

Ruby's World

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION GUIDE

PREVIEW VERSION



PREVIEW VERSION



HELP EMPOWER GIRLS THROUGH EDUCATION ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

Education about menstruation and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is critical to empower girls to manage their menstruation safely, hygienically, and with confidence. Unfortunately, millions of girls in India possess no knowledge about menstruation when they get their first period. A lack of adequate information about this normal biological process breeds fear and shame. It puts girls' health at risk and negatively affects their education, as many girls miss school during their menstruation, or drop out completely when they reach puberty.

You can help change this. By training girls in good MHM, you can help ensure that girls become strong women who fully and equally participate in society, and live healthy, productive, and self-determined lives.

About the MHM Education Guide

The MHM Education Guide (hereinafter also referred to as the “Guide”) is a compact, easy-to-use booklet that enables trainers to provide girls with essential knowledge about menstruation and MHM. In addition, it activates and empowers girls to support each other before and during their periods.

The MHM Education Guide is a product created by WASH United. It was developed over a 1-year period using a user-centred design approach that closely involved girls, teachers/trainers, and local implementing partners at all stages of the design process.

Learn more about how your organization can access and use the MHM Education Guide at www.wash-united.org or write to MHMGuide@wash-united.org



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KEY FEATURES OF THE MHM EDUCATION GUIDE

The MHM Education Guide takes girls on a journey that teaches them what menstruation is and how to manage it safely, hygienically, and with confidence. The Guide does this by combining a narrated story with different activities and games, supported by educational posters.

What's different about the MHM Education Guide?



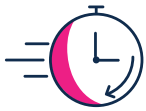
Easy-to-use:

The Guide is so simple that you can just read it out. No in-depth preparation or prior knowledge is required.



No cost:

All the materials required to implement the Guide are materials that you will already have available. The only additional item you will need is a ball or two of yarn.



Compact:

The Guide can be implemented in 2 sessions of 1-1.5 hours each.



Exciting and engaging:

The Guide makes education about menstruation and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) exciting and fun and actively engages the girls throughout the training. They will love it and all of you will have a good time!

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: the MHM Resource Book

The MHM Resource Book provides trainers with in-depth knowledge about menstruation and MHM. The book answers more specific questions that you may encounter during the training sessions and provides additional advice on how to facilitate the sessions. If you don't have access to the MHM Resource Book – don't worry. It's an additional support tool and the Guide can also be implemented without it.

HOW TO USE THE MHM EDUCATION GUIDE:



HOW TO STRUCTURE THE TRAINING AND TIME REQUIRED

The training should be divided in two sessions:

- 1 The first session includes chapters 1 and 2, and will take approximately 1.5 hours.
- 2 The second session covers chapter 3, and will take approximately 1 hour.



HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TRAINING



Prepare yourself:

We recommend that you prepare for the sessions by reading through the entire Guide. If you want to prepare more comprehensively, we suggest that you also read through the MHM Resource Book.



Materials required:

Bring A4-size sheets of paper, pens or pencils, erasers, sharpeners, and crayons or sketch pens for the training. Or ask the girls to bring their own notebooks and stationery.

For the first session, you will need one or two balls of yarn (preferably red, pink, or purple) and a pair of scissors.

For the second session you need paper and a pair of scissors.



WHERE TO DO THE TRAINING

The training sessions can be carried out anywhere in school – inside a classroom or in an open space outside. Make sure you create a safe space and are not disturbed by others.



HOW TO START



The girls should sit in a circle or semi-circle during the sessions.



Place all the stationery materials in the centre of the circle before starting the training.



Always start with your introduction, then ask the girls to introduce themselves one by one.



Avoid mentioning menstruation/menstrual hygiene in the introduction.



TIPS

- Read the story to the girls. Be expressive while narrating the story.
- Do not interrupt the story unless there is a question or an activity to do.
- It is mandatory to complete all of the activities and games included in the text, and to ask all questions, as these will help reach the outcomes of the story. The instructions and tips will help you conduct all of the activities.
- It is important to listen to what the girls have to say when asked a question.
- It is okay if the girls do not know the correct answers. Do not prompt answers or judge them in the process. The answers will be in the story.
- If you need further information, please consult the MHM Resource Book.
- Try to engage all the girls and encourage them to be active participants.
- The Guide includes images that can be shown to the girls. If you want, you can even make some photocopies or draw images on a board.

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TRAINING SESSION 1



ACTIVITY 1: Draw yourself

🕒 Duration: 5-7 minutes

📋 Things required: Paper and stationery

PURPOSE:

To help the girls visualise the story of Ruby that they will hear today.

HOW TO START:

- Distribute papers and ask the girls to draw themselves using materials placed in the centre of the circle.
- All the girls are to name the girl in their drawing as Ruby.
 - Tip: Ruby will be the same age as the girl who creates the drawing. Hence, the age of each drawn Ruby may differ, yet the name Ruby will remain the same for every drawing. For the purpose of the story, she is 10 years old.



CHAPTER 1

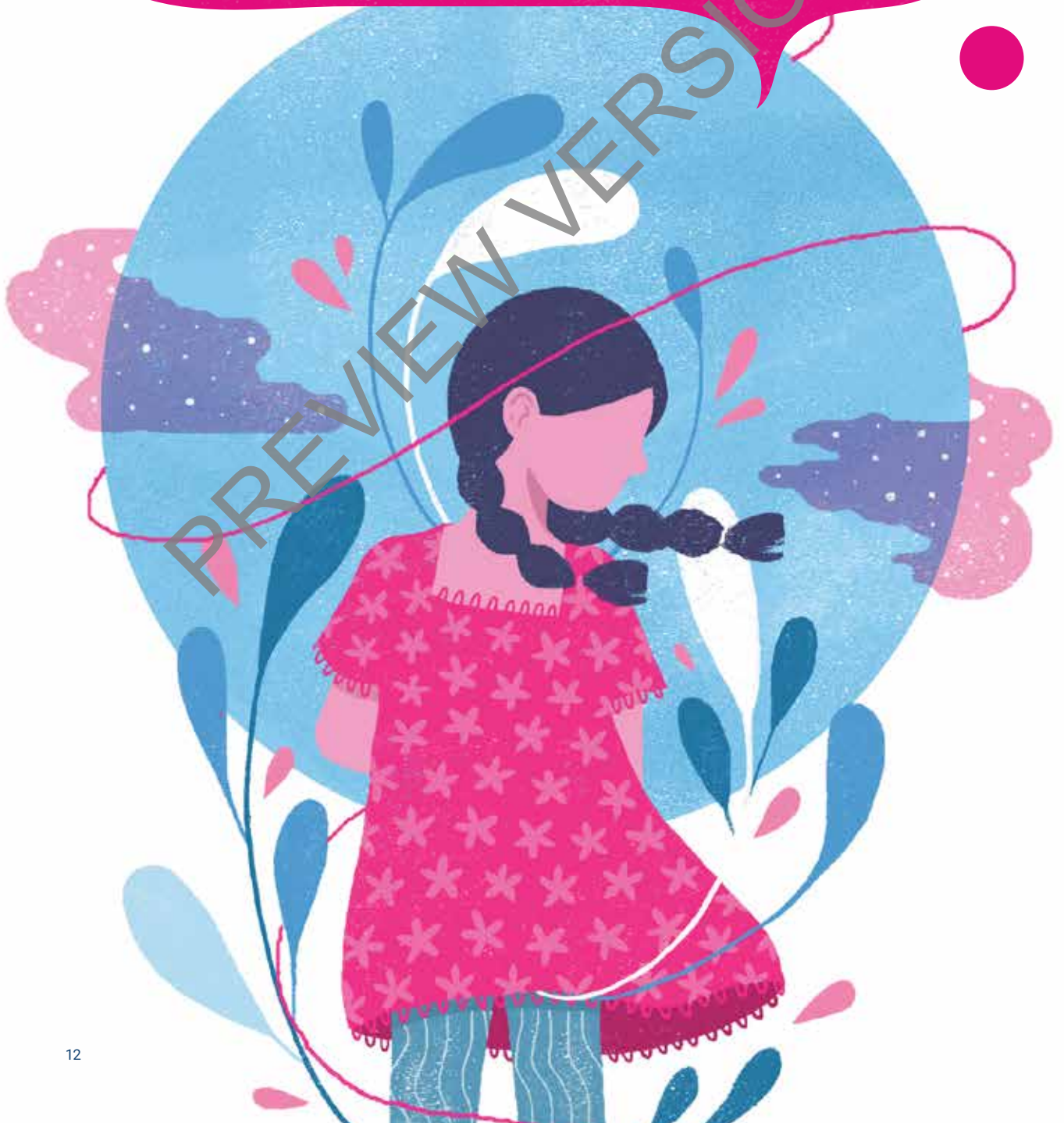
Ruby realises that periods are a normal biological process.

PREVIEW VERSION

A central illustration featuring a pink ball of yarn with a textured, woven pattern. The ball is set on a light blue circular base. A single red thread extends from the bottom of the ball, curving across the lower part of the page. The background is white, decorated with stylized blue and pink leaves and floral motifs. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading 'PREVIEW VERSION' is overlaid diagonally across the central illustration.

I am Ruby and I am 10 years old. I have an elder sister Roli who is two years older than me and a brother, Rohit, who is three years younger than me. I live with my mother, father, and my siblings.

I like to draw, play hide and seek, and most of all I like to study, but I don't have too many friends. Didi is not very good at studies but she is very popular and good at sports. My brother is too young to be good at anything. My sister and I are very close.



My sister plays badminton and she is on the school team. She was preparing for the interschool match and I supported her in every possible way. Sometimes I did her chores at home so she could practise.

As the day of the match came closer, Didi became more disciplined. Then three days before the match, something happened. She did not go to practice and was sitting at home waiting for mummy. When mummy got home, they had an argument. I heard my mother say, "Gande khayal ate honge isiliye" ("It's because you are getting bad thoughts"). Didi broke down and cried inconsolably. I tried talking to her, but she didn't want to. She shut herself off in one corner and did not speak to anyone.



That night, Didi did not sleep next to me. My mother said she must now sleep separately for three days. I was confused. I did not know what was happening. The next day, Didi did not go to school and handed me a letter for the teacher. It said she could not participate in the match because she was unwell. I felt terrible for her.

Because I am very good at studies and do not have too many friends, I am very close to my teachers. My class teacher saw that I was upset and asked me what was wrong. I told her that Didi could not be in the competition, even though she had worked very hard for it. My teacher asked me to bring Didi to school to meet her the next day.



QUESTION 1:

TRAINER: ASK THE GIRLS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

“What do you think has happened to Ruby’s Didi, Roli?”

Now let’s find out what has happened to Ruby’s Didi.

The next day, Didi came to school with me. I thought she was walking funnily and looked weak and sad. When my teacher met her, once again, she had tears in her eyes. Our teacher sat both of us down.

Teacher: Why are you looking so sad?

Roli: You have no idea what has happened to me. I think it’s a disease.

Teacher: Can you tell me what has happened to you? Maybe I can help.

Roli whispers into the teacher’s ears.

Teacher: (With a smile on her face) Roli, what has happened to you is absolutely normal. It’s called a period!

Roli: (Looking puzzled) Really? What is that?





QUESTION 2:

TRAINER: ASK THE GIRLS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

“How many of you know what a period is? What do you call a period in your local language?”

- Tip: Replace the word ‘period’ in the story ahead with the word which the girls use for a period in their local language.

Teacher: A period (_____) happens to every woman, to your mother, your aunt, your neighbour, and your friends in school too!

Roli: What happens to all of us?

Teacher: Here is what is happening.

Roli, you are growing up and your body is going through changes. These changes are a part of growing up. This stage is called puberty. Can you tell me about some changes that you have noticed in your body?



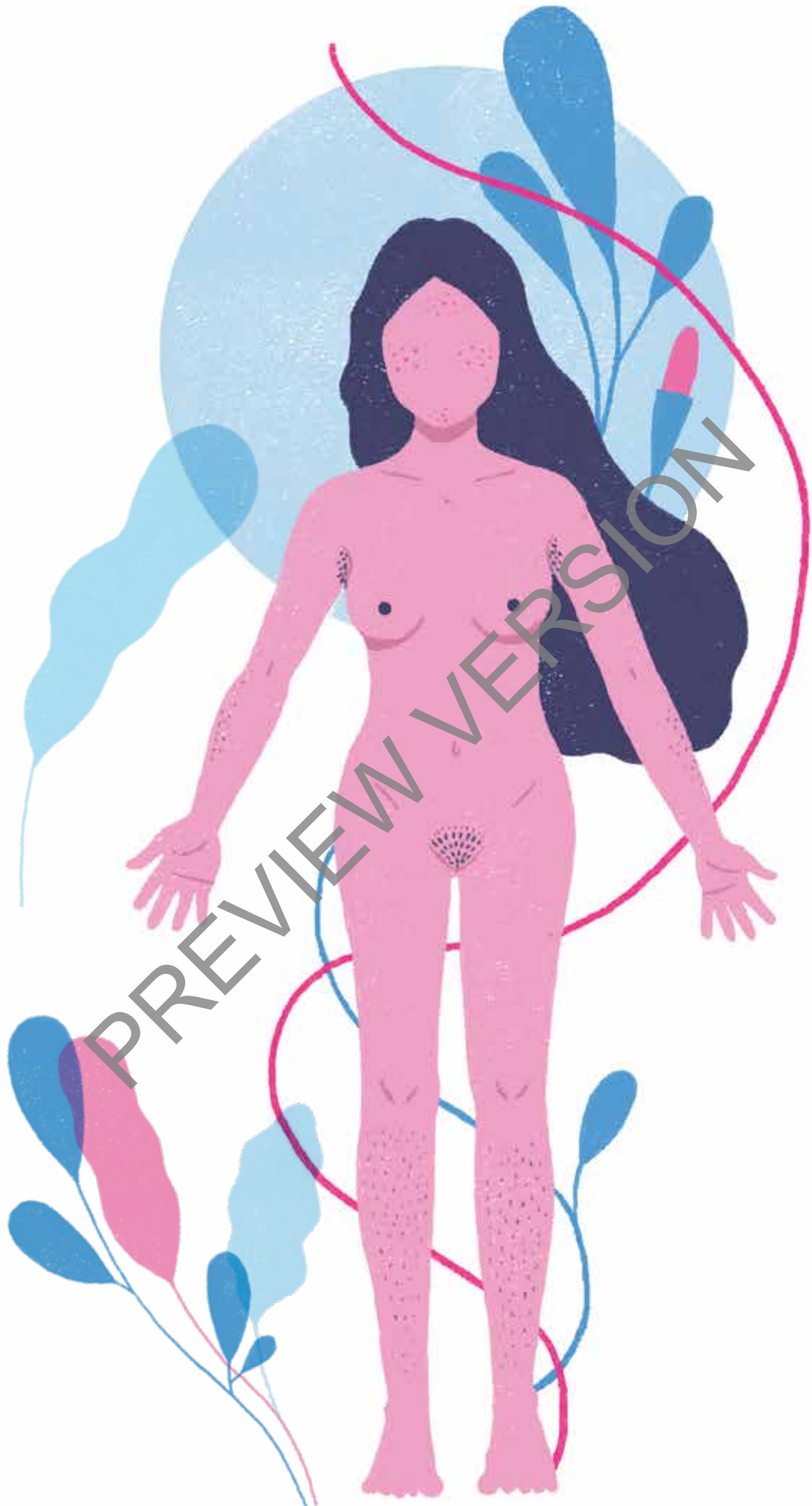
ACTIVITY 2: Puberty changes

⌚ Duration: 5-7 minutes

📋 Things required: Paper and stationery

PURPOSE:

Get the girls to observe, identify, and depict the changes happening in their body.



HOW TO START:

- Ask the girls to think about the changes they have noticed in their body in the past year.
 - Tip: If girls find this challenging, ask them if they look the same as they did as 4-year-olds. Ask them what has changed, if their hair has grown, has anyone started wearing glasses, etc.
- Ask girls to draw these changes on the drawing they made of Ruby during the first exercise, or create a new drawing to depict these changes.
- Observe, summarise, and share the changes with all.
 - Tip: Depending on the age of the girls and what stage of puberty they are in, there may be different changes indicated in the drawings.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Ask the girls if they are willing to share their drawings with the trainer. In this case, collect the drawings of Ruby at the end of Training Session 1 and share the unique drawings (maximum 20) with WASH United at MHMGuide@wash-united.org. This will help WASH United collect data and develop this product further.

Teacher: Periods (_____) are a part of growing up just like gaining height and weight. It is also an indication that your body is functioning normally, that you are healthy, and don't have any diseases or problems. This means that a period (_____) is nothing abnormal, and is actually good news!

Ruby: But what are periods (_____)?

Teacher: A woman's body goes through a menstrual cycle, which is a regular cycle lasting about 28 days. The last stage of the menstrual cycle is the bleeding part, which is called menstruation, and is commonly known as a period. This part lasts for 3-5 days, and if it's between 2 to 7 days, that is normal too. And because Roli is 12 years old, it is absolutely normal for her to go through this. The first period can happen between 9-14 years of age. If it happens a couple of years before or after, that is normal too.



Ruby: What? Oh, my God! Didi, if you are bleeding now, are you going to die?

Teacher: Nothing is going to happen to your Didi. She is perfectly normal. She is now going to go through this every month for about 3-5 days.

Roli: Every month?

Teacher: Yes, every month - this is why it is called a cycle. In the beginning, they will be a little irregular. It takes some time for the menstrual cycle to become regular. It can be irregular during the time when a girl starts her period (_____) or when a woman's periods (_____) come to a complete stop. During this time, a period (_____) can occur after a few months or can happen more than once in a month. This is normal.

Roli: So, will they ever stop?

Teacher: A woman stops having her monthly period (_____) when she becomes pregnant. Also, after giving birth, when a woman starts breastfeeding, for the first few months, her period (_____) stops. After this, the woman starts her regular menstrual cycle once again and continues till she reaches 42-45 years of age. At that age, the menstrual cycle becomes irregular once again and eventually stops completely.

Roli: Oh that's good, they will stop at some point. (Smiles)

Ruby: Okay, but what is happening to you now? Where is the blood coming from?

Teacher: In the last phase of the menstrual cycle, the uterus releases a small amount of blood and tissue. This blood comes out through your vagina. There are three openings in the lower half of a woman's body. The first opening is called the urethra, which is used to pass urine. The second opening is the vagina, and this is where the blood passes through during a period. The last opening is called the anal hole, which is used to pass stool.

Ruby and Roli: We have three openings in the lower part of our bodies?

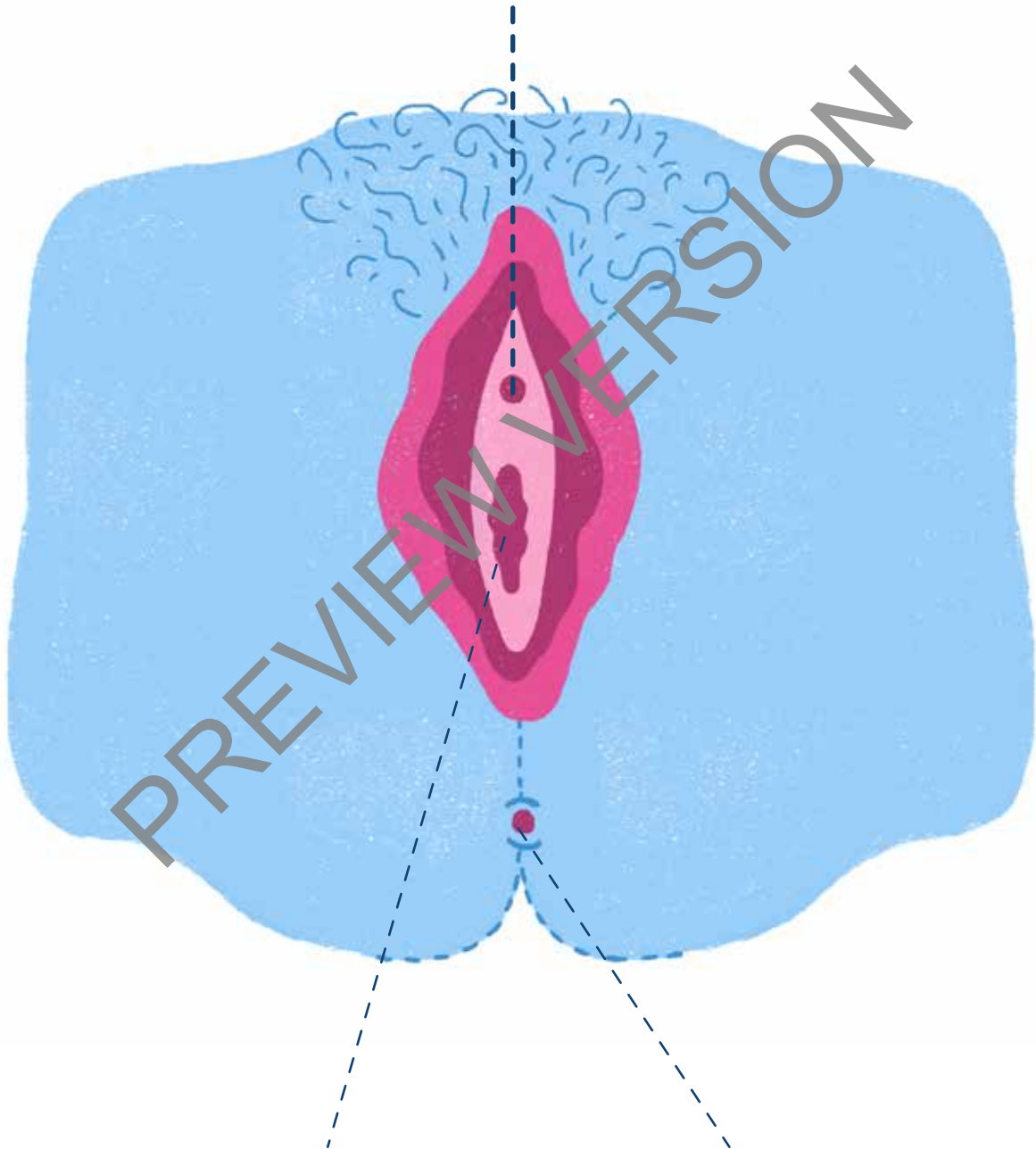
Teacher: Yes.



THREE OPENINGS OF THE FEMALE GENITAL AREA

Urethra

The opening to pass urine.



Vagina

The opening below the urethra is the vagina. Menstrual blood flows out of the vagina.

Anal opening

To pass excreta.



ACTIVITY 3: My story

🕒 Duration: 10 minutes

📄 Things required: Paper and pen/pencil

PURPOSE:

To enable the girls to open up and identify challenges they go through when starting their period.

HOW TO START:

- For girls who have started their period— ask the girls to recall their experiences of seeing period blood for the first time.
- For girls who have not started their period— encourage the girls to recall the first time they heard about periods.
- Encourage the girls to write a few lines about this experience.
 - Tip: Make sure every girl writes her experience and doesn't copy from another girl.

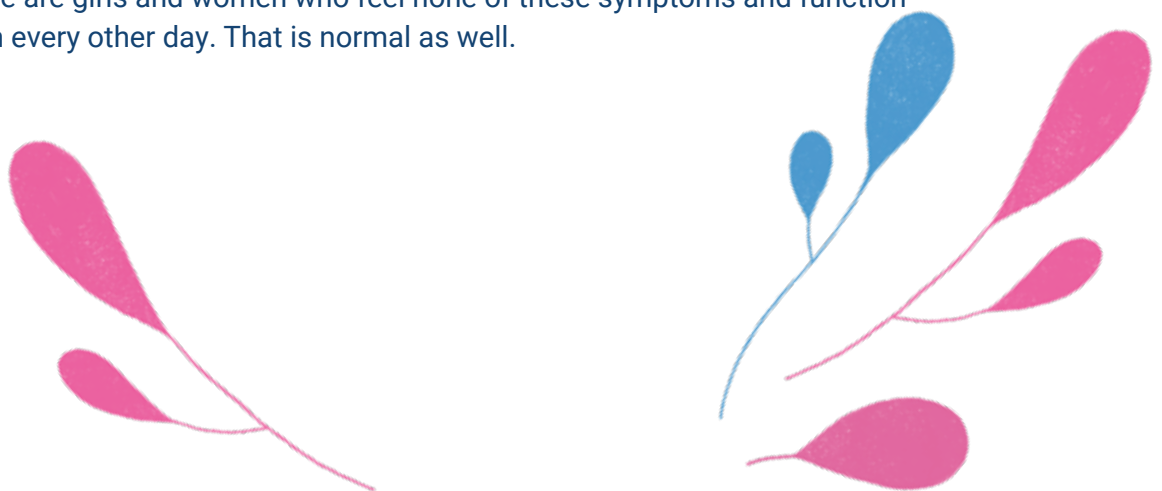
OPTIONAL:

- If girls are willing to share their write-ups with the trainer, collect the write-ups and share the unique ones (20 maximum) with WASH United at MHMGuide@wash-united.org. This will help WASH United collect data and develop this product further.

Let us find out how Ruby's Didi is feeling.

Roli: Teacher, but why do I feel sick? My thighs hurt and sometimes there are terrible cramps.

Teacher: During a period (_____), hormonal changes are taking place in the body. This can cause discomfort for some girls, and nothing for others. It is common to have stomach cramps, feel bloated, and have pain in the thighs and back. Some girls also have headaches, constipation, nausea, dizziness, and in extreme cases may faint. Other girls may feel tense, angry, or emotional before and during their period. It is also normal to have less energy, tender breasts, and acne. There are girls and women who feel none of these symptoms and function just like on every other day. That is normal as well.



Roli: So, can I take medicine for the pain?

Teacher: Not without consulting a doctor. The pain can be eased by applying heat to your abdomen using a hot water bottle or taking a warm bath. Now do you feel better?

Roli: Well, I know what is happening to me is not my fault and I did not do anything wrong. But I'm still sad that I cannot take part in the inter-school competition.

Ruby: I'm also really sad.

Teacher: Why would you not take part in the competition? Some girls find that exercise helps relieve cramps and makes them feel better in general. While you should avoid activities that put direct pressure on the abdomen, you can participate in any physical activity that you feel comfortable doing.

Roli: My parents will never agree.



? **QUESTION 3:**

TRAINER: ASK THE GIRLS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

“Should Roli take part in the inter-school badminton competition?”



Teacher: You need to talk to your mother and explain it to her. People may tell you to not do this or that during your period (_____), but the truth is, you are the best person to decide what works for you and what doesn't. If you feel comfortable doing something, go ahead and do it. Your period (_____) need not limit you in any way!

Ruby: Yay! Didi can participate in the competition now!

Learnings from chapter 1



Instruction for trainer:

- Discuss learnings from Chapter 1

Key takeaways from this chapter



1. Periods (_____) are normal.



2. It is a sign of health and well-being – it's good news.


PREVIEW VERSION



CHAPTER 2

Ruby understands that a period is not impure, but a sign of good health. Also, menstruation need not be a lonely process and it would be easier to manage it if girls and women supported each other.

PREVIEW VERSION

The illustration features a central blue circle with a textured, watercolor-like appearance. In front of this circle, a hand is shown in profile, holding a ball of bright pink yarn. The hand is drawn with simple, clean lines. From the hand, several long, wavy lines of pink yarn extend across the lower half of the page. The background is white, decorated with various blue and pink floral and leaf motifs scattered around the central elements.

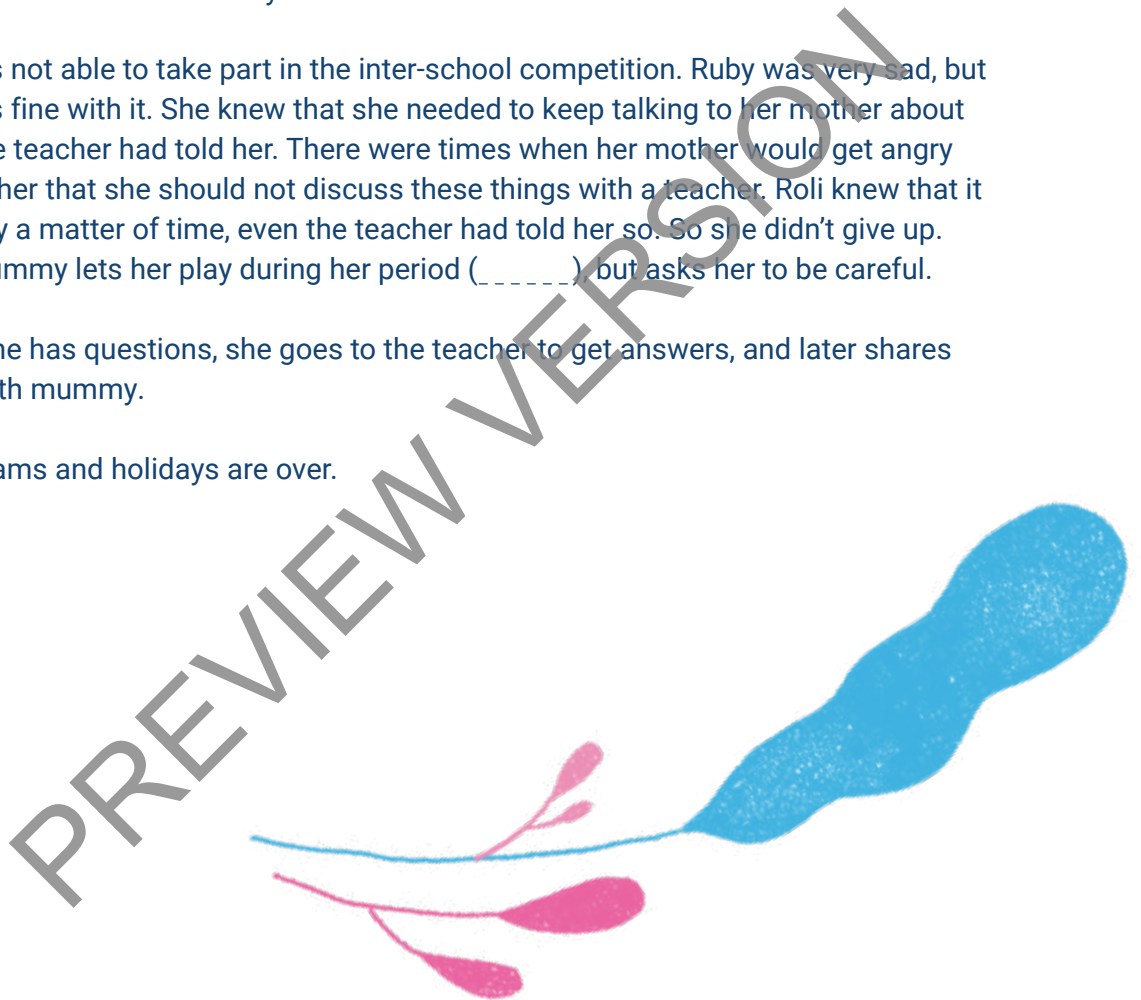


Exams were about to start in a few days
and all the children were busy with their studies.

Roli was not able to take part in the inter-school competition. Ruby was very sad, but Roli was fine with it. She knew that she needed to keep talking to her mother about what the teacher had told her. There were times when her mother would get angry and tell her that she should not discuss these things with a teacher. Roli knew that it was only a matter of time, even the teacher had told her so. So she didn't give up. Now mummy lets her play during her period (.....) but asks her to be careful.

When she has questions, she goes to the teacher to get answers, and later shares them with mummy.

Now exams and holidays are over.





Ruby: I started noticing changes in my own body. Somewhere inside me I started to feel really excited about growing up. I sometimes spend hours in front of the mirror combing my hair to make it look as soft as Alia Bhatt's. It doesn't work, but it feels good doing it.

There is a new girl in our class, Arushi. Her father got transferred and she joined our school. I think that she is beautiful and I secretly admire her. She doesn't seem to notice me, so I comb my hair a bit more.



One morning, when I reached school, there was a huge argument going on. There was a puja being held in the school and someone from class asked Arushi not to attend because she had her period (_____). Arushi said she did not believe in all this and was going to attend. The girls said they would shout out loud if she did. It sounded very confusing.

It is true that Didi is not allowed to attend any ceremonies at home during her period (_____). She always sits outside, or doesn't come with us. So, on this day, I had no clue what to do and how to help the girl I wanted to be friends with, and the fight was getting unpleasant.

Girl 1: Don't you know we are impure during this time? You are making the entire school impure.

Arushi: Really? What else do you think? What else do you not do?

Girl 2: Do you wash your hair during your period (_____)?

Arushi: Yes.

Girl 2: Oh no, your uterus will fill with water.

Arushi: How? How will the water enter my uterus?

Girl 3: Do you eat pickles too?

Arushi: Not a bowlful, but if I feel like it, I have some.



Girl 1: You mean you enter the kitchen too?

Arushi: My mother works in Mumbai. If I don't serve myself, I won't be able to eat. My father has enough to do already.

Girl 2: Your parents are clueless, that's why you do all of these things.

Arushi: My mom knows everything. She is a working woman and does everything on her own. If she doesn't enter the kitchen, who will make her food? And my father also knows about all of this. We live together, after all! If I don't tell him what is going on, who will help me if I need anything?

Girl 1: (To the other girls) This girl seems different from all of us. You can be friends with her if you like. I won't be.



QUESTION 4:

TRAINER: ASK THE GIRLS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

“Is Arushi doing the right thing when she has her period?”

Ruby knows this is her chance. She goes to Arushi and says:

Ruby: Hi, I'm Ruby. I'm in your class.

Arushi: I am Arushi.

Ruby: I heard everything.

Arushi: (Looking sad) What do I do now? These girls seem very mean.

Ruby: Come, I have an idea.

Ruby and Arushi look for the class teacher and tell her everything. The teacher comes to the class.

Teacher: I want to teach you all a special lesson today. Is that okay?

Students: (Happily) Yes.

Teacher: I heard there were some differences between some of you this morning.

Students: (Everyone is quiet. There are some whispers.)

Teacher: Don't worry, we will play a game today.

Students: Yay!

Teacher: When we have our period (_____), what are some of the things we don't do?





QUESTION 5:

TRAINER: ASK THE GIRLS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

“What are some of the things you don’t do or avoid doing when you have your period (_____)?”

- Tip: Discuss this briefly and move on to the next activity that is related to this question.



ACTIVITY 4: I wish

🕒 Duration: 15 minutes

✍️ Things required: Paper and stationery

PURPOSE:

To give girls the space to learn about each other’s misconceptions regarding period (_____) practices and to support each other in making their wishes come true.

HOW TO START:

- Encourage girls to identify the activities they wish they could do during their periods (_____).
 - Tip: Create an ideal situation where no one will stop them, put pressure on them, or check on them.
- Ask girls to write down what they wish they could do during their periods.
 - Tip: Check on participants so they do not copy from each other.
- Collect the wishes and group similar wishes together.
 - Tip: For example, wish groups could be:
 - I want to play
 - I want to eat pickle/sour things
 - I want to wash my hair
 - I want to pray
- Read the wish groups and unique wishes out loud and check if there are girls in the group who already practice these wishes.
- Encourage girls who are already living someone else’s wish to share their experiences with the others.
- Encourage girls to share experiences of having overcome any period (_____) restrictions or misconceptions.
- Encourage girls to share how they will help each other make their wishes come true.
 - Tip: Keep the discussion positive and solution-oriented.

Teacher: Promise me that you will all help each other in times of need.
Will you do that?

Students: Yes, we will!

After class, Ruby is standing in a corner smiling. Arushi walks up to her and gives her a big hug. They both know they are friends now. Ruby's wish has come true!



ACTIVITY 5: Yarn game

🕒 Duration: 20 minutes

🧶 Things required: 1 or 2 balls of yarn (ideally magenta-coloured)

PURPOSE:

To enable girls to identify, understand, and question their current period () practices and support each other in overcoming certain obstacles

HOW TO START:

- Ask the girls to stand in a circle. A circle should consist of a maximum of 10 girls. If you have more than 10 girls, form multiple circles. Give one girl in each circle a ball of yarn.
- Ask the girls to pass the yarn within the circle to form a web. Each girl should say out loud what she learned from Ruby's story as she passes the yarn to another girl.
 - Tip: Each girl must get the ball of yarn at least once. The ball of yarn should not be passed to an adjacent girl and must be used up by the end. Encourage each girl to share a new learning from the story as she passes the ball of yarn to the next girl.
- When a web is formed, encourage girls to share the significance of the web that they have created.
 - Tip: This means that all the girls are connected to each other, directly or indirectly. They are strong together. They all have their period, or will start soon.
- The trainer should then cut one chord of the web.
 - Ask: What does this signify?
 - Tip: When the cord is cut, the web is broken. The connection between the girls is then broken and thus becomes weak.
- Find a way to join the web again. This should be done in a way where a maximum of two girls can move from their current position in the circle to reconnect the web. Ask the girls to place the re-joined web on the ground.
- The girls can now cut a small part of the yarn and tie it to their friend's wrist.
 - Tip: While the girls tie the yarn onto each other's wrists, the trainer shares how these bracelets are a symbol of their commitment to support each other and help each other through the problems that they may face during their period ().



- Ask the girls to form a circle again while they hold each other's hands and shout out the slogan,

“Pakadkar ek doosre ka haath, badhenge hum saath saath.”

“Holding each other's hand, together we will grow.”

- Trainer explains that the girls are now connected through this pledge and the yarn.
- Tip: The girls can now support each other by sharing Ruby's story with their mothers, friends, and sisters, and find out ways to make their period (.....) wishes come true. Once they share the story with five people, the girl can ask her friend to remove the yarn bracelet from her hand.



Learnings from chapter 2



Instructions for trainer:

- Discuss learnings from chapter 2:

Key takeaways from this chapter



1. Shift attitudes and perceptions of periods () from being impure to natural and healthy.



2. Shift the perception of menstruation being a lonely experience to one that brings everyone together in support.

TRAINING SESSION 2

PREVIEW VERSION

CHAPTER 3

Ruby is introduced to products that can be used to manage period blood efficiently and hygienically. She understands that periods are not something to be ashamed of.

PREVIEW VERSION



QUESTION 6:

TRAINER: ASK THE GIRLS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

**“Did you share Ruby’s story and period wishes with your mother, sister, or friend?”
Ask the girls who did, to raise their hands.**



ACTIVITY 6: Happy circle

⌚ Duration: 10 minutes

PURPOSE:

To acknowledge and appreciate the girls who shared Ruby’s story with their peers and family and to motivate others to do the same.

HOW TO START:

- Ask the girls who shared Ruby’s story and their period wishes with their mothers, sisters, or friends to stand in a circle.
- The girls who are yet to share their story or wishes will form a smaller circle inside it.
- Encourage the girls standing in the outer circle to support the girls standing in the inner circle. The girls standing in the inner circle should shake hands with the girls in the outer circle and must be motivated to share Ruby’s story and their period wishes with their mothers, sisters, friends, and relatives.
- Ask all the girls to mix and form one large circle.
- As the trainer claps once, the girls jump one step inside the circle. With two claps, they jump back, forming the circle again. With three claps, the girls must shout out the slogan,

**“ Pakadkar ek doosre ka haath,
badhenge hum saath saath.”**

“Holding each other’s hand, together we will grow.”

- Tip: Repeat three times.
- Ask the girls to sit in a circle again after completing this exercise.



The school year was coming to an end. Exams were around the corner and everyone was busy studying. The other girls in the class started to like Arushi and became friends with her.

One day, there were murmurs from some of the girls in the class. Not sure what was happening, Ruby went to check with the group of girls.

Humayera had just started her period (_____). She had a faint idea about what it was, but was scared. She thought she was going to die. And, worst of all, she had stained herself. The girls were not being kind to her, and some were even making fun of her. Humayera was about to break into tears.

Ruby ran straight to look for her teacher, but realised that she was on leave. She knew who her next best bet was and ran to find Arushi. She went straight to the playground and told Arushi to come along with her immediately.

Arushi: Ruby, I was right in the middle of a game! You literally dragged me out without even telling me what's going on. What happened?

Ruby: Well, what did you want me to do? I couldn't tell you right in front of everyone that Humayera started her period (_____)!

Arushi: Oh! When?

Ruby: Right now. She's crying and there is no one to help!

Arushi: Wait, let me get my bag.

Ruby and Arushi took Humayera to the toilet. The two tried to console her.

Ruby: Why are you crying?

Humayera: I'm scared.

Ruby: There is nothing to fear, this happens to everyone. It is important that you understand why this happens.

Humayera: Why does this happen?

Ruby: That's a long story that I can tell you later. You're going to be fine! Now go inside the toilet and wear this.

Arushi gave her the extra sanitary pad from her bag.

Arushi: I'll wait outside, okay?

Humayera: (Nodding) Okay.

10 minutes later Ruby and Arushi realised that Humayera was still inside.



Arushi: Are you all right?

Humayera: Yes.

Arushi: Then come out.

Humayera: I can't.

Arushi: Why?

Humayera: I'll stain myself.

Arushi: No, you will not. Come out.

Humayera (Silence)

Arushi: Come, I need to get back. I came here without taking permission.

Ruby: Do you know what to do with the pad that Arushi gave you?

Humayera: I don't know.

Arushi: I'm so silly! Open the door Humayera, I will come in and tell you.

Humayera kept crying. She had no idea what to do with the white thing in her hand. Arushi went in and consoled her.

Arushi: Look, this is how you use a sanitary pad.

Now I'll go out and you can stick it on to your underwear like this, pull the wings to the side and stick it at the bottom of the underwear.

FOR THE TRAINER: prepare the cut-out papers for cloth and pad like shown on the next page.



ACTIVITY 7: How to use a sanitary pad and cloth

⌚ Duration: 15 minutes

📄 Things required: Paper and a pair of scissors

PURPOSE:

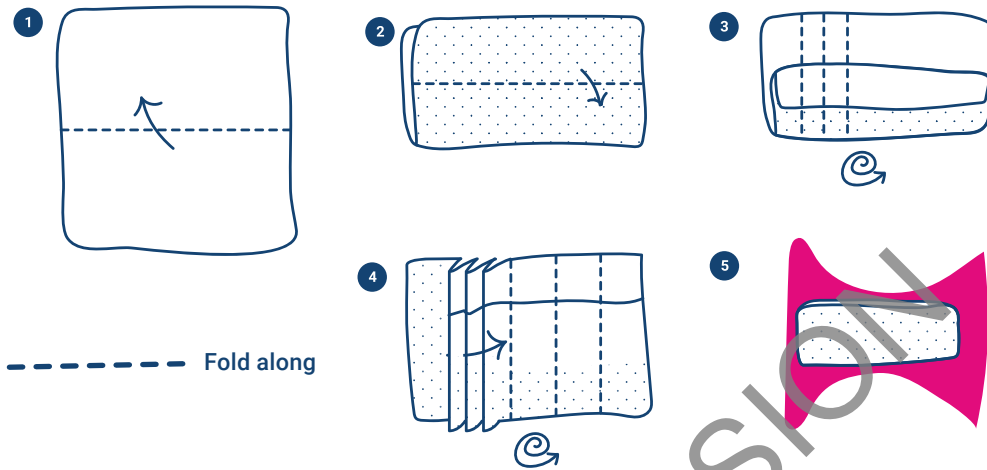
To educate the girls on how to use a sanitary pad and cloth.

HOW TO START:

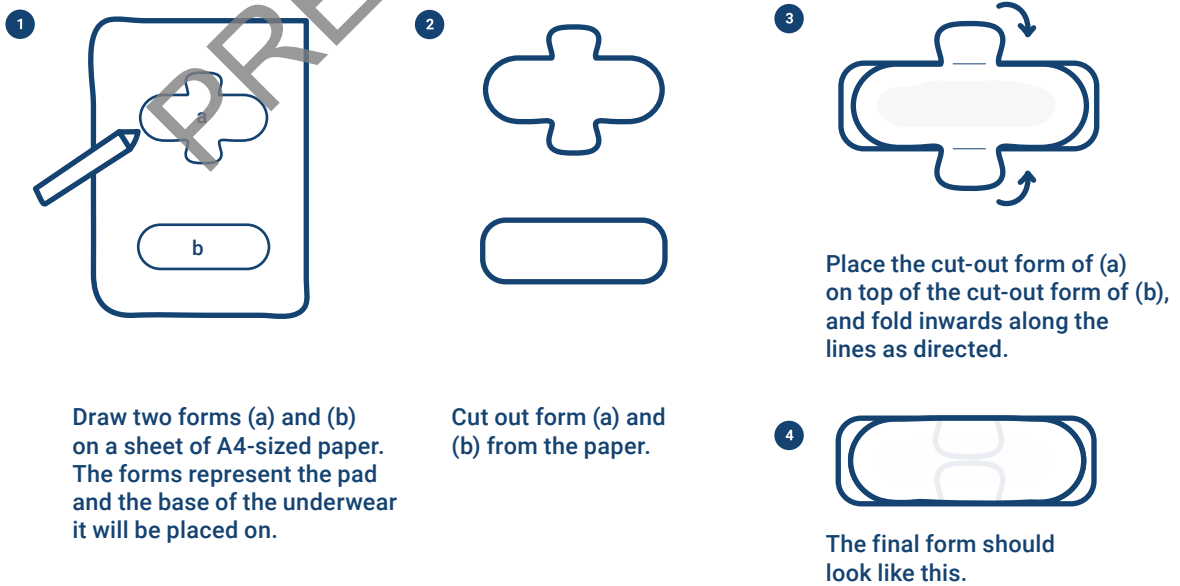
- Demonstrate the application of a pad on underwear using a pad-shaped paper cut-out.
 - Tip: The trainer must demonstrate application of pads with wings and without wings. (The same pad cut-out can be used for this demonstration.)
- Also show them how to fold and use a cloth, as shown in the MHM Education Guide.



DIY- HOW TO FOLD A CLOTH



DIY - HOW TO PUT ON A PAD



Humayera was still crying inconsolably. Ruby and Arushi didn't know what the problem was. And then Humayera said,

Humayera: I'm not wearing any underwear (panties).

Ruby and Arushi had no idea what to do.

Ruby: No underwear? But why? Oh no! Humayera, you should wear underwear every day. It's very important to protect yourself from various diseases.

Humayera: But what do I do now?

Ruby: First of all, promise yourself that you will find a way to wear an underwear every day.

Humayera: Okay, but help me now.

Ruby: Well, I guess we will have to take you home now.

The two used a bag to cover Humayera's skirt, and walked her home.

Humayera did not come to school for three days after that. Arushi and Ruby knew why. They knew they were going to take Humayera to their teacher once she came back.

When Humayera returned, she wasn't too interested in talking to Arushi and Ruby about what happened once she went home. Ruby insisted that she go to the teacher with them, but she resisted. She was too shy to talk to her teacher about such personal matters.

This time, Ruby had to bring her teacher to Humayera.

Teacher: Humayera, you can talk to me.

Humayera: (Looking shy)

Teacher: Why are you feeling shy?

Humayera: I just am.

Teacher: What you are going through now, I have been experiencing it for the past 10 years.

Humayera: What? It's going to happen again?

Ruby: Yes, now it will happen every month.

Humayera: Oh no! I thought I was done with it.

Ruby: Why didn't you come to school for 3 days?

Did your mother ask you to stay home?





Humayera: No, my mother was okay with me going. I was scared.

Teacher: Scared of what?

Humayera: What if I stained my clothes again? What if I smelled? I can't even think about it.

Teacher: Well, periods are a sign that you are growing up. When it comes to taking care of your personal hygiene, you should wash your vagina daily with clean water and should take more care during your period (____). After washing, you should dry yourself properly using a clean towel or dry cloth. Also, make sure that you bathe daily. It is very important to clean your body every day. And when you have your period (____), whatever you use, cloth or pad, make sure to change it after every 4 hours. This way there will be no unpleasant smell.

Ruby: Roli didi was telling me that we should also wear underwear every day and wash our underwear with soap.

Teacher: That is correct. Also, you should come to school even when you have your period. If you take a holiday for three days every month, you will end up falling behind in class. So Humayera, you will be fine! Repeat after me, "I have started my period. Now I have to be smart, not shy".

Humayera: (Faintly) I have started my periods (_____).

Now I have to be smart, not shy.

Teacher: Now say it loud and clear.

Humayera: (Smiles) I have started my periods (_____).

Now I have to be smart, not shy.



ACTIVITY 8: Smart, not Shy! - Pledge

 Duration: 5 minutes

 Things required: Mobiles phones to record audio

PURPOSE:

To encourage girls to let go of feelings of shame about their periods.

HOW TO START:

- Trainers should have their mobile phones ready to record audio.

- Ask the girls who have started their period to shout out the slogan –

“ Mere period (.....) shuru ho gaye hain. Mujhe sharam se nahin, samajh se kaam lena hoga!”

(My period has started. Now I have to be smart, not shy.)

- The girls who have not started their period must shout out the slogan –

“ Ab mujhe pata hai, mujhe sharam se nahin, samajh se kaam lena hoga!”

(Now I know that when my period start, I have to be smart, not shy.)

- Tip: If girls are shy and say the slogan in a low tone, ask them to repeat it loudly.

OPTIONAL:

- Record the slogan in an audio format and share with WASH United on MHMGuide@wash-united.org. This will help WASH United collect data and develop this product further.

Walking back to class, Humayera kept thinking about what her teacher said. There is absolutely no reason to feel shy or ashamed because periods (_____) are a normal, biological process. Then why worry about it at all? It's easy to say, but tough to do.

When she reached her class, somehow everyone knew why she had missed school. As the girls started talking, she realised that she didn't feel shy or scared anymore. Her best friend Runali had started her period (_____) just a few months ago. After class, she asked her:

Runali: Why didn't you come to school?

Humayera: I thought I'd stain myself.

Runali: Don't you use a pad?

Humayera: No, I use cloth.

Runali: Oh, cloth is really bad. It causes diseases. I use a pad.

Wear one and it lasts a whole day. And there's no worry of staining.

Humayera: Really, is it that comfortable? But what do you do with the used pad? Arushi gave me one but I was too scared to use it, because I didn't know where I'd throw it.

Runali: I just throw it anywhere.

Usually on my way to school, I just throw it somewhere.

Humayera: Yuck! You can't just throw it like that.

Runali: What else do I do? Wave it in front of people?

Humayera: I don't think it's right to throw it on the road. I'll ask Arushi what she does.

Humayera waves at Arushi and Ruby and waits for them to come.



How to dispose a pad

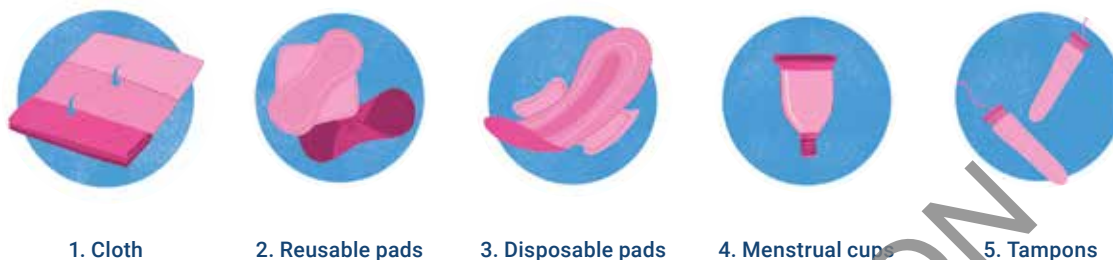
Humayera: Arushi, how long does a pad last? Does it last a whole day?

Arushi: No. Who told you this? It last only 4-5 hours.

Using it for longer can cause infections.

Humayera: Isn't a pad safer than cloth?

Arushi: I too had the same question. Then I figured, both can be safe and harmful as well. It's about how we use them. The cloth has to be made of cotton or flannel. It has to be clean, washed well, and dried in the sun. It is very important to sun-dry a cloth, and only then is it safe to use. If it is folded and placed well in your panties, you won't stain either. You need to change both the pad and the cloth.



A sanitary pad has to be changed every 4 hours, and most of us cannot afford so many pads. So, I use a pad at school and a cloth at home.

Humayera: There are so many problems with this though.

Arushi: Why?

Humayera: A cloth has to be dried in the sun and a pad has to be thrown out? How do I do either?



Arushi: Don't overthink it. Periods (_____) are normal. Every woman gets it every month. There is no point in being shy. Drying the cloth in the sun will prevent diseases, which is good! And just wrap the pad in used newspaper and throw it in the garbage. You just have to be shameless.

Humayera: Right into the dustbin?

Won't everyone know that I have my period then?

Ruby: (Sarcastically) Do people in your house dig into the dustbin and check what's thrown away?

Humayera: What if someone sees me throw it away?

Arushi: If someone sees it, then they do. This is not a one-time thing, this is going to happen every month. You just have to get used to it. Talk to your mom, explain everything to her and make smart choices.

Humayera: This sounds like a lot of work. I wish this drying and throwing business didn't exist.

Arushi: You know what? When I went to Mumbai for my last vacation, my mother showed me on the Internet that there are many products available in the market other than pads and cloths that we can use during our periods. Like menstrual cups, tampons, reusable pads, and compostable pads.

Humayera: What are all of those?

Arushi: I don't know much about them. Let's ask my mother when she comes to visit me next. I will also ask her to bring some from her hospital for us to see.

Ruby: Wow! Now, I too will be happy when your mother comes.

When Ruby got back home that evening, she felt unusually tired. She went through her routine and, after a short nap, sat down to study. She felt something strange, something wet between her legs. She jumped up and ran to the toilet. She then yelled:

Ruby: Roli Didi!!!!!!...Mummyyyyyy!

Roli: (Running to the toilet) What happened?

? **QUESTION 7:**

TRAINER: ASK THE GIRLS THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

“What do you think has happened to Ruby?”



Ruby: My period has started.

Roli: Are you scared?

Ruby: No, but please help me.

Roli: I will get you a pad. Let me see how well you've been trained.

They both laugh as they come out of the toilet and go to tell their mother.

This time, mummy hugs both of them and says:

Mummy: Ruby, your period has started, now you need to be smart, not shy.

Roli: See, my training! I have taught mom, too.

Ruby: Roli, Mummy, don't worry, I am smart already, and I promise not to be shy about it and support others.



FOR THE TRAINER: Follow 36 and 37 only with older students who have their periods. Otherwise move forward to page 38.

Mommy: Just keep track of your period (____), Ruby. You can use a calendar bookmark.
Roli: Let's make one together for you!



ACTIVITY 9: TRACK YOUR PERIOD!

🕒 Duration: 10 minutes
📄 Things required: Paper, stationary

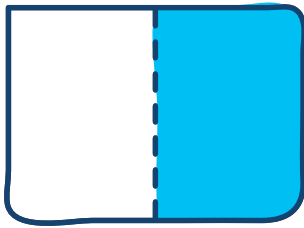
PURPOSE:

- 1 To help girls track their period (_____) dates with ease and efficiency.

HOW TO START:

- Distribute paper amongst the girls.
- Ask the girls to cut two rectangles of equal size.
- Sitck the two halves together. Ask the girls to draw a smiling face on one side and a calendar on the other side indicating just the months.
- The calendar should be created in a way such that there is space to write below each month.
- Make a circle below each month.
- Explain to the girls that they should write the start date of their period inside each circle, and write the number of days the cycle lasted outside each circle.
 - Tip: If a girl has her period multiple times in a month, she can draw several circles below each month. The girls can write in their preferred language.
- Encourage the girls to share this calendar idea with five women (mother, sister, and friends).
 - Tip: Girls who have not started their periods can gift the calendar to their elder sister or a friend.

1



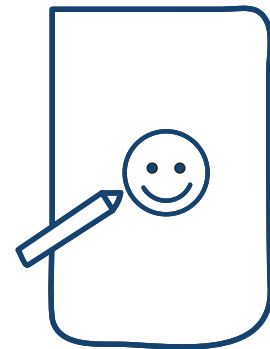
Take an A4 size sheet, divide it into two halves. Stick the two halves together.

2

FRONT

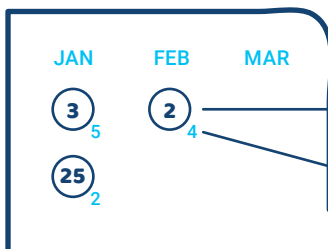


BACK



Ask the girls to draw a smiling face on one side and a calendar on the other side indicating just the months. Your calendar is now ready! Its usage is explained in the next step.

3



Mention the start date of your period under its respective month and circle it.

Write the number of days your period lasted outside the circle as shown.

Ruby: This is nice. But why should I do this?

Mummy: A calendar is helpful so you can see how long your menstrual cycle is and how long your period (_____) usually lasts. Then you can be better prepared.

Roli: By using the calendar I noticed that my cycle last 29 days. Sometimes it is 28 or even 30 days. With the calendar I can then estimate the start date of my next period, and on those days I carry an emergency pad with me to school.

See, Ruby, you are not the only smart person in this family!

Ruby (laughs): So glad to have you as my older sister, Roli!



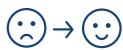
Learnings from chapter 3:



Instruction for trainer:

- Discuss and summarize learnings from Chapter 3

Key takeaways from this chapter



1. Periods (.....) are nothing to be ashamed of. Perceptions should be shifted from shame to understanding.



2. It's your choice.

What product you use to manage menstrual blood is your choice. No product is better or worse than the other. A product is good or bad depending on how hygienically one uses it. Remind the girls to practice good hygiene when they have their periods (.....).

Every girl needs to experience what works best for her!

The End

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS



1. Cloth



2. Reusable pads



3. Disposable pads



4. Menstrual cups



5. Tampons

PREVIEW VERSION

HOW TO USE/ DISPOSE

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS



CLOTH

After 3-4 hours of use, wash well with soap and water. Dry in sunlight. Sunlight helps kill harmful bacteria.



DISPOSABLE PADS

Dispose the sanitary pad after 4-5 hours of use. These should be thrown into an incinerator if available or else wrapped in a newspaper and disposed off in a dustbin.

NOTES

PREVIEW VERSION



PREVIEW VERSION