

## *Journey Into Womanhood*

*Welcome to one of the most beautiful journeys you will ever take.*

*The journey into womanhood!*

*Starting your period is a personal and individual experience, but it's a natural part of every young girl's life and it is our hope that your experience is full of discovery and celebration.*

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*Beginning your first period can often be a confusing and scary time.*

*Your body is in a state of transformation and you may be unsure of all the changes taking place within, but please know that this is a natural part of the journey.*

*Whether you are just starting your period or you're curious about what to expect, it is our hope to answer any questions you may have and make the transition into womanhood as smooth as possible.*

### ***When can I expect to get my period?***

*It's a complex process when it comes to how the body begins a menstrual cycle. Much like trying put together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle—every piece must be sorted one at a time so that it fits where it's suppose to in order for the puzzle to be complete and the body operates in a similar way. Your body is in the process of sorting through all the pieces that make YOU unique, so the timetable of when you will start your period will be different depending on your genetics and many other factors.*

*Many girls begin their period between the ages of 12 and 14, but it can start earlier or later—that decision is completely up to your body.*

*Not being able to predict the exact time and day you will start your period can be frustrating, especially if you have friends who have started their period before you.*

*Just trust your body and know that when the time is right, your puzzle will be complete and the journey into womanhood will begin.*

### ***How much blood do I lose?***

*Most girls and women bleed the heaviest during the first few days of their cycle, so during that time—it may seem as if your body is pouring out a never ending river, but we assure you that this is not the case.*

*The uterus is about the size of a fist, so as the tissue that lines the uterus walls begins to shed—you will only be releasing about 2-5 tablespoons of blood over a course of days.*

*The body will go through different stages as it adjusts to the change, so your flow may fluctuate from light to heavy.*

*The more you grow into womanhood, the more your cycle will begin to regulate itself.*

### ***What to do when you get your period for the first time?***

*Getting your period for the first time can be exciting, liberating and scary all rolled into one.*

*You've probably been waiting for this moment for a long time and even imagined what it was going to be like when it happened, but when that moment finally arrives—it can throw you into the a whirlwind of emotions. In order to lessen the impact, it's important have a good support system to help you sort through all that you may be feeling while taking your first steps into the journey of womanhood.*

*While your mom, teacher, or school nurse may be the last people on earth you want to run to when your moment arrives, they will often be the ones to help you get the correct information and the feminine hygiene products you'll need (pads, tampons, etc.)—so don't feel like this is something that you can't share with them. You can even talk to an older sister, an aunt, or a close girlfriend.*

*All girls and women who have began their journey have had this experience, so it's completely okay to share this moment with someone you trust.*

### ***How often do I get my period?***

*The frequency of your period will once again depend on the uniqueness of YOUR body.*

*Most menstrual cycles arrive once a month and can last between 2-7 days, so this means there should 28 days from the first day of your period to the first day of your next period. This time table is not set in stone though, so that number can vary anywhere between 21 and 35 days.*

*If there are extreme fluctuations—such as your period being absent for months at a time or you are bleeding longer than 7 days—don't be afraid to use your support system and communicate if you feel that something is wrong.*

*Listen to your body and talk to someone that you trust.*

### ***How do I deal with cramps?***

*Cramping is probably one of the most unpleasant parts of getting your period, so here are a few remedies that can help make your time of the month less painful:*

- Drinking lots of water*
- Eating fresh fruits and vegetables*
- Herbal teas, such as peppermint, chamomile, or ginger. \*Talk this over with your parents before drinking anything\**
- Placing a heating pad on your lower abdomen*
- Taking pain relievers (such as Ibuprofen) a few days before your cycle and during. \*Never take more than the recommended amount\**
- Light exercise*

*The intensity of your cramping can depend on many factors, but it's not something that you have to suffer through.*

*Rest and relax as much as you need to during this time.*

### ***Can I Exercise during my period?***

*While you may not want to run a marathon, you can certainly do some light exercise during your period and it is even recommended to alleviate menstrual cramps and boost mood—which can be up and down due to all the changes going on in your body.*

*Yoga is an awesome and gentle form of exercise for all ages and you can even do some aerobic exercise if yoga is not your thing.*

*Whether you want to take a bike ride, do some brisk walking or punch it out in a kickboxing class—moving your body during your period is never a bad thing.*

*If all you want to do is curl up on the couch, watch your favorite show, and eat delicious chocolate (in moderation of course), that's okay too.*

*Just listen to your body.*

### ***Embracing Who You Are***

*So now comes the time to celebrate!*

*Your journey into womanhood has begun and there is so much information to process, but this is what makes the journey somewhat of an adventure. You are entering a phase of exploring unknown territory and putting together the pieces of who you are. I can't promise you that this journey will be perfect, but as you continue along the path—you will be given the pieces to unravel the mysteries of your beautiful body.*

*You have just entered into a circle of women that has been growing since the beginning of time.*

*Embrace the young woman that you are and all that you discover about yourself along the way.*