

We know the topic of periods can feel a bit awkward or taboo, especially if you don't experience them, but it doesn't have to be that way! That's why we've created this period breakdown to help you support your sibling/s in this new stage of life.

## What are They Feeling?

The term **period** refers to the event where the lining of the uterus is shed. Periods mark the start of a **menstrual cycle**, which is a full process of hormonal fluctuations that occur over the course of a few weeks in order to prepare the body for the chance of pregnancy.

These hormonal fluctuations can cause emotional and physical effects ranging from uncomfortable to painful - and each person's experience will be different. During and in the lead up to their period, your sibling may experience **cramps, cravings, bloating, tenderness, headaches, back pain, breakouts, anxiety, sadness and irritability** - to name a few.

## Types of Period Products

There are many ways to manage periods. Your sibling might use:

### PADS

These are stuck to underwear. Some come with 'wings' which wrap around the underwear to hold the pad in place and prevent leakage.

### TAMPONS

These are inserted into the vagina. They can't be seen when in use and are more comfortable than pads for sport and swimming.

### MENSTRUAL CUPS

Looks a little like an egg cup and is inserted into the vagina where it collects blood that is shed. It is washed, sanitised and reused.

### PERIOD UNDERWEAR

These look and feel like normal underwear but have an absorbent lining. They are machine washable and reusable.

The amount of blood lost is usually between 30-40 ml per period (about 2-3 tablespoons). Not much, right? But it feels like a lot more to your sibling!

## Being a Supportive Brother

### DON'T SHAME THEM

Avoid making jokes or negative comments about their period. It's natural and nothing to be embarrassed about.

### BE UNDERSTANDING

They might feel yucky, be a bit more irritable, worry about leaks, or be anxious about doing sports or swimming. Treat them with kindness and empathy.

### OFFER HELP

If they crave chocolate, need you to run to the shop to get period products, has cramps, or just wants to relax with a hot water bottle - support them.

### LISTEN

Some people are embarrassed to talk about their periods, while others might be more open. Respect their comfort level and listen if they want to share.