

MENSTRUATION

Menstruation in TCM context: What's normal, What's not

In TCM, menstruation involves the following components: Qi, Blood, Kidney essence, Spleen and Liver functions, Ren and Chong meridians and the Womb. The proper function of the above will eventually result in the monthly occurrence of menstruation in a woman.

What's Normal

In general, young ladies start their first period between 14-18 years old. When menstruating, women should take note of the following:

- a) Regularity of menstrual cycle
- b) Duration of menstrual period
- c) Volume of menstrual flow
- d) Colour, texture, odour of menstrual flow

A normal menstruation cycle should be between 28-30 days and the normal menstruation period should last between 3-7 days.

In TCM, the volume, colour and texture of the menstruation blood are important. A normal menstruation flow volume ranges between 50 – 80ml, while the normal colour should be dark red, without blood clots and without any odour.

During pre-menstruation and/or menstruation period, it is common to experience some of the following symptoms:

- a) Slight tenderness/swelling in breasts
- b) Slight heaviness in the abdomen
- c) Slight back ache
- d) Mood swings

What's Not Normal

Surprisingly, not many women know that the following conditions are not normal and such conditions may indicate a problem within the body. Abnormalities can be seen in 5 ways.

1. Abnormal Menstrual Cycle

Abnormal menstrual cycle	Time between Two Period
Advanced Menstruation	21 days or less, for at least two cycles
Delayed Menstruation	35 days or more, for at least two cycles
Irregular Menstruation	Irregular, either in advanced or delayed by 7 days or more, for at least 3 cycles

2. Abnormal Menstruation Period

Prolong menstruation period – this is a common condition treated by TCM for menstruation period that lasts between 7-14 days.

3. Abnormal Menstrual Flow

It is also likely to see abnormalities in all three aspects: menstrual cycle, period and flow. This condition is known as “Menorrhagia” or in TCM, “Beng Lou”. This is characterised by

an abnormally heavy or light menstrual flow yet has a prolonged menstrual period, resulting in an irregular menstrual cycle.

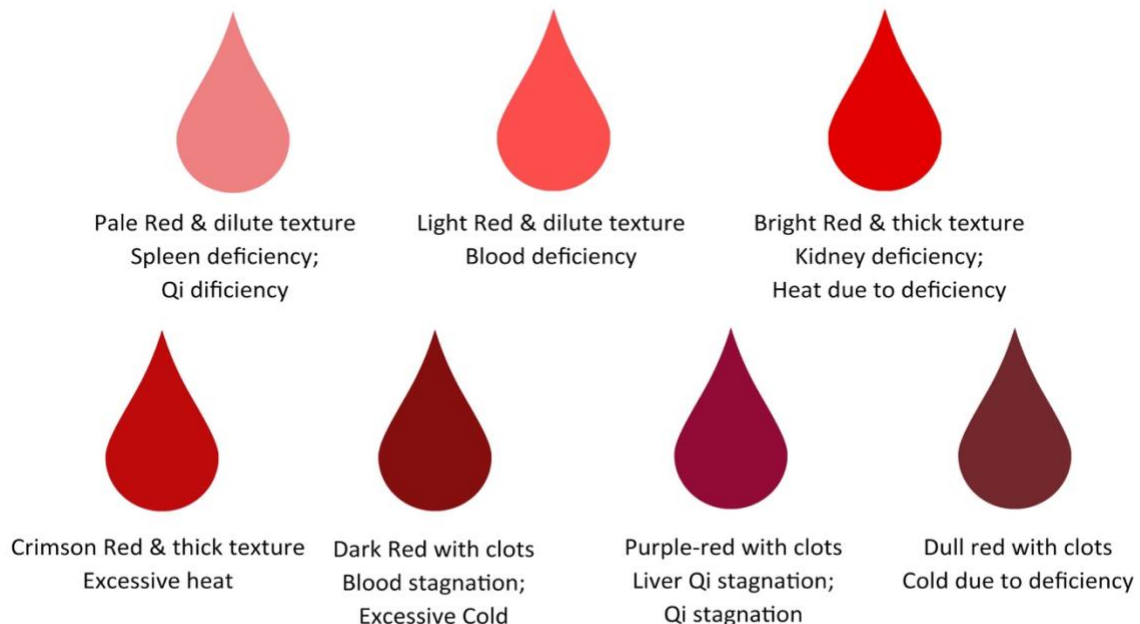
Menstrual Flow	Amount of Blood Flow
Heavy	>80ml (a soaked pad absorbs roughly 5ml of blood)
Minimal	< 20ml and/or the menstrual period less than 2 days.

4. Abnormal Colour and Texture

The colour and texture of the blood is important as it acts as indicators for TCM diagnosis.

Colour and Texture of the Blood Indication

Colour/texture of the blood and the indicators for TCM diagnosis



NOTE: Normal menstrual blood is Dark Red without clot.

5. Abnormal Premenstrual Symptoms

- Swelling and tenderness in breasts two weeks before menses
- Prolong back aches
- Bloated-ness in stomach and limbs before menses
- Diarrhoea before or during menses

Do the above abnormal symptoms need treatment?

Yes, the above conditions mentioned are indications of an imbalance of Yin-Yang within the body. The main TCM organs that are affected are the Spleen, Liver and Kidney. It is best advised to consult a TCM physician if you experience any of the above mentioned symptoms to understand your condition better.