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## What does brown blood mean in between periods

Blood

This article is also available in: português, español, Deutsch, françaisChanges in period blood color are normalDark red, brown or black period blood is simply blood that has reacted with oxygen.Talk to your healthcare provider if you have grayish or pink watery discharge, as this can be a sign of an infection or something more serious like cancer.You may notice the color of your period blood varies. Sometimes it’s a bit brown, or almost black, to later turn to bright crimson.Understand what’s going on in your body. Track your period in Clue to learn about your menstrual cycle.4.82M+ ratingsOverall health conditions are more likely to affect the timing and length of your period than its appearance—but there are some reasons why your period blood may vary in color.Blood (and tissue) changes color depending on how long it has been exposed to air oxygenation. Think of when you cut your skin—red blood comes out of a fresh wound. If you put a bandage on it and check it the next day, you’ll see that once-red blood will have turned brown. Blood color appears darker because it has reacted with oxygen, and the majority of the water in blood will have evaporated, making a more concentrated pigmentation.Your endometrium is the inner lining of your uterus, which is where a fertilized would implant and grow. The endometrium is made up of highly vascularized tissue with special spiralized arteries (1). This provides a fertilized egg with quick and easy access to a fresh blood supply (carrying nutrients and oxygen), so it can start to develop.Right before you get your period, these specialized spiral arteries constrict, to limit blood loss (1,2). After the constriction of the spiral arteries, the endometrium starts to break away in pieces from the deeper layers of the uterus (3). Your endometrium does not separate all at once, it’s a slower, controlled separation, and it takes time for your endometrial tissue to make its way down through your cervix and vagina. This initial blood and tissue may appear dark red or brown, or even black because it takes longer to exit your body.As tissue breaks away, it leaves torn ends of blood vessels that continue to bleed (3,4). This is where the bright red blood you may see during your period comes from. Eventually platelets (pieces of cells involved in blood clotting) are activated to group together and form a plug to stop the bleeding, bringing the period to an end (2).As bleeding slows toward the end of a period, it may once again appear darker red or brown.Black, brown, or dark red period blood colorAt the beginning or end of your period, blood can be a dark brown/red shade and can have a thick consistency—but it’s also normal for the first signs of your period to be bright red and more liquid. If you notice brown period blood at the start or end of your period, it’s because the blood is older and took longer to leave your uterus. The uterine lining darkens the longer it takes to leave the body. Period blood clots are normal on the heaviest days of your period, and can appear deep red or almost dark black as well.Bright red period blood colorPeriod flow typically becomes heavier on the second or third day of the cycle as the uterine lining sheds faster. Bright red period blood is newer blood, thus it doesn’t have time to darken before it exits your body. Pink period blood colorSpotting is any bleeding that happens outside of your regular period. Some people experience spotting mid-cycle, also known as ovulation bleeding (4,5). Bleeding that mixes with fertile cervical fluid can appear light red or pinkish.Watery, pink vaginal discharge that occurs irregularly (without a pattern and not related to your menstrual cycle) may be a sign of cervical cancer and should be evaluated by a healthcare provider (6).Gray period blood color If you have grayish discharge, this could be a sign of an infection. If you experience heavy bleeding with pieces of grayish tissue, this could be a sign of a miscarriage. Seeing a healthcare provider is a recommended for either situation. The significance of period blood color is commonly misunderstood. One company even raised thousands of dollars on Kickstarter to build a “smart menstrual cup” which would analyze menstrual fluid color. Reproductive and menstrual health is still gravely misunderstood, and pushed aside compared to other aspects of health. The lack of proper education and research on aspects of female health negatively impacts people globally in so many ways.A range of period blood colors is normal, and doesn’t signify anything serious.Changes in the color of your period blood are not anything to worry about. But do pay attention to your flow volume, changes in cycle length, and pain, or any bleeding that doesn’t have a pattern, as these can indicate underlying conditions.Article was originally published on Oct. 19, 2017. Cunningham FG, Leveno KJ, Bloom SL, Spong CY, Dashe JS, Hoffman BL, Casey BM, Sheffield JS. Williams Obstetrics. 24th ed. New York: McGraw Hill Education; 2014. 84–86 p. Davies J, Kadir RA. Endometrial haemostasis and menstruation. Rev Endocr Metab Disord. 2012;13(4):289-99. Garry R, Hart R, Kartihasu KA, Burke C. A reappraisal of the morphological changes within the endometrium during menstruation: a hysteroscopic, histological and scanning electron microscopic study. Hum Reprod. 2009;24(6):1393-1401. Jones RE, Lopez KH. Human reproductive biology. 3rd ed. Burlington, MA: Elsevier; 2006. Dasharathy SS, Mumford SL, Pollack AZ, Perkins NJ, Mattison DR, Wactawski-Wende J, et al. Menstrual bleeding patterns among regularly menstruating women. Am J Epidemiol. 2012 Mar 15;175(6):536-45. Petignat P, Roy M. Diagnosis and management of cervical cancer. BMJ. 2007 Oct 13;335(7623):763-8. If you’ve finished what you’re doing, can you answer some questions about your visit today?Take our survey Most women under a certain age have a period every month—it’s just part of being a female. And, odds are, you’ve been dealing with your period since you were a teenager. But have you ever wondered what, exactly, your period is made up of?It’s actually not what you’d think. Sure, there’s blood in the mix but that’s not the only component. “Period blood is made up of thickened endometrial cells that slough off if there isn’t a pregnancy, actual blood from arteries in the uterus, and sometimes clots,” women’s health expert Jennifer Wider, M.D., tells SELF.Let’s back up for a sec: During your cycle, a lining is formed in your uterus to make an appropriate, nourishing bed for a fertilized egg. Maureen Whelihan, M.D., an ob-gyn at the Center for Sexual Health & Education, tells SELF. This lining, made up of cells and fed by many blood vessels, is called the endometrium, and it first begins to build up with estrogen, which happens for the first two weeks of your cycle. Then, you ovulate and pass an egg, which may or may not be fertilized. The follicle that released your egg makes progesterone (a hormone that prepares your body for pregnancy), which makes the lining stay thick and plush. About 14 days later, if you don’t get pregnant, the hormone levels drop, the lining sheds, and you get your period.“Your period is just a monthly shedding of the bed that would normally nourish a developing embryo,” Whelihan says.As for those blood clots, that’s actually just your body trying to do its job. While they can be freaky, Whelihan says they’re really not a reason to panic. “When women come in worried about clot, I tell them it’s a good sign that your body is responding to the increased blood flow by trying to slow down the flow,” she says. These are especially common first thing in the morning, she says, since the blood has time to pool in your vagina while you sleep. “Our bodies release anticoagulants to stop the menstrual blood from clotting,” explains Wider. “When the period is heavy and coming out rapidly (often in the early days), the anti-coagulants may not have time to work, and clots can form. “If you’re taking hormonal birth control pills, though, your period blood is slightly different. “When you introduce synthetic hormones into the body, the level of natural hormones gets altered,” Wider says. Basically, “the hormonal changes that would cause a thickening and breakdown of the endometrium doesn’t occur if you’re taking the Pill,” Wider says.Your body will produce a “flatter” uterine lining when you take hormonal birth control and, in some cases, will create no lining at all, Whelihan says. “That’s why on some of these pills, women don’t bleed much or rarely bleed,” she says. “It’s like a fake period.”The more you know. Period Tips & Hacks > Why Is My Period Blood Brown? You might be surprised to find out that not all period discharge is red. I know—blood is red, right? Usually, yes. But sometimes, you might see brown period blood. There are several reasons for this, and most of them are harmless. You might not realize it, but you have some vaginal discharge nearly every day. It’s often clear or white, but other times you can experience spotting of other colors. For most women, brown discharge is simply a sign of old blood leaving your uterus.There are many times throughout your cycle that vaginal discharge could be brown. Brown discharge before your period: sometimes, the very light flow at the beginning of your period looks brown. You might even have brown spotting, or brown blood at the beginning of your period, instead of your period. Totally normal, and no reason to worry. Brown discharge during your period: again, this is usually very normal. Sometimes your uterus has more tissue to clear out than other months, and it can often look brown instead of red. Other times, you might just have a bit of dark brown discharge instead of a period. It all depends on your cycle and what is normal for your body. Brown discharge after your period: old blood often looks brown. So, if this is old blood from your uterus a few days after your period, or the last couple of days, the blood is brown simply because it’s old. This brown discharge after your period is normal. Brown discharge when you’re pregnant: some women will have pink or brown spotting as an early sign of pregnancy. When a fertilized egg burrows into the uterus wall, it sometimes causes a bit of bleeding. This is called “implantation bleeding” and usually happens one to two weeks after conception. After you’ve taken a pregnancy test or you already know you’re pregnant, brown discharge could be a cause for concern. In very rare cases, it could be an ectopic pregnancy or be a sign of miscarriage. Talk to your OBGYN as soon as you can, and she can help you figure out what’s going on.Also—after you have given birth, you’ll experience lochia. Lochia is a four to six week period after giving birth that your body will bleed, usually a heavy red flow at first that turns yellow or brown after the first week or so. Brown discharge between periods or with no period: if you just had a Pap smear test or vaginal exam, you might experience some spotting. It could be bright red, pink, or brown. If it continues after a couple of days, talk to your physician, just in case.Another time you might have brown spotting when you’re not on your period is after sex. Again, watch it and make sure it isn’t super heavy and doesn’t continue for several days.Women and girls, from their first period through menopause, often have brown spotting when they are ovulating. Reusable Period Pads vs. Period Panties: Which is Best?How Does Period Underwear Work?Period Hacks: How To Have A Less Painful PeriodThere are a few reasons that brown discharge is concerning. It is usually just one of many symptoms, however, so keep track of what else is going on when you talk to your doctor. Most of these issues are accompanied by 5 symptoms:1) Brown discharge continues for several weeks, or a period for longer than seven days.2) It usually happens after sex3) The discharge is really smelly4) Pain and a lot of cramping5) Vaginal itchingSo, if you have one or more of these symptoms along with brown discharge, speak to your doctor. She might help you identify the problem as one of the following: Pelvic inflammatory disease: this is an infection of the cervix and uterus. You’ll also experience pain in your pelvis or abdomen, pain during sex, a fever, and burning when you use the bathroom. Luckily, an antibiotic is usually all you need to get back to normal. Sexually transmitted disease: symptoms of gonorrhea or chlamydia almost always includes brown discharge. It will also smell quite strong, and you’ll have pain during sex and when urinating. Some STDs can be treated with antibiotics, but others will take more involved treatment. Something that doesn’t belong: If there is something left inside your vagina accidentally, your body will often react with inflammation and bleeding. This could be a tampon, condom, or contraceptive ring. If the discharge is smelly, speak to your doctor. Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS): brown discharge is only one of many symptoms of PCOS. This is a hormonal imbalance and is very common in women during their childbearing years. (The National Institutes of Health estimates between eight and twenty percent of women worldwide have PCOS). You could also experience irregular periods, very heavy periods, unusual acne or oily skin, difficulty getting pregnant, and uneven color of your skin. Cervical cancer: unlike PCOS, cervical cancer is extremely rare (less than 0.6 percent of women are diagnosed with cervical cancer). So, more than likely, brown discharge is not a symptom of cancer. You would also have pain during sex and bleeding after. Heavier and longer periods as well as bleeding in between are also causes for concern. While brown discharge can be a cause for concern, for most women, it is normal. Remember to watch for other accompanying symptoms, and then you’ll know if it’s something you should bring up with your doctor. For the most part—you’re just experiencing that normal flow that comes with being a woman. For further protection, try our breathable, moisture wicking, buttery-soft microfiber leak proof undies for the day-to-day leaks and shop our complete collection of panties at Proof.com to find your style!Get exclusive specials on period underwear and new product launches!

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