

## How to use the Pictorial Blood Loss Assessment Chart (PBAC)

- Record the number of tampons and sanitary pads used each day during your bleeding episode by placing a tally mark under the day and next to the box representing the amount of bleeding you see each time you change your pad or tampon.
- Record clots by indicating whether they are the size of a dime or a quarter coin in the small and large blood clot row under the appropriate day.
- Record any incidences of flooding (accidents) by placing a tally mark in the 'flooding' row.

*This log is meant to help you track your period and discuss your circumstances with your healthcare provider. It is not meant as medical advice.*

## Scoring the Chart

At the end of your bleeding episode tabulate the "Total Tallies" in each row. Next, multiply the "Total Tallies" in each row by the "Multiplying Factor" at the end of the row, for the "Row Total." Then sum the "Row Total" for the final, "Total PBAC Score."

### Clot Sizes



**Quarter**  
Large (quarter size or larger)



**Dime**  
Small

### PBAC Scoring

Description	Multiplier
Light Pad	x1
Medium Pad	x5
Heavy Pad	x20
Light Tampon	x1
Medium Tampon	x5
Heavy Tampon	x10
Small Clots	x1
Large Clots	x5
Flooding	x5

## Tips from Your Blood Sisters

- In general, you will remember better if you log your bleeding right away. Consider carrying your log with you.
- Period panties/shorts may be more comfortable and convenient when you have light or moderate days or as a backup.
- Reusable pads and menstrual cups may cost less in the long run.
- Menstrual cups sometimes have applicators (might be sold separately) if that is more comfortable for you to use. If you are trying to use menstrual cups to measure, you may want to empty them more often for a few heavy days so that you don't risk overflowing them.
- If you want to measure how much liquid your particular pad holds, you can try weighing a new one on a sensitive scale and then weighing it again after it is soaked. The difference in weight is a decent measurement of how much the pad holds. If you choose to use a pad after you have soaked it, be sure to weigh it before the blood dries for better accuracy.
- For an environmentally friendly option, consider biodegradable pads and tampons.
- Use Depends style for super heavy days, post-partum, or after surgery.
- A&D ointment, Sensicare, or some essential oils may help with rash or skin inflammation. (Do not use essential oils full strength—dilute with a carrier oil.)

- Take a friend or other advocate with you to talk to your doctor if you feel you need to.
- Prepare for your appointment: gather your logs, write down your questions, and take your documentation with you.
- Take pictures to share with your providers.
- Keep your friends and family informed, to the extent that you are comfortable, so that they can offer you support.

### Provider Discussions

**(Please discuss with your provider to explore your options for anything on this list. Shared decision making is important.)**

- NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxin sodium) can make your periods worse.
- Oral contraception may thin the uterine lining and make periods less heavy if you want to talk to your doctor about trying it.
- Antifibrinolytics, desmopressin acetate (DDAVP), and clotting factor may lighten your flow.
- Uterine ablation may lighten your flow.
- Iron and folic acid are supplements you can ask your healthcare provider about taking, especially for low energy during your period.

**Participate in SisterSpace and other Blood Sisterhood activities to receive support from your blood sisters and bleeding disorders community.**



# Menstrual Definitions

Please note that these definitions are specific to menstruation.

**Anemia:** A blood condition in which a person either does not have enough red blood cells, in hemoglobin (the iron- and oxygen-carrying component) or in total volume from loss of blood or has red blood cells that do not function properly.

**Antifibrinolytic:** These medications inhibit the enzymes that break down clots. Examples of these include tranexamic acid and aminocaproic acid.

**Blood Clots:** A clump of platelets and blood proteins (also known as a thrombus) that form a plug at the site of an injured blood vessel to prevent excessive bleeding. A clot may also form inside a blood vessel and block that vessel, which is called a thrombosis or a blood clot.

**Breakthrough Bleeding:** Bleeding that occurs between menstrual cycles.

**Desmopressin Acetate (DDAVP):** A synthetic hormone used to treat some patients with bleeding disorders.

**Flooding:** Gushing bleeding that might go through your clothes or sound like urinating when you first sit on the toilet.

**Heavy Menstrual Bleeding (HMB)/Heavy Periods/Menorrhagia:** Excessive menstrual bleeding, for example, needing to change your tampon or pad after less than 2 hours or passing clots the size of a quarter or larger.

**Iron (Ferritin):** A form of iron that is stored in the liver and released as needed to make new red blood cells.

**Iron Deficiency:** A condition where a lack of iron in the body leads to a reduction in the number of red blood cells.

**Iron Deficiency Anemia:** Anemia due to insufficient iron.

**Intrauterine Device (IUD):** A device inserted into the uterus to prevent pregnancy; certain devices containing hormones may also help with HMB by thinning the lining of the womb.

**Menstrual Cup:** A small, flexible cup made of rubber or silicone that you insert into your vagina during your period to collect blood.

**Menstrual Cycle/Menstruation:** A woman's monthly bleeding. When you menstruate, your body sheds the lining of the uterus (womb). Menstrual blood flows from the uterus through the small opening in the cervix and passes out of the body through the vagina.

**Oral Contraceptives:** Pills containing estrogen and progesterone or just progesterone that can be used for pregnancy prevention and menstrual disorders. (Non-oral contraceptives may also be useful and include the ring, the patch, and the "depro" shot.

**Pictorial Blood Loss Assessment Chart (PBAC):** An alternative semiquantitative tool that is used to demonstrate HMB.

**Shared Decision Making:** The process of collaborative communication between a healthcare provider and a patient and/or their caregiver where both parties work together to make informed decisions about the patient's healthcare.

**Spotting:** Bleeding that is much lighter than a period and often occurs out of cycle.

## Links to Resources



**Blood Sisterhood web page:** [www.hemophiliafed.org/join-blood-sisterhood/](http://www.hemophiliafed.org/join-blood-sisterhood/)



**Learning Central:** [www.hfalearning.org](http://www.hfalearning.org)



**Research (FIRST):** [www.hemophiliafed.org/females-in-research-sharing-and-translation-first-project/](http://www.hemophiliafed.org/females-in-research-sharing-and-translation-first-project/)



**Mental Health Resources:** [www.hemophiliafed.org/resource/mental-health/](http://www.hemophiliafed.org/resource/mental-health/)



**Rezan Abdul-Kadir, Ahmad Tarawah, Naveen Shridhar, Roshni Kulkarni; Driving Change: Improving Diagnosis and Awareness of Heavy Menstrual Bleeding and Bleeding Disorders in Women and Girls Among Healthcare Providers. Blood 2022; 140 (Supplement 1): 2717–2718. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1182/blood-2022-166777>**

Link: <https://ashpublications.org/blood/article/140/Supplement%201/2717/488985/Driving-Change-Improving-Diagnosis-and-Awareness>

**Cleveland Clinic, Heavy Menstrual Bleeding (Menorrhagia), accessed 5 June 2023, last medical professional review, 11/11/2021.**

Link: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17734-menorrhagia-heavy-menstrual-bleeding>

**James AH. Heavy menstrual bleeding: work-up and management. Hematology Am Soc Hematol Educ Program. 2016 Dec 2;2016(1):236-242. doi: 10.1182/asheducation-2016.1.236. PMID: 27913486; PMCID: PMC6142441.**

Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6142441/>

**Quinn SD, Higham J. Outcome measures for heavy menstrual bleeding. Womens Health (Lond). 2016 Jan;12(1):21-6. doi: 10.2217/whe.15.85. Epub 2015 Dec 23. PMID: 26693585; PMCID: PMC5779559.**

Link: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5779559/>

**Yahalom S., Gupta A., Dehdashtian S., Scheiner M., 94: Reliability of Counting Sanitary Pads In Evaluating Severity of Vaginal Bleeding. 2010 September.**

**Intira Sriprasert, Tarita Pakrashi, Thomas Kimble, and David F. Archer, Heavy menstrual bleeding diagnosis and medical management. Sriprasert et al. Contraception and Reproductive Medicine (2017), DOI 10.1186/s40834-017-0047-4.**

**CDC, Heavy Menstrual Bleeding, accessed 5 June 2023, last review, 8/17/2022.**

Link: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/blooddisorders/women/menorrhagia.html>