

Beyond Blood: Raising Awareness of Contraceptive-induced Menstrual Changes

What are contraceptive-induced menstrual changes (CIMCs)?

Changes to a user's menstrual cycle while using hormonal contraception or the copper IUD

Why do CIMCs matter?

- Currently overlooked by stakeholders, healthcare practitioners, and users
- Major factor in user continuation and satisfaction with their contraceptive method
- Can significantly impact users' lives in beneficial and harmful ways
- Challenges understanding of the role of contraception in users' lives

How were CIMCs approached in this project?

- ❖ Key audiences
 - ❖ Contraceptive researchers and developers
 - ❖ Current and first-time contraceptive users
- ❖ Key methods
 - ❖ CIMC Task Force
 - ❖ Global call to action
 - ❖ Landscaping of existing public data
 - ❖ NORMAL job aid
- ❖ Goals
 - ❖ Increased understanding of CIMCs among users
 - ❖ Greater awareness of CIMCs in contraceptive research and development
 - ❖ More funding allocated toward research of CIMCs



Further information: <https://www.fhi360.org/expertise/menstruation-and-contraception>

Acknowledgements: My supervisor, Emily Hoppes, and the PDI team at FHI 360. My Laidlaw fellowship. All images from FHI 360.

Changes to your monthly periods are **NORMAL** while using family planning

It is common to have changes to your menstruation (monthly periods)* when you use some family planning methods.**

Review this guide as part of family planning counseling when you choose a method.



*See the back page for more information about your monthly periods

**Normal changes in your monthly periods can include lighter bleeding or less bleeding, shorter bleeding, heavier bleeding or more bleeding, longer bleeding, bleeding when you don't expect it, or a pause in your bleeding. Heavier bleeding is when your bleeding stops for some or all of the time you're using a family planning method.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns at any point.

N It is **NORMAL** and safe to have changes in your monthly periods when you use some family planning methods.**

O Lighter bleeding or a pause in bleeding** can provide **OPPORTUNITIES** to gain you strength and freedom to go on with your daily activities.

R Your monthly periods and length will **RETURN** after you stop using family planning.

M Different family planning **METHODS** can cause different bleeding changes. Talk to your doctor about what you want.

A **ABSENCE** of monthly bleeding by itself does not mean you are pregnant.

L Talk to your doctor if changes to your monthly periods **LIMIT** your activities. There may be treatments that can help.

Different family planning methods can cause different menstrual changes. Below are some common bleeding changes, but everyone is different. You may experience none of these changes, some of them, or all of them.

	INJECTABLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleeding when you don't expect it • Spotting (drips of blood) • Less bleeding (lighter bleeding) • More bleeding (heavier bleeding) • Prolonged bleeding (bleeding stops for some or all of the time while using the method)
	IMPLANTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleeding when you don't expect it • Less bleeding (lighter bleeding) • More bleeding (heavier bleeding) • Prolonged bleeding (bleeding stops for some or all of the time while using the method)
	PILLS (Progestin-Only Pills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter bleeding • Less bleeding (lighter bleeding) • Spotting (drips of blood) • Prolonged bleeding (bleeding stops for some or all of the time while using the method) • Bleeding when you don't expect it • Longer bleeding
	PILLS (Combined Oral Pills)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter bleeding • Less bleeding (lighter bleeding) • Spotting (drips of blood) • Longer bleeding
	COPPER IUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in bleeding • More bleeding (heavier bleeding) • Longer bleeding
	HORMONAL IUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleeding when you don't expect it • Spotting (drips of blood) • Less bleeding (lighter bleeding) • More frequent bleeding • Prolonged bleeding (bleeding stops for some or all of the time while using the method)

If your bleeding stops while you are using family planning, this is **NORMAL**. There can even be benefits to your health or life.

WHAT IS YOUR MONTHLY PERIOD?

• A monthly period (menstruation) is normally 3-7 days when the lining of the uterus in the form of blood flows from the uterus out of the vagina each month.

• You usually lose about 6-8 teaspoons of blood during the monthly period.

• Cramps, headaches, or sore breasts are all common during and just before bleeding starts.

• Use of the family planning methods above can change the menstrual cycle (pictured here). This is normal and does not cause health problems. For example, some methods keep the lining of the uterus from growing.

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

This is what a 28-day menstrual cycle looks like. Yours may be longer or shorter; this is normal.