



Menstrual Cramps



Overview

These are pains in your lower abdomen. You may feel them before and during your menstrual period. For most women, they're not serious. But for some, they can be very painful.

Causes

What causes these cramps? They're a normal part of the process that results in your monthly period. Once a month, your uterus (that's your womb) sheds its inner lining. To do this, hormones trigger your uterus to have a series of contractions. These contractions are the menstrual cramps you feel.

Other causes

Menstrual cramps can also be caused by medical conditions. They can be linked to endometriosis or uterine fibroids. They can be caused by adenomyosis. They can be caused by cervical stenosis. And they can be linked to pelvic inflammatory disease.

Symptoms

What do menstrual cramps feel like? You can have throbbing, cramping pain in your lower abdomen. Some women feel a constant, dull ache. The pain can radiate through your lower back and thighs. It may be mild or intense. You can also have nausea, headache, dizziness and loose stools.

Treatment

How do we treat the pain of menstrual cramps? Most often, pain relievers help. If you have severe cramps, your doctor may prescribe birth control. And if your cramps are caused by a medical condition, you may need surgery. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.