



The Female Reproductive System

Lesson Goals

- Review questions that students left in the question box from the last lesson
- Identify and describe the structure and function of the female reproductive system
- Become aware of the maturation process of the female reproductive system
- Learn the proper vocabulary for the female anatomy
- Understand the process of menstruation and ways to decrease cramps and uncomfortable feelings during menstruation

SEL Skills Addressed

Self-awareness
Social awareness
Self-management

Terms Used:

Ovaries (Ovary)
Fallopian Tube
Uterus
Cervix
Vagina
Ovulation
Menstrual Cycle
Menstruation

TIME: 45 minutes

Materials: Folders, Index Cards, Question Box, Handouts (Female Reproductive System; Ovulation and Menstruation), Video *Let's Talk Puberty for Girls*, and website <http://kidshealth.org/kid>



Activity 1 - What's in The Question Box

Greet students and ask volunteers to pass out folders, index cards. Respond to some of the questions that students have left in the question box. Remind students that it is natural to have questions. Encourage them to use the question box or to ask their parents/guardians/or other trusted adults. There may be some questions that were generated in the last lesson that you would like to address at this time.

Activity 2 - The Structure of the Female Reproductive System

Give each student a copy the *The Structure of the Female Reproductive System* handout. Students will see a diagram of the female reproductive system. They will also have a list of vocabulary words with their definitions. Each word represents a part of the female reproductive system. Tell them that today's lesson will focus on the parts of the female reproductive system and you want to see how many of the parts they already know. Ask students to read through the terms and definitions and attempt to match each team with the correct body part. Once students have had some time to fill in the diagram - go over each term and show them where it belongs on the diagram.

Activity 3 - Explain the Process of Ovulation and Menstruation

Explain that this is a natural process that all females experience. Some girls will experience some cramping or discomfort. This is normal. Exercise can help to diminish the pain. Girls should talk to their parents about any pain they are experiencing.

Activity 4 - Review

Review this material using a visual. You can use the video - *Let's Talk Puberty for Girls*, and/or the website <http://kidshealth.org/kid>. This will serve as a review of the material covered in this lesson. It will also present the information in a different way which will address different learning styles.

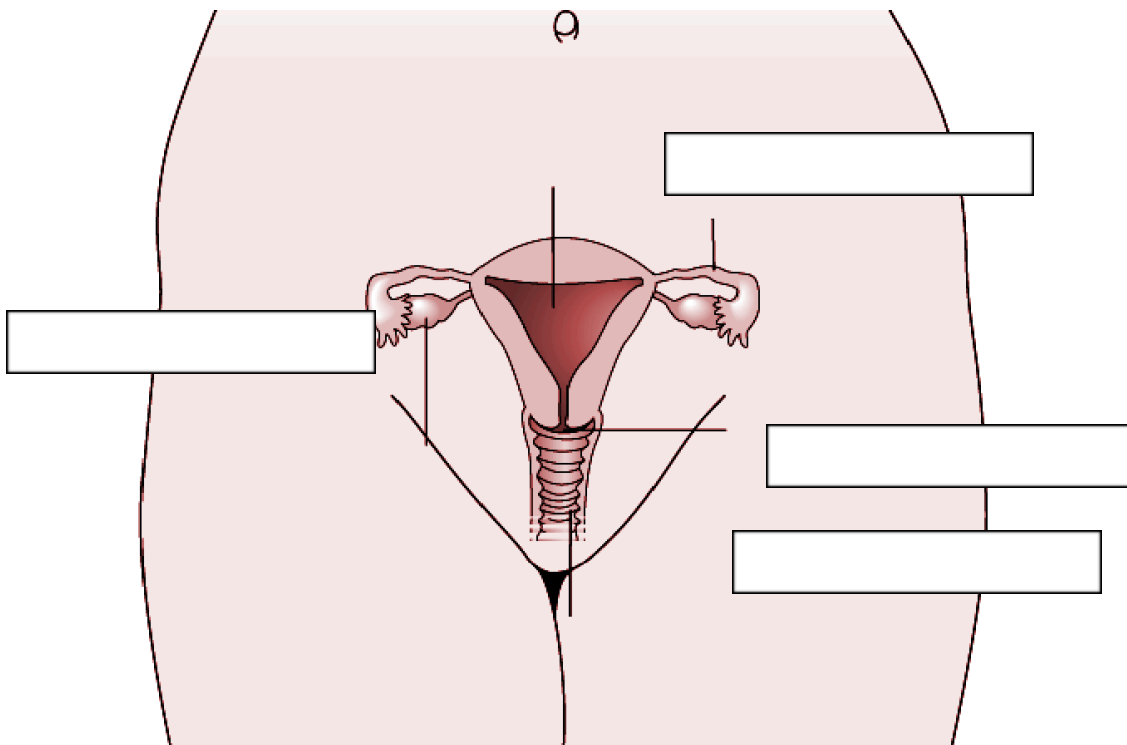
Activity 5 - Anonymous Questions

Address student questions in the Anonymous Question Box. Give students a new question to answer if they don't have one about the class material, and remind students to place their anonymous questions in the box as they leave the classroom

Female Reproductive System

Directions: Label the body parts above with the correct term.

1. **Ovary** - The female reproductive organs or glands that produce the egg cells and the hormones (estrogen and progesterone). Each ovary is about the size and shape of an unshelled almond.
2. **Fallopian Tube** - Either of two tubes through which an egg released from the ovary each month travels on its way to the uterus. Each one is about 4 inches long and the width of a needle. The sperm meets the egg in the fallopian tube in order to make a baby.
3. **Uterus** - Also called the womb, the uterus is the upside-down pear-shaped female reproductive organ in which the baby develops until birth. It consists of layers of muscle and tissue. The lining is shed monthly as menstrual flow.
4. **Cervix** -The neck-like, narrow end of the uterus which opens into the vagina. It stretches to allow a baby to be born.
5. **Vagina** - Also called the birth canal, this soft, muscular, elastic passageway extends from the uterus to the outside of the body. Babies come out through it, the menstrual blood flows through it.



Vocabulary terms associated with the female reproductive system

1. **Egg** - Also called an ovum, this is the female's reproductive cell. A mature egg cell can start a pregnancy when fertilized by a male's sperm cell. The egg cell is microscopic.
2. **Ovulation** - This is the process of the ovary releasing one egg every 28 days (on the average). The egg travels through the fallopian tube and into the uterus. Females are born with all their eggs, about 400,000. Once menstruation begins, usually only one egg is released during each cycle.
3. **Menstruation** - This is also called "getting a period". This usually happens sometime between the ages of 8 and 16. It is a stage in the female's body cycle. If an egg is not fertilized by a sperm, the uterus sheds its lining. Blood and cell tissue are released from the uterus and come out through the vagina. A period may last from 3-7 days and usually occurs every 28 days. (However, it can range from every 21 to 35 days or more in special cases.) The flow may start out a brownish-red color and then change to deep red. The blood comes out slowly but is usually heavier for 2 or 3 days. Females respond differently to menstruation. Some have minor cramps or discomfort. Some may break out in pimples and some may have tender breasts. Some females have no physical reactions or discomforts at all. Females do not get their period when they are pregnant since the lining of the uterus is needed to help support the growing baby. Women stop menstruating between 45 and 55 years of age. This is called menopause.
4. **Pads** - When a female has her period she may use a pad or sanitary napkin to absorb the flow of blood. A pad fits inside the female's underwear. It should be changed every few hours. Pads should be wrapped in toilet paper and placed in the wastebasket. Pads should not be flushed down the toilet. Panty shields may be used when a female's period is almost over and she wants to make sure her underwear stay protected. They can also be used between periods to absorb any discharge.
5. **Tampons** - When a female has her period she may decide to use a tampon instead of a pad. A tampon is inserted into the vagina to absorb the blood flow. Using a tampon or a pad is a matter of personal preference and often a parent can be helpful with the decision. Choosing a tampon with a plastic or paper applicator is another decision a female can discuss with a parent. Tampons should be changed regularly like pads and should not be used overnight because of the risk of toxic shock syndrome. Some tampons can be flushed down the toilet while others need to be wrapped in toilet paper and placed in the wastebasket.
6. **Toxic Shock Syndrome** - This is an illness that occurs when certain bacteria get into the female's reproductive system. This can cause fevers, diarrhea, vomiting, or a rash. Researchers believe that keeping tampons in the body for long periods of time can make the disease more likely to occur.

Function of the Female Reproductive System

Ovulation

The menstrual cycle is critical to reproduction and is important for both males and females to understand. About once per month, an egg is released from the ovary (this process is called “ovulation”). Female hormones prepare the inside lining of the uterus for a possible pregnancy. If a pregnancy doesn’t happen, the egg and lining of the uterus are shed through the vagina during menstruation.

Menstruation

Women release a little blood and tissue from their vagina once a month. Most women start this at about age 12, but it can be different from person to person (e.g., between the ages of 8 - 18). This is called a period. It's a sign that a girl's body is capable of having a baby. Some girls and women have cramps, moodiness and breast tenderness, but some people have no negative symptoms at all. The period usually lasts about one week, goes away and returns in about another month.

Explain the biological process involved if she is curious and ready for that kind of information. Discuss how the ovaries release one egg each month. The uterus lines itself with blood and tissue to protect a growing baby. If the egg is fertilized, it stays in the uterus and the baby begins to form. If the egg isn't fertilized, it is shed along with the uterus lining during the next period. Show her diagrams if you like (see resource section).

A period may last from 3-7 days and usually occurs every 28 days (can range from every 21 to 35 days or more in some cases). The flow may start out a brownish-red color and then change to a deep red. The blood comes out slowly but is usually heavier for 2 or 3 days. Females respond differently to menstruation. Some have minor cramps or discomfort. Some may experience skin tenderness in the breasts or break out in pimples on their face, neck, chest and back. Some females have no physical reactions or discomfort at all.

Women stop menstruating between the ages of 45 and 55 years of age. This is another time of change for the female body - called menopause.

When a female has her period she may use a pad or a sanitary napkin to absorb the flow of blood. As girls get older they may choose to use a tampon instead of a pad. A pad fits inside the female's underwear where it absorbs the menstrual flow as it exits the body. A tampon is inserted just inside the vagina where it can absorb the menstrual flow before it leaves the body.

Both pads and tampons should be changed every few hours. Regular changing prevents buildup of bacteria and eliminates odor. Naturally, if your period is heavy, you should change pads more often because they may get saturated more quickly.

Pads and tampons should be wrapped in toilet paper and placed in the wastebasket. They should never be flushed down the toilet. Panty shields may be used when a female's period is almost over and a pad is no longer necessary.

Process Questions

1. What was one fact that you learned today that surprised you?
2. Why do some people use slang terms to refer to their menstrual periods?
3. How might a girl feel if she were the first person among her friends to get her period?
How might a girl feel if she were the only one of her friends who had not gotten her period yet?
4. How might a girl feel if boys were teasing her about the changes she is going through during puberty?
5. What might you do or think differently after learning about the female reproductive system?

LESSON 16
Teacher Reference

OVULATION AND MENSTRUATION

