



**Health Professionals
Committed to the
Reproductive Needs of
Children and Adolescents**

Amenorrhea (no periods)

What is Amenorrhea?

Amenorrhea means not having menstrual periods. Most girls have their first period 2 years after they start developing breasts (typically between the ages of 12 and 13 years), although every girl is different. The normal age range for the first period is between 9 and 14 years. Amenorrhea means a girl has not started her period by 15, or if she had a period then it stops for more than 6 months.

What Causes Amenorrhea?

For a girl to have a period, she needs to have started puberty and have hormone signals from her brain sending signals to her reproductive organs (ovaries and uterus). These hormones cause the uterus to build a lining and the ovary to release an egg (ovulation). During a period, the uterus sheds this lining which leaves the body through the vagina gradually over a week. Stress, weight changes and other health problems can affect hormones and lead to amenorrhea including:

- Pregnancy (women miss periods when they are pregnant)
- Vigorous exercise
- Eating disorders
- Obesity
- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
- Other endocrine (hormone) problems, including thyroid disease
- Chronic Illnesses
- Certain medications
- Birth defects of the uterus or vagina
- Sometimes the ovaries do not work to make hormones because of genetic reasons or after cancer treatment, or other causes.

How will my health provider diagnose amenorrhea?

Your provider will start by asking you general questions about your past medical history including any physical problems, major stressors, medication use, puberty timeline, menstrual history, exercise and nutrition habits. On exam, your provider will pay careful attention to your thyroid gland, breasts, and skin looking at acne and body hair. They will discuss why a pelvic exam may be helpful as well. Your provider may also recommend a pregnancy test, a pregnancy test, an ultrasound of your pelvis and possibly blood tests to check your hormone levels.

How is Amenorrhea Treated?

Treatment depends on the cause and may involve one or more of the following: keeping a menstrual calendar, healthy lifestyle changes, medication, working with a counselor and/or referral to a surgical specialist. Your provider will work with you to find the best treatment for you.

Are There Any Long Term Consequences of Amenorrhea?

This is also dependent on what the underlying problem is but the majority of women can be successfully treated.