

Your Period

What's Normal and What's Not

By Jenna Haines

Cramps – Cramps are caused by chemicals manufactured in the uterus called prostaglandins, which bring on contractions in order to help shed the uterine lining. Pain is normal, but severe, debilitating cramps can be sign of endometriosis, a disorder that affects 6 to 10% of women of reproductive age in the U.S. If your cramps are tolerable, pop an aspirin or ibuprofen to reduce the production of prostaglandins and ease the discomfort. But if you suspect your cramps are more painful than normal, see a doctor and ask about endometriosis.

Spotting – Spotting can result from low-dose birth control pills, but OB-GYNs say there is nothing to worry about 99% of the time. If you're not on the pill, you may spot during ovulation because of a brisk rise and drop in estrogen that occurs in the middle of your cycle. Another possibility is polyps, an estrogen-derived overgrowth of tissue in the uterus or cervix. If your spotting doesn't go away after a few months on the pill, you should discuss polyps and higher-dose birth control pills with your doctor.

Missed Period/Irregular Cycles – You can miss a period because of a number of factors. But if you're not pregnant or going through menopause, the irregularity could be caused by taking certain medications, stress, extreme weight gain, extreme weight loss, or perimenopause—the five-or-more year period in which your body transitions



into menopause. However, don't ignore the symptoms. If the irregularity lasts over three months, see a doctor to weed out more severe causes.

Heavy Flow – If you're going through more than five pads or tampons a day, it might be time to talk to the doctor. Heavy flow may be the result of uterine fibroids, benign tumors in the uterus.

They can be treated with ultrasound surgery, uterine artery embolization, a hysterectomy, etc. However, if the bleeding is tolerable, you may decide to just wait until menopause, at which point the tumors shrink because of the estrogen reduction. ♀

OVER 40 YEARS SERVING THE U.S. AIR FORCE. NOW SERVING CHATTANOOGA



EAST BRAINERD
ORAL SURGERY



BILL CHILDRESS, D.D.S., M.D.
KARL MEYER, D.D.S., M.D.

Dental Surgery & Extractions • Wisdom Tooth Removal • Dental Implants
Treatment of Dental & Facial Injuries • General Anesthesia



1350 MACKEY BRANCH DRIVE, SUITE 110 • CHATTANOOGA, TN 37421 • 423.296.8210 • WWW.EASTBRAINERDOMS.COM



Ragweed isn't controlling my life.

Are seasonal allergies controlling your life by keeping you away from outdoor fun and adventure?

Relief is possible at Covenant Asthma and Allergy Care. Dr. Susan Raschal, a board-certified allergist, specializes in the testing and treatment of adults and children who suffer from all kinds of allergies, asthma, insect stings and eczema. She can help with the congestion, sneezing, watery eyes and other irritating symptoms that can ruin your day. If you want to worry less about allergies and more about how you're going to get down from a tall rock, call Covenant today.

423-468-3267
Saturday and evening appointments available.
www.covenantallergy.com

COVENANT
Allergy and Asthma Care

The promise of relief.

Dr. Susan Raschal, DO
BOARD-CERTIFIED ALLERGIST

Gwen Carlton, DNP, FNP
CERTIFIED ASTHMA EDUCATOR

Leigh Anne Calhoun, MSN, FNP-C
FAMILY NURSE PRACTITIONER