

Periods and Down Syndrome

Easy Read summary of our research







Researchers wanted to learn how girls with Down syndrome experience periods and what support they need.

The research happened in the UK.

The researchers spoke with:

- Girls with Down syndrome aged 13–19
- Family members
- Professional caregivers

What did the research find?

Many families felt worried before periods started



Families worried about:

- Blood
- Pain
- Using period products
- Managing periods independently

But many girls coped better than **families** expected.



Period products helped



Many families said period underwear helped a lot.

Some people called them **"magic pants"**.

They helped girls:

- Feel more independent
- Feel more comfortable
- Manage periods more easily

Pain was a big issue



Some girls had:

- Heavy periods
- Bad pain

Many girls found it hard to explain when they were in pain.



Families often had to look for signs like:

- Changes in behaviour
- Crying
- Wanting to rest



Some families felt pain was not treated well enough.



Some medicines helped



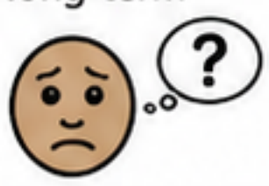
Hormonal medicines helped some girls by:

- Reducing pain
- Making periods lighter

Families said this brought:



But some families worried about long-term side effects.



What should happen next?





Create easy to understand information about periods, body changes and building confidence and independence.



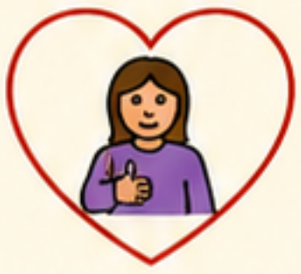
Give practical guidance about period care, heavy periods, pain and medicine options.



Train doctors and health workers to talk openly and helpfully about periods.



Create support networks for families to share knowledge and reduce isolation.



Safe and respectful **menstrual care** is important for **everyone.**

Thank you



Thank you to all the girls, families and professionals who took part in this research.

Thank you to the Down's Syndrome **Research Foundation UK** for funding this important study.

Made by



This research was done by a team from the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM):
Dr Katie Greenland, Dr Sarah Polack, & Dr Jane Wilbur.



Contact:
Katie.Greenland@lshtm.ac.uk