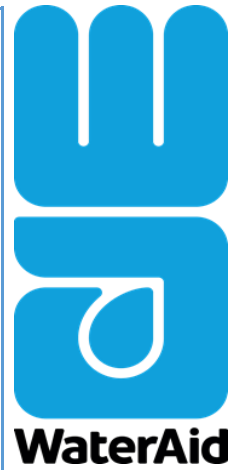


# Is that true?! Menstrual myth buster

## Background:

WaterAid is an international not-for-profit organisation, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation. Every month, 1.8 billion people across the world have a period – but millions have to manage theirs without essential clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene knowledge. Not having access to these can be both embarrassing and unsafe – and can have far-reaching impacts for women and girls, acting as a disadvantage in their lives as they are forced to stay home every month, missing vital chances to go to school, earn a living, and to take control of their futures.



## Time needed:

15 minutes

## Aim:

To understand that when a subject is considered a taboo, it can lead to the spread of misinformation about it and myths being created.

## Materials:

- Myth or fact statements printed or written out on individual paper/card.
- Myth or fact answers.

## Lesson Objective:

Learners will identify facts and bust common myths about periods.

## What to do:

1. Ask students what 'myth' means? Myths are stories that are often widely believed but aren't true. Ask if they know of any myths (e.g. the Loch Ness Monster).
2. Sometimes it isn't clear if a belief is myth or fact. There are lots of myths about periods as it is a taboo subject. People don't speak openly about periods so myths are easily created and believed. Some myths are bad for health, or prevent people from doing what they need or want to do when on their period.
3. Split into pairs or groups and give each a statement. Each group takes turns to act out their statement to the group. E.g. 'do no exercise' students could pretend to do sport and then stop and shake their heads.
4. The rest of the group should stand if they think it's a myth, or sit down if they think it's a fact. Give them the correct answer for each.
5. After reading, discuss what they think about the myths and if they know any myths themselves. What could they do to help bust these myths? How might talking openly help this?
6. Explain that by discussing periods and myth busting, people can live full and happy lives when on their period. Tell students that period myths are common globally which is why it's important to talk so everyone has correct information.

## Optional Extension Activity:



Read the Nepalese myth busting stories.

<https://www.wateraid.org/us/stories/when-your-period-means-you-have-to-live-in-a-shed>

After reading the stories, reiterate that periods are something that many people have in common. By working together on period issues things can improve.

Ask students what they've learnt from the stories and what they could do to bust period myths in this country. They could come up with ideas and try to put them into action and become period myth busters in the UK.

# Myth or Fact - Answers



## **You shouldn't take part in sport when you are on your period.**

In the past, periods were treated as an illness and women and students were expected to rest and not take part in physical activities. This isn't true as periods are a natural body function. In fact, participating in sport can sometimes help relieve period pain.

**MYTH**

## **You are not clean when you are on your period.**

Some believe periods are dirty and so force people on their periods to stay away from places like churches, mosques or school. Periods are natural, so by changing and washing regularly, you'll stay clean, healthy and unable to spread germs or disease.

**MYTH**

## **During an average period, you may lose between 5ml and 80ml of blood/fluid.**

Whilst the amount of blood or fluid lost during a period can vary greatly, a typical amount is about 60ml. The amount of blood and fluid lost varies from person to person, period to period and day to day.

**FACT**

## **You can contaminate food when you are on your period, so you should not cook or prepare food.**

Periods are natural and as long as you wash your hands and remain clean and healthy, you cannot contaminate or spread disease or illness through handling food.

**MYTH**

## **In some parts of the world, people on their periods are sent away from the communities until the period has passed.**

This happens in some countries where periods are still viewed as a curse or as unhygienic. They may have limited contact with others and can be at risk of attack from people or animals.

**FACT**

## **You should not take a bath when you are on your period.**

Some people believe taking a bath on your period could make you infertile (not able to have children). This isn't true! It's really important to wash and keep clean when on your period as it helps avoid infections.

**MYTH**

## **You can make other people sick if you are in close contact with them when you are on your period.**

Periods are not an illness. You may feel under the weather, but this cannot be spread from person to person.

**MYTH**

## **You can get pregnant if you have unprotected sex whilst on your period.**

If you have unprotected sex at any point during your menstrual cycle, including during your period, there is a chance you can get pregnant.

**FACT**

## Myth or Fact - Statements



**You shouldn't take part in sport when you are on your period.**

**You are not clean when you are on your period.**

**During an average period, you may lose between 5ml and 80ml of blood/fluid.**

**You can contaminate food when you are on your period, so you should not cook or prepare food.**

**You should not take a bath when you are on your period.**

**In some parts of the world, people on their periods are sent away from their communities until the period has passed.**

**You can make other people sick if you are in close contact with them when you are on your period.**

**You can get pregnant if you have unprotected sex whilst on your period.**