IRREGULAR BLEEDING BETWEEN THE MENSTRUAL PERIODS

Metrorrhagia

Bleeding that occurs irregulary between the menstrual period.

About Irregular bleeding between the menstrual periods

Metrorrhagia (metro = womb, -rrhagia = excessive flow) is uterine bleeding at irregular intervals, particularly between the expected menstrual periods.

In some women, menstrual spotting between periods occurs as a normal and harmless part of ovulation. Some women experience acute mid-cycle abdominal pain around the time of ovulation. This may also occur at the same time as menstrual spotting. The term breakthrough bleeding or breakthrough spotting is usually used for women using hormonal contraceptives, such as oral contraceptives, in which it refers to bleeding or spotting between any expected withdrawal bleedings, or bleeding or spotting at any time if none is expected. Breakthrough bleeding is likely due to hormonal fluctuations. The body is programmed to make certain estrogen levels each day and the estrogen (and some additional hormones, such as FSH (follicle-stimulating hormone), LH (luteinizing hormone), and progesterone) are responsible for regulating endometrium shedding. Therefore, when new levels of hormones enter the body through oral contraceptives, the body is provided with two ways to receive estrogen. These excess estrogen levels can cause pre-period bleeding (bleeding through). This should be regulated in several months.

Besides the aforementioned physiologic forms, metrorrhagia may also represent abnormal uterine bleeding and be a sign of an underlying disorder,
such as hormone imbalance, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, uterine (endometrial) cancer, or endometrial polyps.

If the bleeding is repeated and heavy, it can cause significant iron-deficiency anemia.

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a gynecological condition characterized by extra-uterine endometrial-like cells, which often proliferate and cause hematomas, menstrual pain, or other symptoms, in conjunction with hormonal changes.

The clinical symptoms of endometriosis include severe dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation), deep dyspareunia (pain with intercourse), chronic pelvic pain, ovulation-related pain, heavy menstrual bleeding and/or spotting between periods, and painful bowel and/or bladder symptoms that occur during or prior to menstruation.

Endometrial cancer

Endometrial cancer is the most common gynecological malignancy in developed countries. Approximately 90% of women with endometrial cancer have abnormal uterine bleeding as the only presenting complaint leading to the diagnosis of the disease. It has been suggested that screening of asymptomatic endometrial cancer by transvaginal ultrasound before the onset of clinical symptoms, i.e., postmenopausal bleeding, leads to an earlier diagnosis.

Uterine fibroids

Uterine fibroids are benign tumours of the smooth muscle of the uterus. Common complications of uterine fibroids include irregular bleeding with symptoms of anaemia. Submucosal fibroids may also present with intermenstrual bleeding. This is especially prevalent with prolapsed (a condition where organs, fall down or slip out of place) submucous fibroids. Any woman with fibroids and intermenstrual bleeding must, however, have a pelvic examination and pap smear to make sure an obvious cervical cancer is ruled out.

Endometrial polyps

Endometrial polyps (EPs) are one of the most common gynecological conditions often diagnosed incidentally or associated with clinical symptoms such as infertility in reproductive age and abnormal vaginal bleeding both in
premenopausal and postmenopausal women. The stroma of the polyp is composed of spindle cells and large blood vessels with thick walls which are very fragile and vulnerable to rupture.

Find more about related issues

- organs
  - Uterus
    The uterus is the largest and major organ of the female reproductive tract that is the site of fetal growth and is hormonally responsive
    Learn more at: www.fertilitypedia.org/edu/organs/uterus

- Diagnoses
  - Endometrial polyp
    The finger like overgrowths attached to the inner wall of the uterus that extend into the uterine cavity which are made of endometrial tissue
    Learn more at: www.fertilitypedia.org/therapy/diag/endometrial-polyp

  - Endometriosis
    A state in which pieces of the tissue alike to the lining of the uterus (endometrium) grow in other parts of the body.
    Learn more at: www.fertilitypedia.org/therapy/diag/endometriosis

  - Endometrial cancer
    Cancer that arises from the endometrium, the lining of the uterus.
    Learn more at: www.fertilitypedia.org/therapy/diag/endometrial-cancer

  - Uterine fibroids
    The most common benign smooth muscle tumors of the uterus encountered in women of reproductive age.
    Learn more at: www.fertilitypedia.org/therapy/diag/uterine-fibroids

  - Cervical stenosis
    Narrowing of cervix - the opening to the uterus.
    Learn more at: www.fertilitypedia.org/therapy/diag/cervical-stenosis

Sources
“Metrorrhagia” —sourced from Wikipedia licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

“Endometrial Polyps in Women Affected by Levothyroxine-Treated Hypothyroidism—Histological Features, Immunohistochemical Findings, and Possible Explanation of Etiopathogenic Mechanism: A Pilot Study” —by Saccardi et al. licensed under CC BY 3.0

“Giant Endometrial Polyp in a Postmenopausal Woman without Hormone/Drug Use and Vaginal Bleeding” —by Ünal et al. licensed under CC BY 3.0

“Breakthrough bleeding” —sourced from Wikipedia licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

“Radiotherapy for inoperable and refractory endometriosis presenting with massive hemorrhage: a case report” —by Nomiya et al. licensed under CC BY 2.0

“The development and validation of the daily electronic Endometriosis Pain and Bleeding Diary” —by Deal et al. licensed under CC BY 2.0

“The presence of postmenopausal bleeding as prognostic parameter in patients with endometrial cancer: a retrospective multi-center study” —by Seebacher et al. licensed under CC BY 2.0

“Counselling Patients with Uterine Fibroids: A Review of the Management and Complications” —by Simms-Stewart and Fletcher licensed under CC BY 3.0