

# Heavy Periods

Do you have to plan stops during your trips if you are on your period? So you know you can make changes if you start leaking?

Sleep on top of a towel at night because of bleeding through and onto your mattress?

Clots that are so large that you could hold them in your hand?

Do you have to wear multiple sanitary products to protect yourself and your clothes from leaks?

On certain days of the month, you might not leave the house for fear of leaking.

None of the above should be how you live your life. I am here to support you.

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Heavy periods are considered to be:

- where you lose more than 80ml of blood during a cycle
- have to change a regular tampon or pad more than 16 times or
- a period that lasts longer than 7 days

Things to consider	Diagnosing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Low progesterone</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Spotting during your luteal phase,</li><li>○ Difficulty falling or staying pregnant</li><li>○ PMS</li><li>○ Premenstrual headaches/migraines</li><li>○ Heavy periods</li><li>○ Irregular or frequent cycles</li><li>○ Bloating/water retention</li><li>○ Restless legs at night</li><li>○ Insomnia</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cycle and symptom tracking</li><li>● Blood tests progesterone, 7 days before the next cycle</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Low iron</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Heavy periods</li><li>○ Tiredness and lack of energy</li><li>○ Shortness of breath</li><li>○ Noticeable heartbeats</li><li>○ A pale complexion</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Full blood count<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Haemoglobin</li><li>○ Ferritin</li><li>○ B12</li><li>○ Folate</li></ul></li></ul>

Less common symptoms include:

- Headache
- Tinnitus
- An altered sense of taste
- Feeling itchy
- A sore or abnormally smooth tongue
- Hair loss
- Difficulty swallowing
- Ulcers on the corners of your mouth
- Spoon-shaped nails

- **Oestrogen excess**

- Heavy periods
- Painful periods
- Clotty periods
- Cyclical migraines
- PMS symptoms like bloating, cramping, breast tenderness, and mood swings,
- Fibrocystic breasts
- Uterine fibroids
- Endometriosis
- Polyps
- Fatigue
- Depression/anxiety

- Cycle and symptom tracking

- Blood tests for:
  - FSH (day 2-5 of your cycle)
  - LH (day 2-5 of your cycle)
  - E2 (day 2-5 of your cycle)
  - Oestradiol
- DUTCH test

- **Inflammation**

- PMS
- Period cramps
- Menstrual migraines
- Period poos
- Poor egg quality
- Impaired progesterone levels
- Affects the thyroid
- Increased aromatase and oestrogen levels

- A stool sample test will show digestive function, intestinal inflammation, and the intestinal microbiome.

- **Coagulopathy**

- Excessive bruising
- Frequent nosebleeds
- Bleeding gums or heavy bleeding during dental procedures
- Heavy menstrual bleeding
- Excessive bleeding during or after labour

- Blood tests for:

- platelet count
- prothrombin time (PT)
- fibrinogen
- D-dimer/fibrin degradation products

- **Endometriosis**

- Painful periods
- Pelvic pain
- Painful intercourse
- Pain with urination or bowel movements
- Fatigue
- Infertility

- The only definitive way to diagnose endometriosis is by a laparoscopy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Premenstrual spotting</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Adenomyosis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Heavy periods that last for a long time</li> <li>○ Severe period pain</li> <li>○ A feeling of pressure in your abdomen</li> <li>○ Bloating</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MRI</li> <li>● Transvaginal ultrasonography</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Uterine polyps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Irregular bleeding between periods or after menopause</li> <li>○ Periods that vary in length and heaviness</li> <li>○ Very heavy periods</li> <li>○ Difficulty getting pregnant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A transvaginal ultrasound</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Fibroids</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Heavy periods</li> <li>○ Painful periods/pelvic pain</li> <li>○ Infertility</li> <li>○ Irregular bleeding</li> <li>○ Constipation</li> <li>○ Frequent/urgent urination</li> <li>○ Pain with intercourse</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A blood test to check if you have anaemia (see above for low iron).</li> <li>● An ultrasound scan.</li> <li>● A hysteroscopy.</li> <li>● An MRI</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Hypothyroidism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feeling tired</li> <li>○ Weight gain</li> <li>○ Irregular menstrual cycles:</li> <li>○ Heavy periods</li> <li>○ Higher sensitivity to cold</li> <li>○ Swelling and oedema</li> <li>○ Dry skin and hair</li> <li>○ Thinning hair on the head</li> <li>○ Constipation</li> <li>○ Trouble becoming or staying pregnant</li> <li>○ Goiter (abnormal growth/enlargement of the thyroid)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A complete thyroid panel should include the following blood tests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ TSH</li> <li>○ Total T4</li> <li>○ Free T4</li> <li>○ Total T3</li> <li>○ Free T3</li> <li>○ Reverse T3</li> <li>○ Anti-TPO Antibodies</li> <li>○ Anti-Thyroglobulin Antibodies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Copper IUD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spotting between periods</li> <li>○ Irregular periods</li> <li>○ Heavier or longer periods</li> <li>○ More or worse cramping during your periods</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Removal of the IUD to see if heavy bleeding stops</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Perimenopause</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Heavy bleeding</li> <li>○ Irregular menstrual cycles</li> <li>○ New PMS symptoms</li> <li>○ Swollen, tender breasts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cycle and symptom tracking</li> <li>● Blood tests for FSH (day 2-5 of your cycle) and oestradiol</li> </ul>

- Insomnia
- Weight gain
- Night sweats
- Headaches
- Mood swings

- **PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome)**

- Not a common sign, but heavy periods may sometimes be a sign
- No ovulation
- Irregular periods
- Insulin resistance
- Hirsutism
- Acne
- No periods

- Cycle and symptom tracking
- Blood tests for:
  - FSH (day 2-5 of your cycle)
  - LH (day 2-5 of your cycle)
  - Total testosterone (between 7 am and 10 am)
  - Sex hormone-binding globulin
  - Prolactin (any day of the cycle)
  - TSH (any day of the cycle)
- Ultrasound scans (although this is not a conclusive test)
- Exclude other causes of hyperandrogenism such as late-onset congenital adrenal hyperplasia, Cushing's syndrome, or an androgen-secreting tumor

Depending on investigations and your signs and symptoms this is not an exhaustive list.

My guidance today is:

- Your first port of call should be to speak to your primary healthcare practitioner
- Make the necessary checks and tests; heavy periods are not a normal physiological process and should not be accepted where it impacts your quality of life.
- Start cycle tracking
- Get in touch today and we can start working on how I, and acupuncture, can support your healthy periods.

Send me an email at [andrea@thechannelproject.co.uk](mailto:andrea@thechannelproject.co.uk) and we can discuss your signs and symptoms. As a follow up I will then send you information on how you can start to make changes TODAY.



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