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10 Strange & Surprising Things That Can Happen To Your Body When On Your Period

By CARINA WOLFF | November 15, 2016



When it comes to side effects of our menstrual cycles, most women are used to bloating, breakouts, and unruly mood swings. However, in addition to these symptoms, there are a number of other strange and surprising things that can happen to your body when you're on your period, and you may not even realize they're a result of that time of the month. Knowing what these less-obvious side effects are can help you better understand what's going on in your body, and maybe it can even help give you some peace of mind when things feel awry.

"Part of being a woman is experiencing the physical and emotional craziness that happens 1 to 2 weeks before your period," says Sherry Ross, MD, OB/GYN over email. "The cause of these physical, emotional and psychological symptoms are thought to be caused by the hormonal changes and fluctuations during the menstrual cycle."

Some people are more sensitive to these changes than others, and some women may not even realize they experience these symptoms, but a number of unsuspecting issues can arise when your aunt flow comes to town. They may seem totally unrelated to your sexual health or fertility, but here are 10 strange things that can totally happen to your body when you're getting your period.

1. You're More Spacey



If you've ever felt like your brain isn't functioning as well as it normally does when you're menstruating, it's not just in your head. Research from the University of Bath found that women's brain function goes down when they experience pain from cramps and aches during their period. "There is an inability to focus, and the brain may feel foggy and slower during your period," says [Dr. Tina Koopersmith](#), founder of [West Coast Women's Reproductive Center](#) over email.

2. You Poop More



One unfortunate side effect of your period is running to the bathroom much for frequently — to go number two. You can blame two separate chemical signals for this unpleasant symptom, according to Seventeen. Prostaglandins signal the uterus to contract, which helps you get your period, but this also causes your bowel to contract as well. Progesterone is also a hormone to blame. Levels of this hormone drop during your period, which can end up causing diarrhea.

3. Your Pain Tolerance Drops



You can thank a decline in estrogen for your sensitivity to pain during your period. Research from the journal *Perceptual and Motor Skills* found that women rate pain significantly higher during their menstrual and premenstrual phases of their cycle, times that are associated with lower levels of estrogen. "Women may also experience more headaches during their period," says Koopersmith.

4. You Become Clumsier



Tripping and falling more than usual? Many women report feeling unbalanced and clumsy during their period, and this has to do with a number of factors, including hormonal changes, increased fatigue, and fluid retention, according to Health.



5. You Want To Eat Everything



When you're on your period, you're likely craving boat loads of chocolate and piles of french fries. "It's thought that the production of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone and have a strong effect on appetite," says Ross. "Researchers found that an increase in progesterone production happens before your period, and this is responsible for binge eating."

6. Your Voice Changes



All of these hormonal changes during your period can also affect your voice, and it's oddly something men can notice. A study from the journal *Ethology* found that a woman's voice is more attractive to men during ovulation and least attractive during menstruation.



7. You Have More Leg And Back Pain



Discomfort in the uterus isn't the only pain you suffer during your period. Menstrual cramps can extend from your abdomen to your legs and back as well. This is because the nerves in that region of our body are all connected, according to PopSugar.

8. You Get Hornier



It's not uncommon to have an increased sex drive during your period. This is because the hormone progesterone — which is usually responsible for dampening your libido — is lower during your period, making you feel extra frisky, according to The Huffington Post.

9. You Feel The Need To Clean



I've personally never experienced this symptom, but some women feel the obsessive need to clean and organize during their period. A drop in estrogen and serotonin levels right before your period can cause you to become more obsessive compulsive, but a drop in progesterone is also to blame. "Toward the end of the cycle, a woman might become dissatisfied with her environment and obsessive about making changes in order to make sure the setting is appropriate next month for the burrowing of the embryo into the uterine lining," says Dr. Julie Holland in her book *Moody Bitches*.

10. You Have Trouble Sleeping



As if you're already uncomfortable as it is, the changes in your body that occur during your period can also make it more difficult to sleep. The decrease in estrogen causes a slight increase in body temperature, which can make it more difficult for you to fall asleep, according to Dr. Carmel Harrington.

They may not be talked about as much as painful menstrual cramps and heinous acne breakouts, but these symptoms of your period are real, and you can always talk with your doctor to get some options on how to best minimize them.

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