

# Natural Help 4...

## Heavy Periods



### What is Heavy Menstrual Periods?

Most women dread their period – especially when they experience heavy [bleeding](#) with almost every cycle! Heavy [menstrual periods](#) are known by their medical term menorrhagia and are described as [excessive bleeding](#) or [prolonged bleeding](#) every month. It can cause extreme discomfort, often leaving you feeling weak and light-headed. You may bleed so heavily that you are often forced to **change your sanitary towel or tampon every two hours**. Heavy [menstrual periods](#) can lead to a number of complications if not treated immediately.

Every woman's menstrual cycle is different. Normal menstrual flow occurs every 28 days, but can range from 21 days to 35 days, and lasts approximately 4 days (total loss of blood = 30 to 40 milliliters = 2 to 3 tablespoons). When you bleed heavily, you are actually losing 80 milliliters of blood or more (16 soaked sanitary products) during your menstrual cycle, and soaking a sanitary towel or tampon every 2 to 3 consecutive hours. Some women may even **bleed for a prolonged period** which lasts longer than seven days.

Heavy [menstrual periods](#) can affect any woman of childbearing age. However, young adolescents who have just started their period and are not ovulating properly as well as pre-menopausal women tend to be more susceptible to [Heavy menstrual periods](#) than others. Being overweight, using certain medications such as blood thinners and having a **hereditary bleeding disorder** can also influence [Heavy menstrual periods](#).

### Common Symptoms and Signs of Heavy Menstrual period

- Changing sanitary towel or pad on an hourly basis
- Changing sanitary towel or tampon during the night
- Having to use double sanitary protection to control menstrual flow
- Experiencing prolonged [menstrual bleeding](#) (lasts longer than seven days)
- [Bleeding](#) in between [periods](#)
- Short or irregular menstrual cycle
- Menstrual flow with large blood clots
- Severe and continuous cramping in lower abdomen during menstrual period
- [Excessive bleeding](#) hampers daily routine
- Fatigue and shortness of breath

### What Causes Heavy Menstrual Periods?

No one knows the exact cause of Heavy menstrual [periods](#). However, several

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medical conditions and conditions may contribute to Heavy [menstrual periods](#) and these include:

- Hormonal imbalance
- Uterine fibroids
- Endometriosis
- Anovulation (lack of ovulation – when ovaries fail to produce and release eggs)
- Polyps
- Adenomyosis
- Pregnancy complications (miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy)
- Changes in birth control or estrogen use
- Use of an intrauterine device (IUD) for birth control
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Thyroid problems
- Endometrial cancer
- Medications such as steroids, blood thinners, anti-inflammatories or anticoagulants
- Stress
- Change in exercise routine or diet
- Recent weight loss or weight gain

## Diagnosing Heavy Menstrual Periods

The [diagnosis of Heavy menstrual periods](#) is based on your symptoms, a pelvic exam and a review of your medical history. Your doctor will enquire about your menstrual cycle and you may be asked to **keep a record of your blood flow**, particularly how heavy it was. Certain tests such as blood tests, pap smear, endometrial biopsy and ultrasound scan may be performed. Additional tests such as a sonohysterogram, hysteroscopy and dilation and curettage (D and C) may also have to be performed.

## Help for Heavy Menstrual Periods

If you are [bleeding](#) heavily, certain self-care strategies such as making yourself comfortable, getting plenty of rest, **drinking extra fluids and eating iron-rich foods** can improve how you are feeling. Monitor your menstrual cycle so that you know when to expect your period, keep track of how heavy your flow is and the number of sanitary towels or tampons used.

Take over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen which will help to **reduce flow and relieve menstrual pain**. Remember to avoid aspirin as it can prolong [bleeding](#). If you are anemic, you should also increase your intake of iron and folic supplements.

Your health practitioner may recommend a low-dose oral contraceptive pill or progesterone therapy to **regulate the menstrual cycle and decrease bleeding**. Surgical procedures may be required if drug treatment is not effective. These treatment options include a hysterectomy, endometrial ablation (intense ultrasound waves kill endometrial lining) or dilation and curettage (cervix is dilated and tissue is scraped from the lining of the uterus).

## Natural remedies



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

Natural and holistic treatments such as herbal and homeopathic remedies offer a gentler alternative to promoting normal levels of monthly [bleeding](#). These remedies are safe to use and **supports women's overall health and wellbeing**. Herbs such as Artemisia vulgaris and Capsella bursa-pastoris promote menstrual and hormonal health.

Calendula officinalis acts as a menstrual cycle regulator and provides a calming effect while Viburnum opulus (Cramp Bark) helps to **ease nervous tension and reduce menstrual cramps**. In addition, homeopathic ingredients such as Calc. carb, Sepia and Belladonna promote normal menstrual flow and a balanced mood while China encourages healthy levels of iron in the blood and increases energy levels.

## More Information on Heavy Menstrual Periods

There are a number of things that you can do to help cope with and manage the discomfort of Heavy menstrual periods and these include:

- Keep a record of your menstrual flow
- Have an extra supply of sanitary towels and tampons on hand
- Apply a heat pack or hot water bottle to your lower abdomen or back if you are experiencing cramps
- Increase your intake of iron-rich foods such as dark, green vegetable, egg yolks, liver, red meat and raisins and prunes
- Exercise regularly by participating in gentle activities such as walking, yoga or pilates
- Soak in a warm bath to relax muscles and ease pain and tension
- Get plenty of rest and make yourself as comfortable as possible
- Massage lower back with arnica oil to relieve pain
- Reduce your intake of caffeine, sugar and salt a week before your period is due – this will help reduce the severity of cramps
- Add vitamin supplements to your diet such as zinc, calcium and vitamin B6

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is

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encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are 'unproven' and 'untested', the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have



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grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

## **Related Natural Remedies:**

**Mens-Reduce:** Promote normal menstruation support female reproductive health

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This includes formulation, acquiring and testing of raw ingredients as well as final manufacturing. This gives us the confidence to say that when you are buying a Native Remedies product, you are buying the safest and the best! We know what goes into our remedies - which is why we know what you will get out of them!

4) Manufacturing is done strictly according to the principles of GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) and all raw ingredients undergo stringent testing before being approved by our registered manufacturing pharmacists.

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