

Before She Needs It

What to have on hand before her first period — and when to start getting ready — so nobody is scrambling when the day comes.

When should you start getting ready?

You do not need to wait until her first period seems imminent.

A good time to begin is when puberty changes are underway — breast development, body hair, body odor, growth spurts, or vaginal discharge — or simply when she is old enough to be away from home without you for stretches of time.

The goal is not to predict the exact day. The goal is for her first period to feel expected instead of alarming.

If you only do three things

- 1 Put pads somewhere she can find them.
- 2 Put a kit in her backpack.
- 3 Make sure she knows where both are, how to use them — and that she can use them without asking.

Everything else on this list is refinement. You do not have to do all of it this weekend.

What to have available

Period supplies are more widely available for free than most people realize — school nurses keep them, health departments often distribute them, and many community organizations do as well. Worth knowing for a forgotten kit as much as for a tight month.

At home

☐ **Pads in a couple of absorbencies**

Starting with pads makes it easier to see how much she is bleeding and learn her pattern.

☐ **Pantyliners**

Useful for light flow, spotting, or discharge.

☐ **Tampons, if she wants them**

Tampons are medically safe to use from the first period when used correctly. They can be especially useful for swimmers and athletes.

☐ **Period underwear, if she's interested**

Can be worn alone or as backup protection.

☐ **Comfortable underwear**

A few pairs she will not be devastated to stain.

☐ **A heating pad or warm compress**

For cramps or general comfort.

☐ **Pain-relief medication your family normally uses**

Know the correct medication and dose for her age and weight before she needs it, and follow the label or guidance from her healthcare provider.

☐ **A small stain-removal option**

Because leaks happen. They are inconvenient — not catastrophic.

In her school and away-from-home kit

Keep it in a small pouch she can move easily between backpacks, sports bags, and overnight bags.

☐ **Two or three period products she knows how to use**

☐ **Spare underwear**

☐ **Small disposal bags or zip-top bags**

☐ **Travel-size wipes**

For external use only.

☐ **Clean leggings or shorts**

Optional, if the pouch has room.

☐ **A simple plan for who she can ask for help**

Most important: make sure she knows where the kit is, that she understands how to use it, and that she is allowed to use it without asking permission first.

Before she needs the supplies, teach her how to use them

Don't just stock the bathroom cabinet. Show her:

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| ☐ How a pad attaches to underwear | ☐ How to wash blood out of clothing |
| ☐ How often products generally need to be changed | ☐ Where supplies are kept at home |
| ☐ How to wrap and dispose of a used product | ☐ What is in her school kit |
| ☐ How to handle a leak | ☐ Who she can go to if her period starts away from home |

And if she wants to use tampons, explain how they work **before** the day she is standing in a bathroom trying to figure it out.

Before her first period, she should already know

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| ☐ What a period is | ☐ That early cycles may be irregular |
| ☐ Why it happens | ☐ That cramps and other symptoms can happen |
| ☐ That the first one may be light — brown, pink, red, or a mixture | ☐ That she can come to you with questions — even the weird ones |

She does not need every detail at once. She just needs enough that when it happens, her first thought isn't **"What is wrong with me?"**

One last thing to have ready: a calm grown-up.

You do not need the perfect reaction or the perfect speech. She needs someone who can say:

"You're okay. We knew this was coming. Let's get you what you need."

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