pregnancy and childbirth.

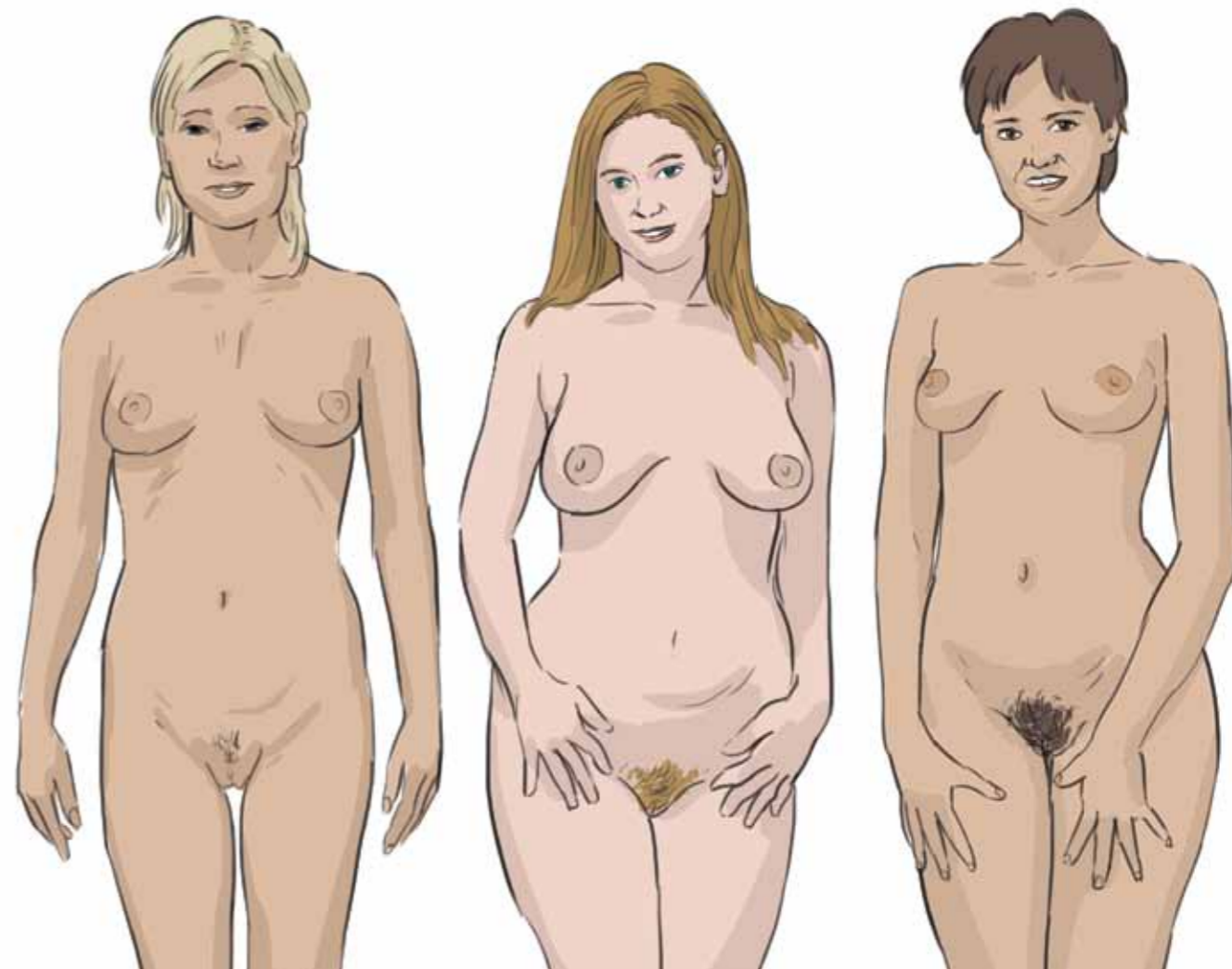
Behaviour

Adult women usually know how to take important decisions.

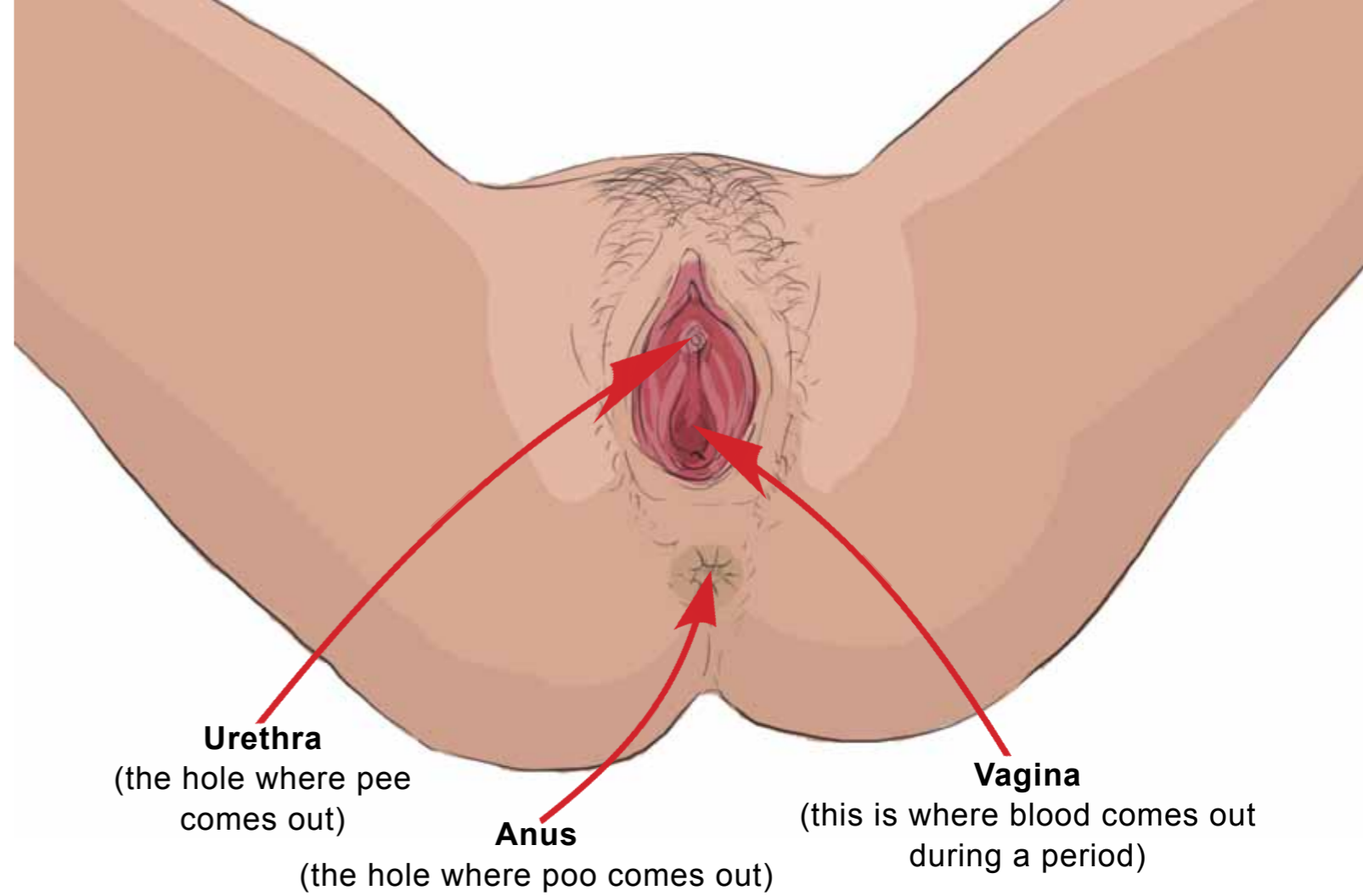
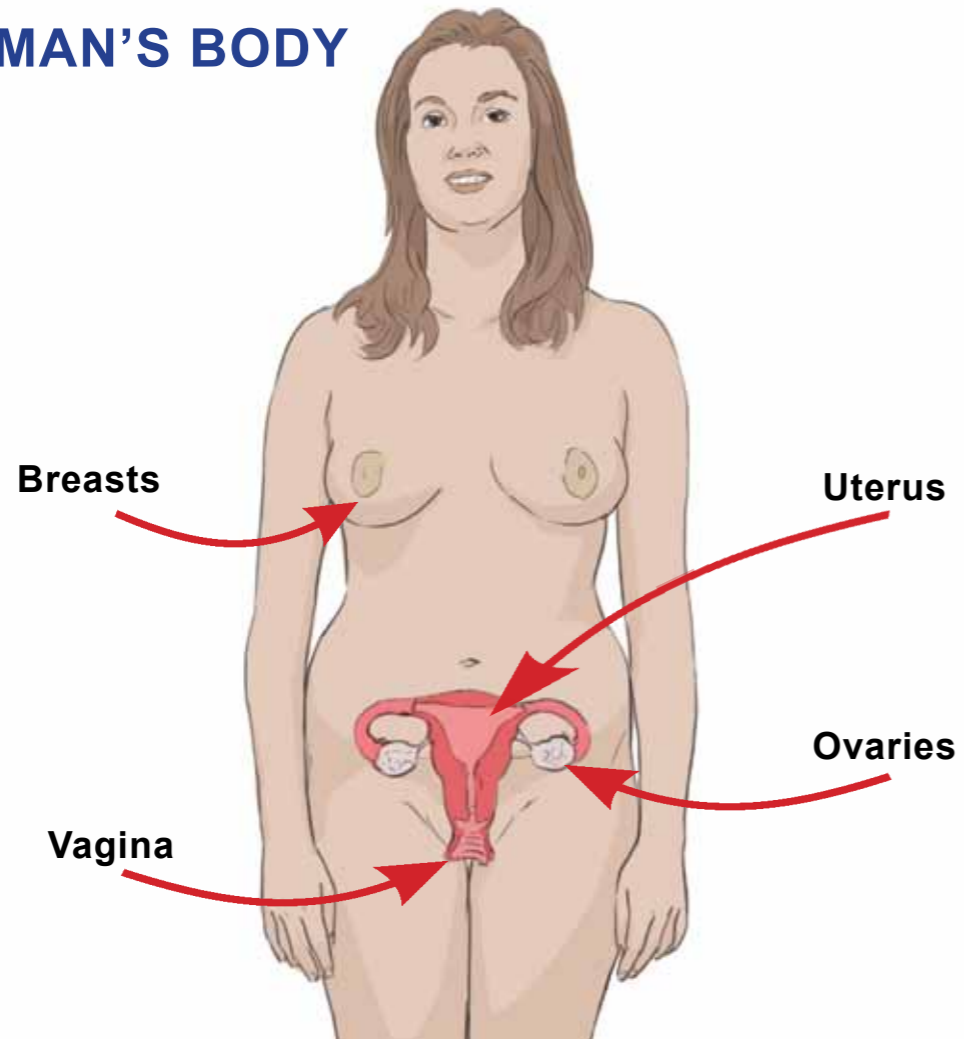
They are responsible for their decisions.

But this doesn't mean that they have to know everything.

Adult women also need help sometimes.



A WOMAN'S BODY



Ageing

A woman starts changing again at the age of 45 or 50. This time of a woman's life is called the **menopause**.

The body in the menopause

In the menopause, women don't have regular periods any more. In her menopause a woman may also have the following signs:

- she gets hot flushes,
- she sweats,
- she has headaches,
- she cannot sleep,
- her skin is dry.

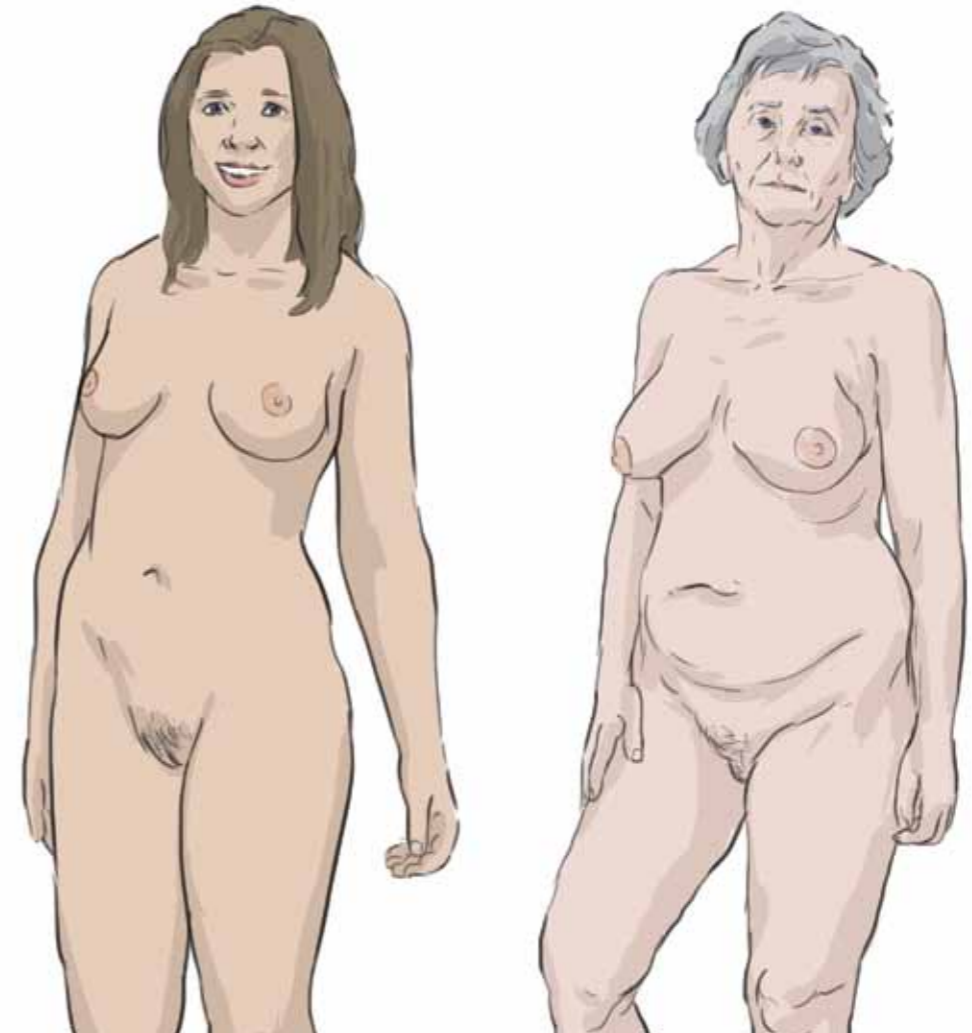
A woman's skin starts ageing in the menopause. Her bones start ageing.

The bones become fragile and they break more easily.

Wrinkles start forming on the face.

The hair is less shiny and weaker. The hair becomes grey.

This is normal. We should not be afraid of ageing.



Behaviour during the menopause

Sometimes during the menopause, women get sad.
Some women are nervous or they cry.
We say that they have mood swings.

Love, sex, and ageing

A woman may fall in love at any age.
A woman can have sex during and after the menopause.
Women who don't have periods any more
cannot get pregnant.



Period

Some girls get their period sooner than others.

For example, they get their period at 10 years of age.

Some girls get their period later,
for example at 16 years of age.

Regular periods normally end
when a woman is around 45 or 50 years old.

A woman is fertile since her first period.

This means that she can get pregnant
if she has sex with a man.

A woman is **fertile**
until she stops her periods.

Example:

A woman gets her first period at 13 years of age.

She gets her last period at 50 years of age.

This means that she is fertile from 13 to 50 years of age.



Before you get your period

There are signs telling you that you are going to get your period:

- your breasts get slightly bigger,
- you feel slight pain in your breasts,
- you feel a pressure in the lower part of your belly,
- you have a headache,
- your belly hurts.

You may have all these signs before the period.

Or you may only have some of them.

Some women don't have any signs.

Beginning of your period

Blood on your panties means that you started your period.

In the first few days, you will bleed less.

Later you will bleed more and more.

On the fourth or fifth day you will slowly stop bleeding.

End of your period

At the end of your period, the blood is not red any more, but brown.

After that you stop bleeding.



Important things about your period

A period means
that a woman bleeds out of her vagina.

A period lasts from 4 to 7 days.

It comes once a month.

A period is also called **menstruation**.

When a woman has her period,
she uses pads or tampons.

Sometimes a woman may feel nauseous during her period.

Sometimes she has cramps in her belly.



Other things about your period

A period is also called menstruation.

During your period you have to shower or wash every day.

If you want to swim or go to a swimming pool during your period, you have to use a tampon.

There are pills

that you can take to stop your period from coming.

This is useful,

for example when you go to the seaside.

You can ask your doctor to prescribe the pills for you.

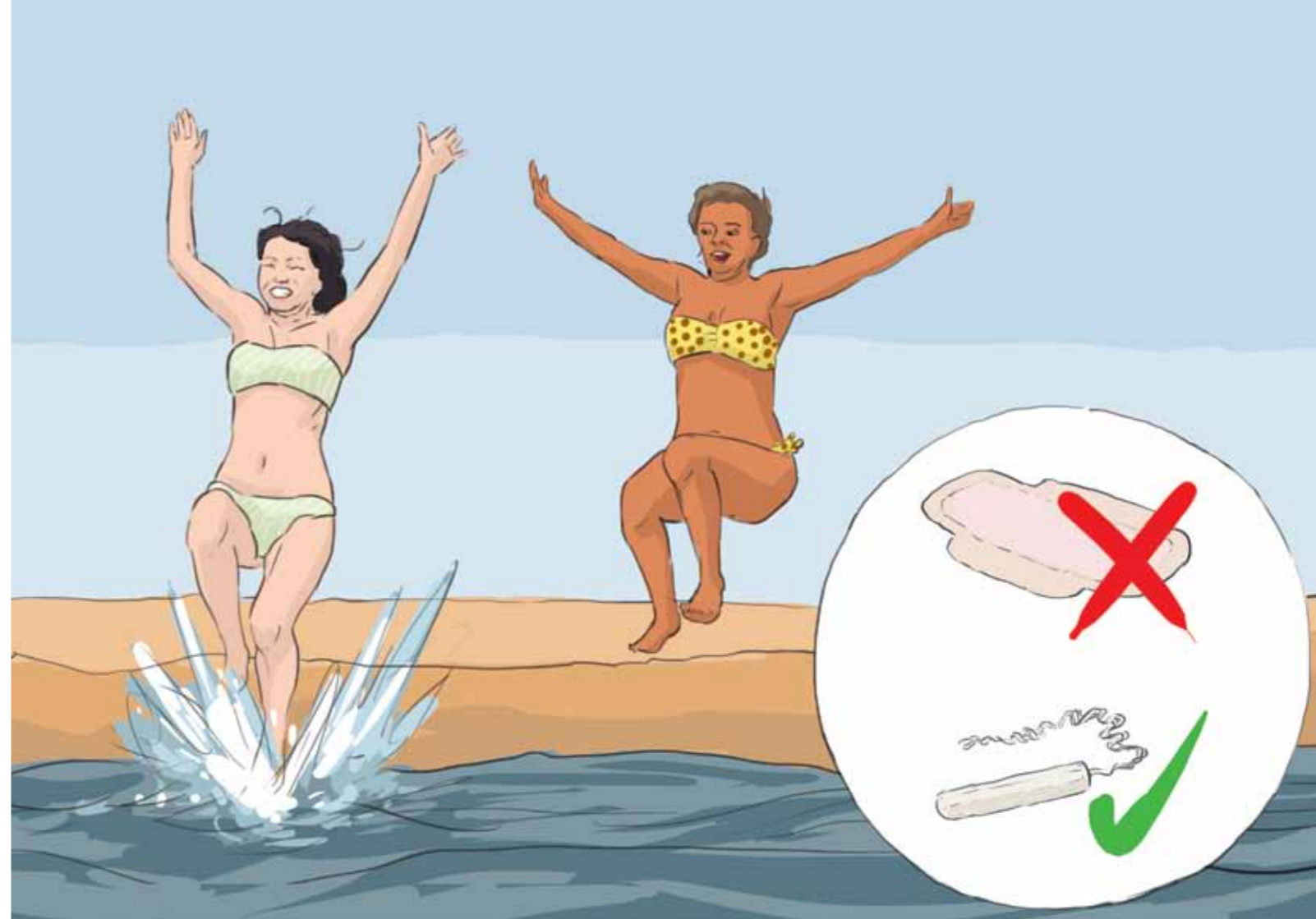
During your period

you cannot go to your gynaecologist for an examination.

A gynaecologist is a doctor for women.

If you have an appointment scheduled with your gynaecologist and you get your period,

you should reschedule your appointment.



What does it mean if you don't get your period?

If you don't get your period you may:

- be sick,
- be pregnant,
- be ageing and you will stop having your period (if you are older than 40 years),
- be worried or afraid,
- have changed your environment (for example you moved).

If you don't get your period, visit your gynaecologist.

The gynaecologist will tell you what is happening with you.

The gynaecologist will give you advice on what to do.

You should also visit your gynaecologist if:

- you bleed when you are not supposed to have your period,
- you bleed for more than 7 days.



Pads and tampons

During her period, a woman bleeds out of her vagina. She used pads and tampons to avoid staining her clothes.

Pads

There are many different types of pads.

The backside of a pad is sticky.

We stick the pad to our panties so that it is fixed.

You have to change your pad every 3 to 4 hours.

If you leave it in your panties longer than that, it will begin to smell bad.

The blood will pour over and stain your panties and clothes.



We also use pads during the night.

You mustn't use a pad in a pool, sea, or lake.

In a pool, sea, or lake you have to use a tampon.

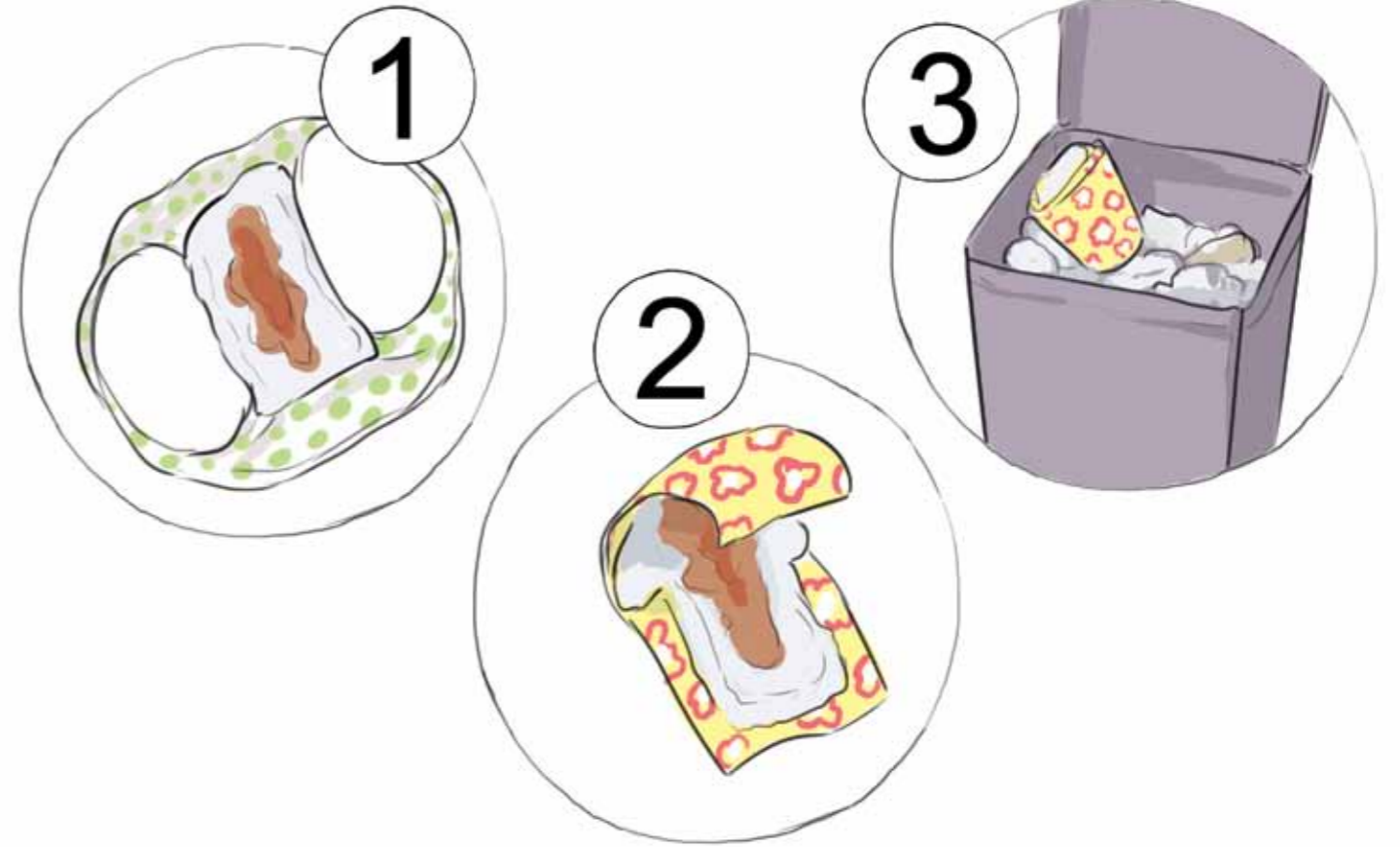
Never throw a used pad in the toilet.

Wrap the pad in paper and throw it in a bin.

After changing your pad, always wash your hands.

If you are on your period,
always carry pads with you.

If you are going on holiday,
and you know
that you will get your period,
pack pads and tampons.



Tampons

Tampons are smaller.

They look like corks.

They are made of cotton wool which absorbs blood.

Tampons are of different sizes.

If you bleed heavily, use bigger tampons.

If your period is light, use smaller tampons.

You insert the tampon deep into your vagina.

There is a string at one end of the tampon.

Use that string to pull the tampon out of your vagina.

Always wash your hands

before inserting a tampon!

Change your tampon every 4 to 6 hours.

It is not recommended to use tampons during the night.

During the night, use a pad instead.



Practical tips

You can talk about periods with other women.

Don't be afraid to talk about this.

All women have periods.

But your period and all things connected to it are personal to you.

This means

that you don't have to talk about your period if you don't want to.

When waiting for your period to start,

always carry with you a pad, a tampon, and clean panties.

If your clothes get stained with blood,

tie a sweater or shirt around your waist.

If you start bleeding and you don't have a pad or tampon,

ask a woman to help you, for example a friend or teacher.

You can use folded toilet paper instead of a pad.

But toilet paper will not hold for a long time.

The blood may stain your panties.

If your clothes are very stained with blood and you are at school, work, or day centre, ask if you can go home.



Sex

We also call sex:

- **sexual relations,**
- **sexual intercourse.**

Usually two people have sex. It is our decision to have sex.

Nobody should force us to have sex.

We mustn't force anyone to have sex either.

Sex is, for example:

- caressing someone between their legs, on their breasts, arms, legs,
- kissing someone between their legs, on their breasts, and elsewhere,
- touching, caressing and kissing a penis,
- caressing and kissing a vagina,
- putting a penis into a vagina,
- putting a penis into a mouth.

Two people usually have sex because they like it and they love each other.



Self-care

Washing

Adult women have to wash their body regularly.
It is up to you how often you wash.
You should wash at least four times a week.
You can shower or take a bath.
Wash yourself every time you sweat.
An adult person's sweat has a bad smell.
If you are on your period,
you have to wash every day.

Panties and other underwear

Change your panties every day.
Change your bra regularly.
When you're buying new underwear, make sure that it fits you.
Panties and bras cover the most sensitive parts of our bodies.
This is why panties and bras have to be comfortable and clean.



Hair

During puberty, women get hair under their armpits and between their legs. Some women also get thick hair on their legs and arms.

Often, women shave or pluck hair on their legs and armpits. This is because they think that legs and armpits without hair are nicer. You decide what you want to do.

You can shave your armpits and legs.

Some say that after shaving hair grows thicker.

You can also pluck the hair on your legs and armpits.

You can do this at a beauty salon or with a special device.

Many women have dark hair on their upper lip or chin.

They can pluck this with tweezers or use wax.



Skin

Take regular care of your skin.

After showering or bathing, apply skin lotion.

Face skin is very sensitive.

If you use makeup,
always remove it before going to bed.

Apply cream on your face in the morning and in the evening.

Hands and nails

Nails should always be clean and neat.

Painted nails look nice.

But be careful!

Nail polish slightly ruins your nails.

Use hand cream regularly.



Food and drink

It is very important
what and how much you eat.

Eating healthily means:

- eating a lot of fruit and vegetables,
- not eating a lot of greasy food and sweets,
- eating regularly, for example five times per day,
- eating smaller portions.

Be careful not to gain too much weight.

We must drink a lot of fluids.

The best is water.

Smoking is bad for your health.

If you smoke and you would like to quit,
ask a person that you trust for advice.



Physical activity and sports

It is very important for our health to be active.

It is important
that you find an activity
that you enjoy.

This way,
you will do it regularly.

Examples:

- jogging,
- cycling,
- dancing,
- taking walks,
- jumping on a trampoline,
- skiing.

People feel good after physical activity.

Doing sports can also bring new friends.



Beauty

For every woman, beauty means something different. Some women like to use makeup and buy new clothes. Some women don't like that. No woman is ugly. It is important that a woman feels good and is satisfied with herself.

Being satisfied with yourself

A woman is satisfied when she does things that make her happy. Besides that, she must have the possibility to be alone sometimes. But she also needs the possibility to make her own decisions. She must decide on her own how, where, and with whom she wants to live.





ZVEZA
SOŽITJE

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Easy-to-read booklet



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Further reading:

Being a Man



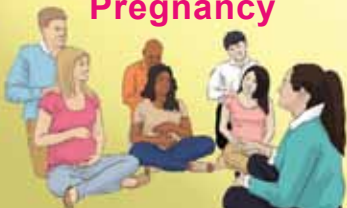
Love, Sex and Me



A Visit to the Gynaecologist



Pregnancy



Childbirth



Sexual Violence



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