

ALL ABOUT YOUR PERIOD

Amenorrhea

What is amenorrhea?

Amenorrhea simply means not getting a period – *pronounced ay-men-uh-ree-uh*

Sometimes it's completely normal to not get your period. It's normal if you're pregnant, on hormone blockers, or breastfeeding. But if none of these things are true, amenorrhea can be a symptom of other conditions. There are two types of amenorrhea:

- *If you are 15 years old and you have never had a period, you have primary amenorrhea.*
- *You have secondary amenorrhea if you have already had regular cycles, but your period has stopped for at least 3 months.*

Pregnancy can cause you to not get your period. If there's any chance you could be pregnant, don't wait — get a pregnancy test.

What causes amenorrhea?

Some people don't *start* getting a period because they are overweight or underweight, they have certain health problems, or they are pregnant.

A regular period might *stop* for these reasons:

- Being overweight, underweight, or obese
- Exercising heavily
- Not eating enough calories
- Feeling a lot of stress
- Problems with reproductive organs or hormones
- Taking hormone blockers, certain kinds of birth control, or certain other medicines
- Being pregnant or breastfeeding

How is amenorrhea treated?

Treatment depends on what is causing the condition. A health care provider might recommend lifestyle changes and/or hormonal medicine.

To find out why someone is not getting their period, a health care provider may want to understand what is happening with hormones and reproductive organs. They may do a physical pelvic exam, blood and urine tests, or an ultrasound. An ultrasound is a test that sends out sound waves. It creates pictures of your body's structures, such as your organs. It is not an X-ray; there is no radiation involved.

If you are sexually active, there is also help. Some health centers specialize in reproductive health or "family planning." They may be able to offer teens free or low-cost service, including care for menstrual problems or concerns. Visit the following link for a list of health centers in New York State counties: <http://bit.ly/health4youth>

When should I talk to my health care provider about amenorrhea?

If you're concerned about not having your period, talk to a health care provider. There may be absolutely nothing wrong, but it's better to find out for sure!

Need to find a health care provider?

Ask for help from a trusted adult, parent, guardian, or school nurse. If you or your family need health insurance, call New York State of Health at 1-855-355-5777.

This handout is part of the "All About Your Period" series on menstrual health. For more information and helpful resources, visit: <https://health.ny.gov/TeenHealth>.