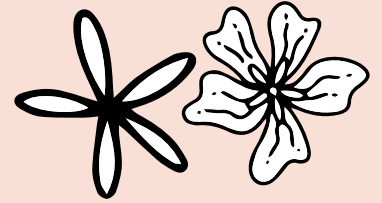


welcome
to
the
club.

Hey, you!



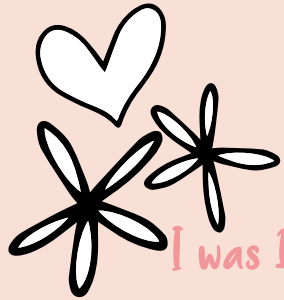
So, you just got your first period? It's easy to feel alone, especially when we're surrounded by brothers, uncles, dads and other men who will just never understand.

Don't worry. We've got you! Periods For Hope asked girls to share stories of when they got their first periods in an effort to make you feel less alone and to welcome you to the club! We've all been there and we have the cramps, stains and strength to prove it.

Periods are nothing to be ashamed of!

With love,
The Periods For Hope Team





I was 12 years old at my friend's house.

We were having a sleepover and I woke up with my pyjama pants covered in blood. At first, my friends and I were worried that I was dying!

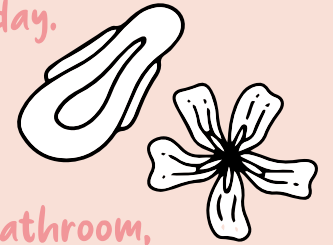
Once we realised it was my first period, I was so embarrassed!

My friend's mom helped me by giving me some pads and called my mom to come pick me up. I remember having such sore cramps!

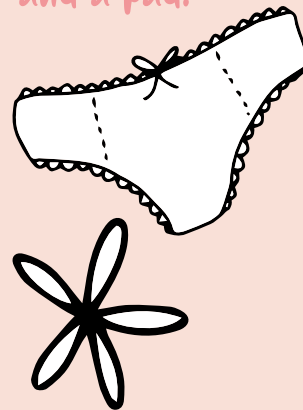


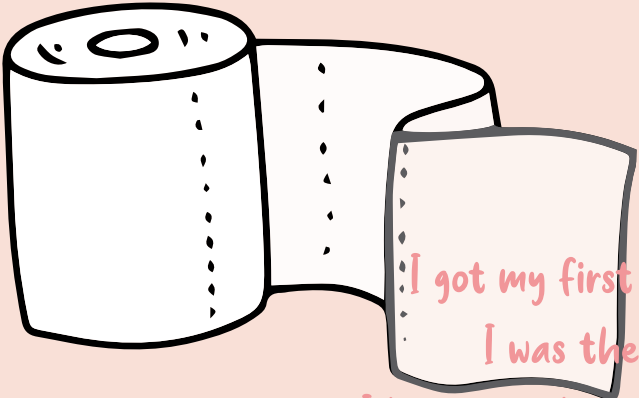
The first time, I was 12 years old and in grade 6. I had prepared a little purse with pads, pantiliner and a spare panty in case it happened at school, and it did!

I was at school after class had ended because of netball practice later that afternoon. I felt a bit irritated, teary and emotional throughout the day.



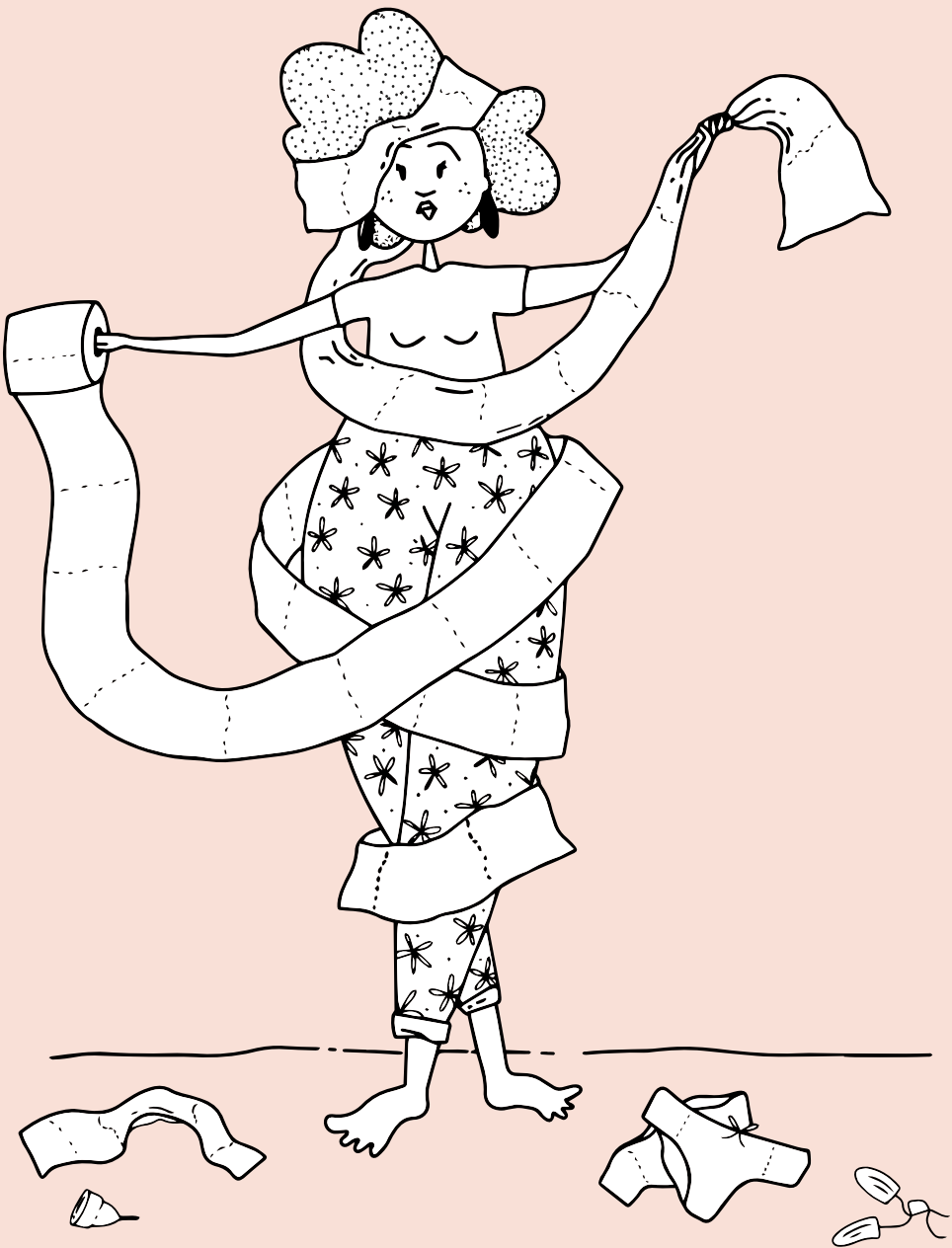
I had a few cramps so I went to the bathroom, and it had started! There was a nail-sized brown stain on my underwear. I quickly run back to my locker, grabbed my little purse and changed into clean underwear and a pad.





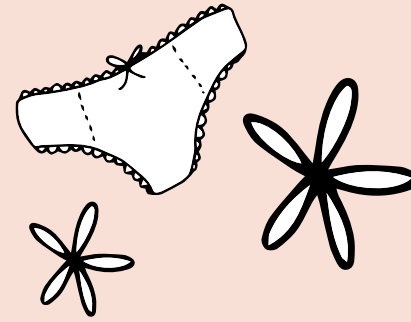
I got my first period when I was 10;
I was the first one in my class.
I had to make a makeshift pad out of
toilet paper because I didn't know who to ask.

When school was over I told my mum and we bought pads.



I hid it from my parents for about 6 months
and used only toilet roll, purely out of shame.

I got my period for the first time during an era where 'periods' were such taboo that my own mother didn't even give me the talk about periods.



I woke up one day with blood on my underwear.



Luckily, I knew about periods because my childhood friend had given me the talk already.

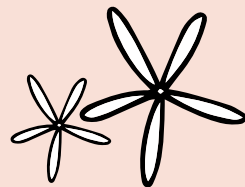
She had learnt about periods from her older sister, not her mother. My parent's generation in the 70s would never talk about periods but my generation wanted to.

I was eleven years old and at a sleepover with a big group of girls. When I woke up in the morning, I noticed quite a lot of reddish brown stuff on my underwear. It had soaked through to my pyjama shorts.

I was embarrassed and didn't know what to do.



Periods have always been a stigmatised and taboo topic but we can end this by having a conversation.

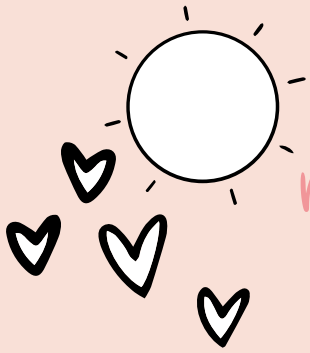


I did this with my own daughters.

My mom picked me up and we went on a walk with some of her friends. I still didn't say anything. I'm not sure if my mom and I had "the talk" yet, because I was still quite young.

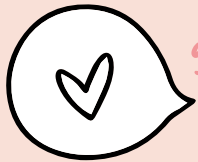
When we got home, I finally told her.

She ran me a bath, explained things to me, and sent her boyfriend to the shops to get me pads and chocolate.

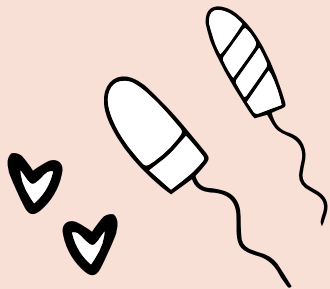


My first period was certainly a weird but happy experience for me.

It was a Saturday and my family and I went on an outing to the city. On our way back home we had lunch. I had to make a quick rest-room stop before heading home after lunch. I was so blissful but my facial expression when I suddenly saw this green goo in my panties must've been so funny.



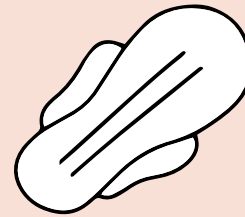
At first I had no clue what was happening to my body but luckily I quickly realised that I had just gotten my first period. I told my mom (awkward) when we arrived home and she had a 'period pack' ready for me.



The colour adjusted to a healthy red and the rest was history.

no shame!

I was 14 years old and on holiday. We were driving home from dinner and my tummy started to get very sore! When we got home I jumped in the shower and my underwear was covered in blood, which I mistakenly thought was poop.

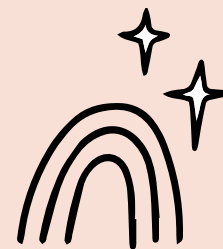


I was so embarrassed because I thought I pooped in my pants! I soon realised it was my period, which made me even more nervous. I spoke to my sister and she helped me use my first pad.

Always ask for help,

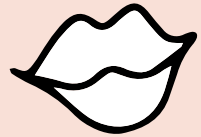
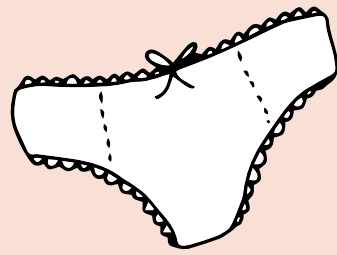


there's nothing to be ashamed of!





My first period happened in Grade 6.
No-one was home except for my dad and me.
I knew what had happened but
I didn't know how to tell him - what if he freaked out?

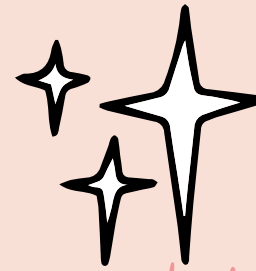


Being a brave (and stubborn) young lady,
I decided I could handle it on my own.

I had never used any sanitary products before
so my weapon of choice was toilet paper...
it was the most uncomfortable experience of my life.

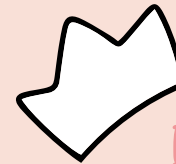
I went the entire day like that just running
to the girls' room to reapply the toilet paper.

I got home called my mom and told her what happened.
She then went on to give my dad instructions
and how to be sensitive and helpful!

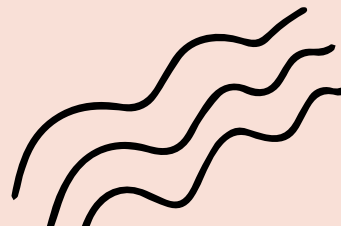
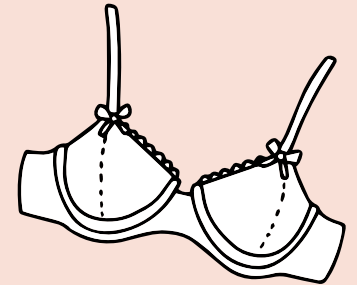


I was so excited for it to happen, as I hit
puberty late and all my friends seemed to already
have their period and constantly spoke about it.
It was something I couldn't wait for. When it finally
happened, I felt like "that's it, I'm a woman now".

My parents were so excited for me,
it was quite cute.

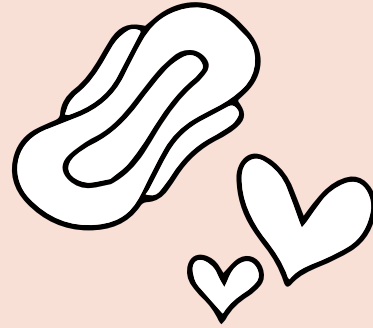


I felt like my period signified that I was in fact,
a woman.



I got so sick! In the middle of the night, I woke up puking and at some point I felt wetness in my underwear and thought I had diarrhoea (gross, I know), my mom had to gently tell me, "no sweetie, you've started your period..."

It wasn't the best experience, but it's luckily gotten much better!



I was in primary school, grade 5 to be exact. I went to the bathroom during break only to find blood in my Barbie underwear.

I ran to the school nurse because I thought I was dying and they handed me a pad without any instructions or information. I, as a confused yet capable 10-year-old, somehow managed to put the pad on the correct way and went about my day like it was nothing.

It was only upon relaying my day to my mother that I was first told I had gotten my period.

I was 13. My mum didn't say anything, she just put some supplies next to my door.

It was always taboo.

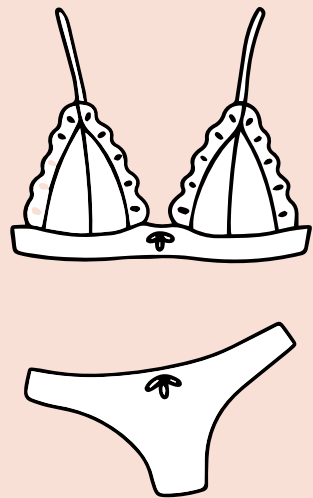
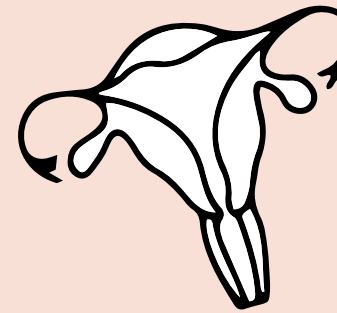
She told me after than first night that there was a place in the cupboard where she put period supplies and that was that, forever.

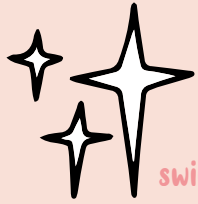


I was 11, and it was during drama practice. I felt this weird sensation in my tummy and didn't realize anything until I actually went to the bathroom and saw the blood.

When the drama practice ended and my mom picked me up, she was so worried and immediately bought me pads.

I then talked about it to my sisters and my mom and they were all very supportive.





I was 11 years old when I first got my period. I had been swimming all day with my cousin's kids, having a great time. When I got into the shower I noticed something weird on my costume but decided to ignore it. Later that evening I saw it again on my underwear. Having already been told what a period was I did have an inkling what was going on but still felt ashamed, as if I had done something wrong and I was terrified to tell my mother.

Eventually I mustered up the courage but when it came time to actually tell my mother all I could get out was "blood..."



My mother, being equally as uncomfortable, panicked and took me to my sister who explained what was happening and how to put on a pad.

The next day she took me shopping and I told me I could try as many brands as I wanted until I found my favourite.

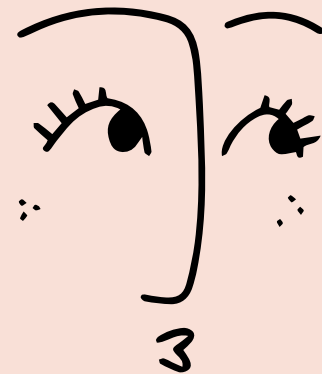


She made it sound like a cool and fun thing to do and it completely put me at ease.

I guess it was scary being that young when I started but it isn't a scary thing at all and I hope that one day my daughter doesn't feel the way I did!

I was 13 and on a beach holiday with my family. I went to the bathroom and, when I looked in the toilet, there was blood. Even though I knew that I was probably going to get my period at some point, my first thought was that I had internal bleeding.

I had been reading a spy book where a boy had been kicked in the stomach and was weeing blood. I was trying to figure out how I had been hurt so badly without realizing it. I knew that I was going to bleed when I got my period but didn't know what consistency, colour or amount to expect.



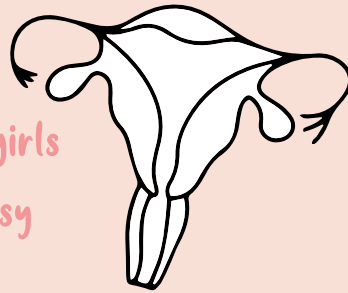
I called my sister in and she told me to go talk to my mom. I didn't know why but I asked my sister to tell her. I felt embarrassed to tell my mom. My sister made me go to her and everything was okay. My mother is a doctor and knows how to explain everything in a frank and shameless way.

I have always been very thankful for the fact that I had someone I trusted to show me how to look after myself.



I remember getting my period on a sunny Saturday. My mom was cleaning my brother's room and I went to her and told her there was blood on my underwear.

Being a doctor, she sat me down (in my brother's room of all places) and drew the female reproductive system on a big sheet of paper.



As I'm maturing I'm realising that other girls weren't lucky enough to have such an easy introduction to womanhood.

This encourages me to help end period poverty and break the stigma that periods are nothing to be ashamed of.



It was during our family vacation in Durban. Nothing really special or extraordinary happened. People either describe it as "finally becoming a woman" or "painful!". Despite this, I felt a little disappointed when I sat on the loo, pulled down my pants and

found small brown blotches on my underwear.

I called my mom to come see and she smiled, "it's your period!".

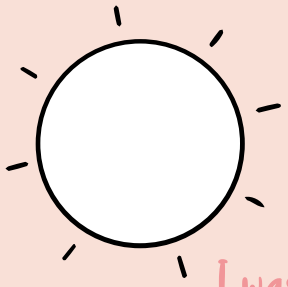


I remember feeling puzzled, having spoken to my friends about our "period fears" - that was it?

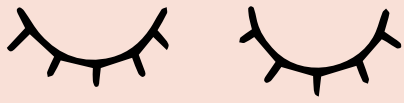
Why do people make such a big deal out of something so natural... so normal.



We need to end the stigma!

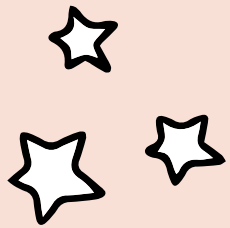


I was 12 years old and I remember getting some brown spotting in my panties but I had no idea what it was.



I was so embarrassed.

For the first few months I tried to always wash my panties to get rid of the stains before putting them in the wash.

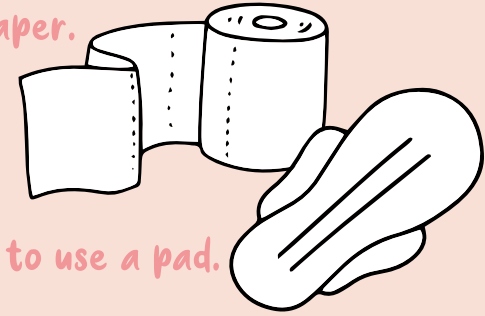


Eventually my mom saw the stains she explained to me what periods were.

I hate that I had to feel so confused and ashamed about my period.

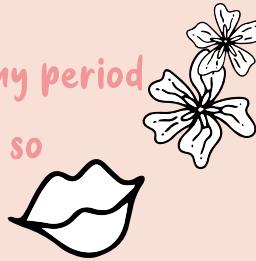
#noshame

I started my period in grade 6 and was the first out of my friend group to get it. I felt scared and embarrassed so I tried to hide it for the first few days by using toilet paper.

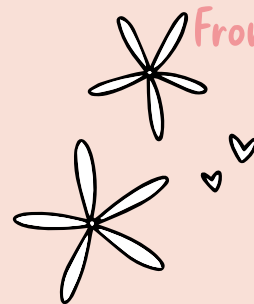


I finally built up the courage to tell my mom, who was really supportive and showed me how to use a pad.

I had still not told any of my friends (out of embarrassment) but the second time I got my period was the night before leaving on school camp so I felt I had to tell at least one friend.



The morning before we left on camp I told my best friend in tears and she was so supportive. We made up some code words to make sure I never had a blood stain after sitting down.



From then onwards my friends have been the best support system - helping me manage my period and feel less overwhelmed.

**If you want to know more about
Periods For Hope, please get in touch!**



periodsforhope.org



info@periodsforhope.org