



# Menstrual Hygiene Management

## For Community Health Workers (CHW)

Year - 2021



# Acknowledgments

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to everyone, who has extended their support and cooperation in developing this MHM talking-book.

The significance of having MHM talking-book for promoting menstruation hygiene that aims to break taboos and raise awareness on the importance of safe menstrual hygiene management, parental support, and enabling environment for out of school adolescent girls and young women is widely acknowledged.

Evidence from 2016 MHM study shows that over half of the girls in Afghanistan did not know about menstruation before getting their first period hence leaving them shocked and frightened when it occurs. Moreover, as menstruation is an extremely taboo topic in our communities. Therefore, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) with support of relevant stakeholders led the development of this pictorial and straightforward talking-book to provide comprehensive guidance for appropriate awareness and effective menstruation hygiene management actions through CHWs, Family Health Action Group (FHAG), and other community based programs.

We would like to express our thanks to all stakeholders who directly or indirectly contributed to the development of this Talking-book. Our special thanks to colleagues from Health Promotion Department and other relevant departments of the Ministry of Public Health representatives from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Women Affairs, and other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Finally, we would like to give our remarkable thanks to UNICEF for their technical and financial support and who have been paving the way for girls' menstruation hygiene management for years in Afghanistan.

Dr. Wahid Majrooh  
Acting Minister of Public Health

## Introduction

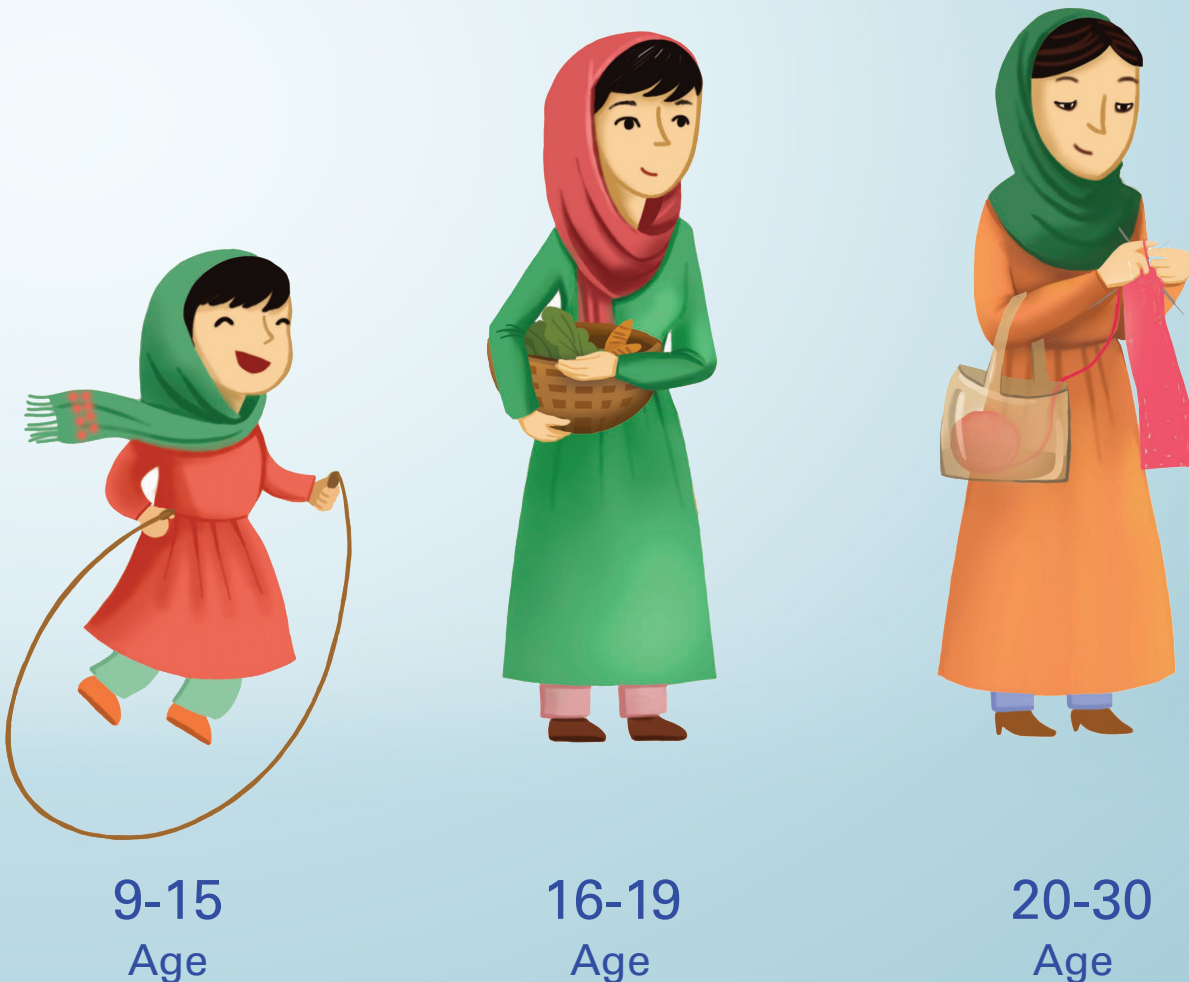
Recent researches show that Afghan women and girls face many challenges in managing their menstrual cycle or menstruation. They do not have access to sufficient facilities and face discriminatory customs and traditions in the family and society. This issue has made it difficult for them to observe proper health conditions and cleanliness during menstruation.

About 70 percent of girls do not take a bath during menstruation due to fear of infertility, and in some cases, they even have to hide their menstruation from their mothers so that families do not prevent them from going to school. According to some misconceptions, some families do not allow girls to eat certain healthy foods during this period, which of course causes health problems.

Therefore, community health workers can increase women and girls' awareness through this guideline and help them deal with their problems easily and confidently during menstruation.

## Puberty and Menstruation

Puberty is the transition from childhood to adolescence which is accompanied by physical, psychological and behavioral changes. Menstruation is a natural change and the beginning of girls' responsibilities that occurs at the beginning of puberty.



Picture No. 1: Age Classification

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It is very difficult to predict exactly when and where you will experience your first period. If you do not already have enough knowledge and preparation for menstruation and when blood comes out of your body for the first time, you will definitely be upset. Therefore, having prior knowledge about menstruation and its management can help you.



Picture No. 2: A girl who experiences menstruation without awareness and preparation and is upset.



Picture No. 3: A girl who experiences menstruated with awareness and preparation and is happy.

## Facts about Menstruation

تَقُولُ عَائِشَةُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَ أَرْضَاهَا مَادِحَةً نِسَاءِ الْأَنْصَارِ: (نِعْمَ النِّسَاءِ نِسَاءِ الْأَنْصَارِ لَمْ يَمْنَعُهُنَّ الْحَيَاءُ أَنْ يَتَفَقَّهْنَ فِي الدِّينِ).

كتاب الطهارة باب الحيض - سنن ابن ماجه ٥٣١

Translation: Hazrat Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) used to say about the women of the Ansar: «They are the best women, because; they are not ashamed to learn the topic of religion» (they inform themselves about menstrual topic).

- \* The first menstrual cycle in girls occurs between the **ages 9 to 15**. Sometimes it may happen sooner or later. If menstruation does not begin by **age 17**, the person should see a doctor.
- \* Some women and girls experience menstruation once every **28 days**; others spend their menstruation in longer periods (**35 days**) or shorter periods (**21 days**).
- \* Menstruation usually lasts between **3 and 7 days** and the average is **5 days**.
- \* Menstruation in women usually stops by the **age 49**.





Picture No. 4: Girls making bracelets to manage menstrual time

## Menstruation Time Management Bracelet

By making bracelets, you manage your menstrual habits well and you are always ready. Have the piece of cloth (used as pad or sanitary towel) ready.



Picture No. 5: Menstruation time management bracelet

 <b>Red</b>	<p>Red beads show the days of menstruation. The first bead is important and it tells to be ready for the period and mark the day on the calendar.</p>
 <b>blue</b>	<p>The blue bead indicates the cessation of bleeding and cleansing of the body.</p>
 <b>Pink</b>	<p>Pink beads are the days of ovulation and the woman is ready to getting pregnant. Mark these days on the calendar.</p>
 <b>Black</b>	<p>Black beads indicate that the days of menstruation are shorter than <b>26 days</b>. In these days women feel body pain, depression, anger and sadness and hopeless which is normal.</p>



## Diet during Menstruation

During menstruation, use different kinds of food that contains protein, vitamins, carbohydrates, fat and minerals. Drink more warm liquids.



Picture No. 6: Getting nutritious food during menstruation

**Protein:** meat, egg, milk, yogurt and beans

**Vitamin:** fresh fruits and vegetables

**Carbohydrates:** rice, bread and wheat

**Fat:** butter and cheese

**Minerals:** cauliflower and walnut

## Be Aware of Anemia

Heavy bleeding and blood loss during menstruation are the most common causes of anemia in girls and women of childbearing years. Therefore, to prevent severe anemia, eat foods such as beans, meat, vegetables, spinach, potatoes, apples, pomegranates, and eggs.



Picture No. 7: Preparation of nutrients during menstruation to prevent anemia

## Cleanliness during Menstruation

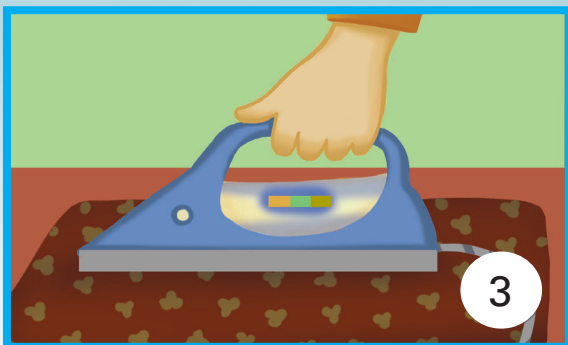
In order to have a healthy body, you must observe personal hygiene during the menstruation.



Picture No. 8: Taking bath during menstruation

## Important Points

- \* Taking bath or shower during menstruation does not cause any health problems (infertility and inflammation).
- \* Always wash used pieces of cloth and underwear during menstruation with soap and water and dry them under the sun.
- \* After drying, be sure to iron the pieces of cloth and keep them in a dry, clean place.



Picture No. 9: Personal grooming steps during menstruation

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- \* Always wash your hands with soap and water before and after changing piece of cloth/pad during the period.
- \* During the days when you are bleeding a lot, change your sanitary pad every **3 or 4 hours**.
- \* To prevent environmental pollution, burn or bury pieces of used cloth or used sanitary pads properly.



Picture No. 10: Personal grooming steps during menstruation

## Piece of Cloth used in Menstruation

Menstruation cloth or pieces can be reused. These pieces of cloth along with the underwear are used during menstruation to absorb blood. Pieces of cloth are usually prepared from new fabrics or from cotton or old-fashioned garments that have already been used at home.



Picture No. 11: Mother prepares pieces of cloth for period usage and daughter learns



Used and old pieces of cloth that are used in periods must be buried after 6 months.

Picture No. 12: Burying the pieces of cloth



The use of unclean pieces of cloth during menstruation cause various diseases.

Picture No. 13: Having pain because of unclean usage of piece of cloth during menstruation

## Support for Girls and Women with Disabilities to Manage Menstruation

People with disabilities experience physical and mental changes like other people, so their menstrual needs are similar to those of other girls. Therefore, during menstruation, they also need attention, love and guidance.



Picture No. 14: Parents support a disabled girl during menstruation

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And they should be made aware of the emotional changes that occur during menstruation. They should be motivated to ask for help and cooperation from their mother or someone they trust. They should be able to get advice and help from adults.



Picture No. 15: A health worker explains about menstruation

They also need toilets with special handles for the disabled, enough water, soap and safe gates.



Picture No. 16: Mother helps and cooperates with a disabled girl

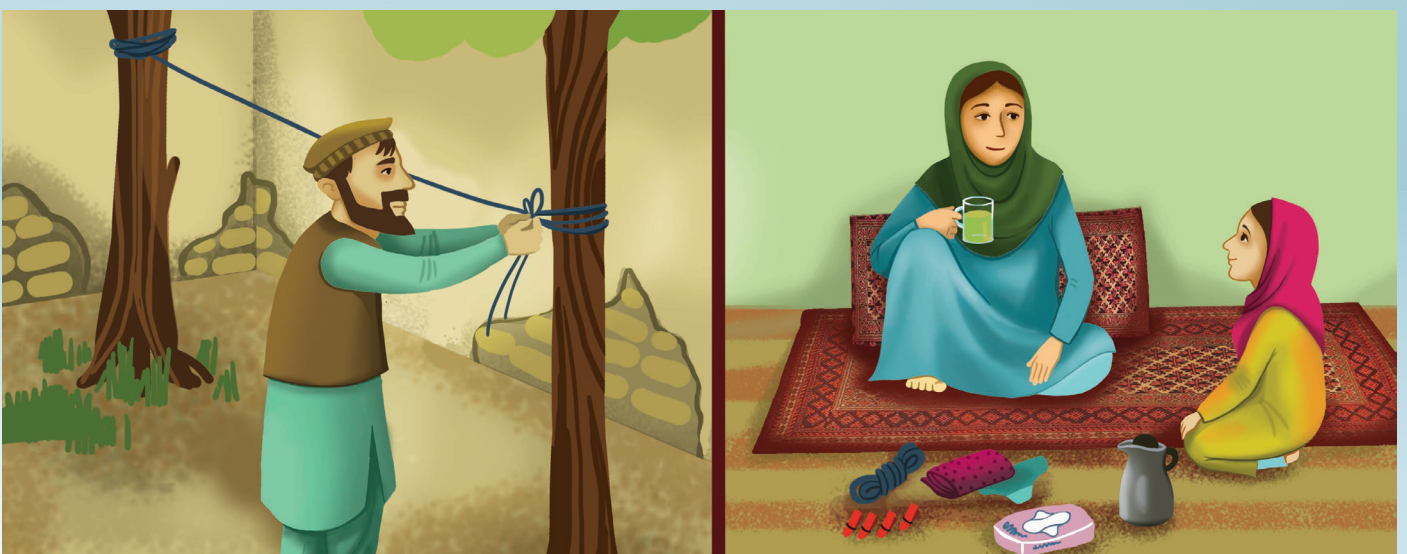


## Support of Parents and families for Young Girls

During menstruation, women and girls need more attention, love and guidance. Families are responsible for educating their daughters about self-grooming and providing them with the items they need, such as a sanitary pads, underwear, soap, a separate string (rope) for pieces of cloth to dry, and so on. Girls have the right to spend their menstrual period with confidence and ease, and to consciously take care of their health and well-being.



Picture No. 17: Father buys sanitary pad



Picture No. 18: Parents' support of the girl



