

FOOTBALL & YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE



WHAT IS A MENSTRUAL CYCLE?

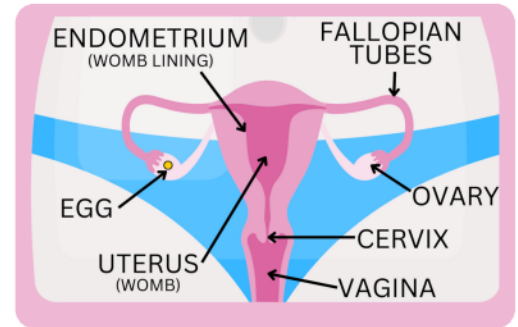
Each month your body goes through a cycle of hormone-driven changes. An **egg develops** and is released from one of your ovaries (ovulation). The **lining of the uterus (womb) builds up** to support pregnancy. If a pregnancy doesn't occur, this **lining sheds** during a **period** (menstruation), and then the cycle starts again.

HOW LONG IS A CYCLE?

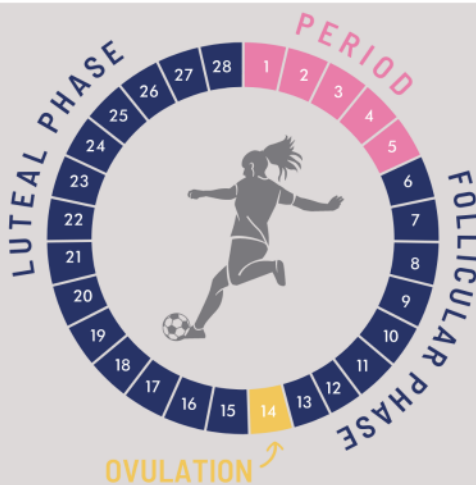
A **cycle** is measured from the **first day of your period** to the **first day of your next period**. The **average** length of a menstrual cycle is **28 days** but **everyone is different**. Cycles vary at different life stages, eg teenagers may have cycles that last 45 days, those in their 20s to 30s may have cycles that last 21-38 days. Everyone is different.

WHAT IS A PERIOD?

A **period** (menstruation) is when **your body releases blood & cells** from the womb lining that it no longer needs. They leave the body **through your vagina as blood** which can vary from bright red to brown in colour. This is **completely normal** and usually lasts around **3-7 days**.



PHASES OF THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE



MENSTRUAL PHASE (PERIOD)

- The first day of your period is **Day 1**
- The **womb lining sheds** and exits through the vagina (bleeding)
- **Oestrogen & progesterone** are low

FOLLICULAR PHASE

- **Oestrogen rises**
- The lining of the **womb thickens** to prepare for pregnancy
- Your body gets ready to release an egg

OVULATION

- There is a **surge in oestrogen** and an **egg is released** from your ovary.
- The egg takes 3-4 days to travel to your womb
- The egg waits for 24 hours before breaking down

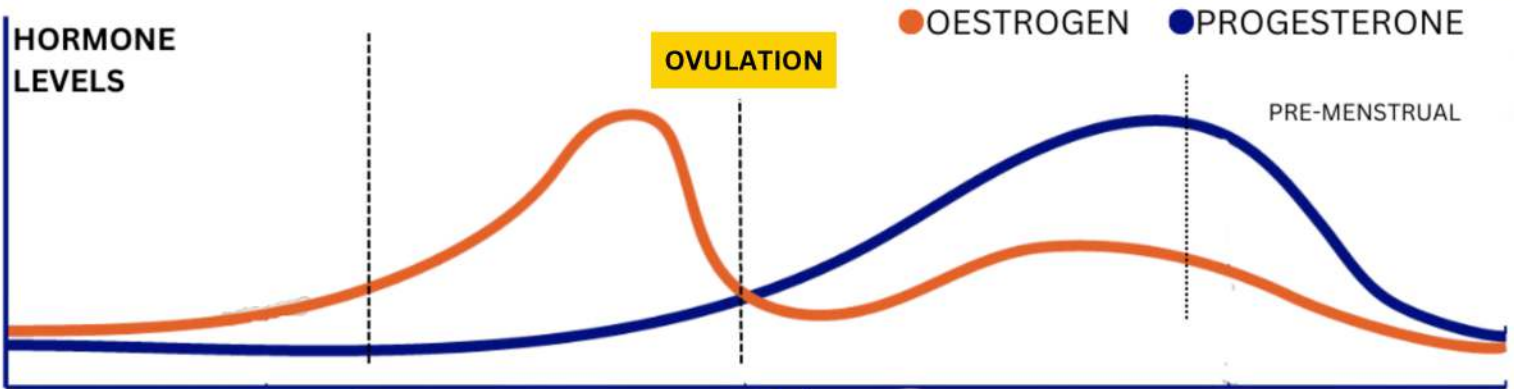
PERIOD PACKS IN KIT BAGS

All team kit bags are now equipped with an emergency period pack for you to use if you need sanitary products or a change of kit whilst at training or matches.

LUTEAL PHASE

- **Progesterone** rises, peaks halfway through this phase, and drops off again.
- Your **womb lining then breaks down** ready for the cycle to begin again

HOW CAN MY MENSTRUAL CYCLE AFFECT FOOTBALL?



DAYS 1-6 PERIOD (MENSTRUAL PHASE)

At the start of this phase when bleeding is heaviest, you may experience **low energy / fatigue** and some of the **PMS** & menstrual symptoms described below, such as tighter muscles. Your **MENTAL SHARPNESS** for more complicated tasks is **HIGHER** in this phase so it's a great time to **learn complex ball skills** that need **good coordination**.

DAYS 6-14 FOLLICULAR PHASE

Rising oestrogen levels are linked with the release of more '**FEEL-GOOD**' hormones, so you may feel more **SOCIABLE, POSITIVE & ALERT**. You are also likely to feel **STRONGER** & more **ENERGETIC**. You may have increased ligament and joint laxity in this phase - as always, **thorough warm-ups are essential** before training and matches. Recovery from exercise is at its best so it's a **good time for high-intensity fitness training**.

DAYS 15-28 LUTEAL PHASE

Oestrogen and progesterone both start to rise in the early part of this phase and your **energy levels may not feel as high**. This is a good time for **SLOWER-PACED ENDURANCE TRAINING**. Your body may need **more rest and recovery** between training sessions during this phase but it's still good to keep active.

Towards the **end of the luteal phase** you may experience some of the Pre-Menstrual Syndrome symptoms (**PMS**) below so you should **listen to your body** and **take care** in training and matches.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF and allow **lots of time for recovery** after exercise.

PMS & MENSTRUAL SYMPTOMS



WHAT IS PMS?

Changes in your body's hormone levels before your period can cause **physical** and **emotional** changes, often called **Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)**

In the lead-up to, and during your period you may experience some of the following **PMS symptoms**:

- **abdominal and back pain** caused by contraction of the muscles in the womb
- **back and leg pain** caused by tightening of muscles
- **headache and breast pain** related to changing levels of hormones
- **bloating, increased or reduced appetite, and nausea** caused by hormonal changes and pain
- **tiredness** and/or **difficulty sleeping**
- feelings of **sadness, loneliness, anxiety, anger**, and many other emotions
- **withdrawal** from social interaction and communication

These symptoms **usually improve** when your **period starts** and disappear a few days afterwards. PMS doesn't affect everyone, but some people can experience very severe symptoms. **If your symptoms are affecting your day-to-day life or regularly preventing you from playing football, speak to your GP.**

Pre-menstrual Dysphoria Disorder (PMDD) is a **severe** form of PMS. It can occur at any time, but is more often experienced when periods start or during menopause. It's a **complex condition** where you may experience difficulties with your **mental health** as well as **physical symptoms**. If you think you are experiencing PMDD **seek help and advice from your GP**.

