
A woman with dark hair styled in braids is looking directly at the camera. She is holding a large white rectangular sign in front of her chest. The sign contains the text "ARE HEAVY PERIODS RULING YOUR LIFE?". She is wearing a patterned top with green and brown floral designs.

ARE HEAVY  
PERIODS RULING  
YOUR LIFE?

*Don't make excuses for  
problem periods*

Make an appointment with your doctor



WHAT IS  
HEAVY  
MENSTRUAL  
BLEEDING  
(HMB)?

There are medical definitions of heavy menstrual bleeding, but a practical definition is when your periods are so heavy that they interfere with your quality of life,<sup>1</sup> or your ability to carry out daily activities.<sup>2</sup>

# How common is HMB?



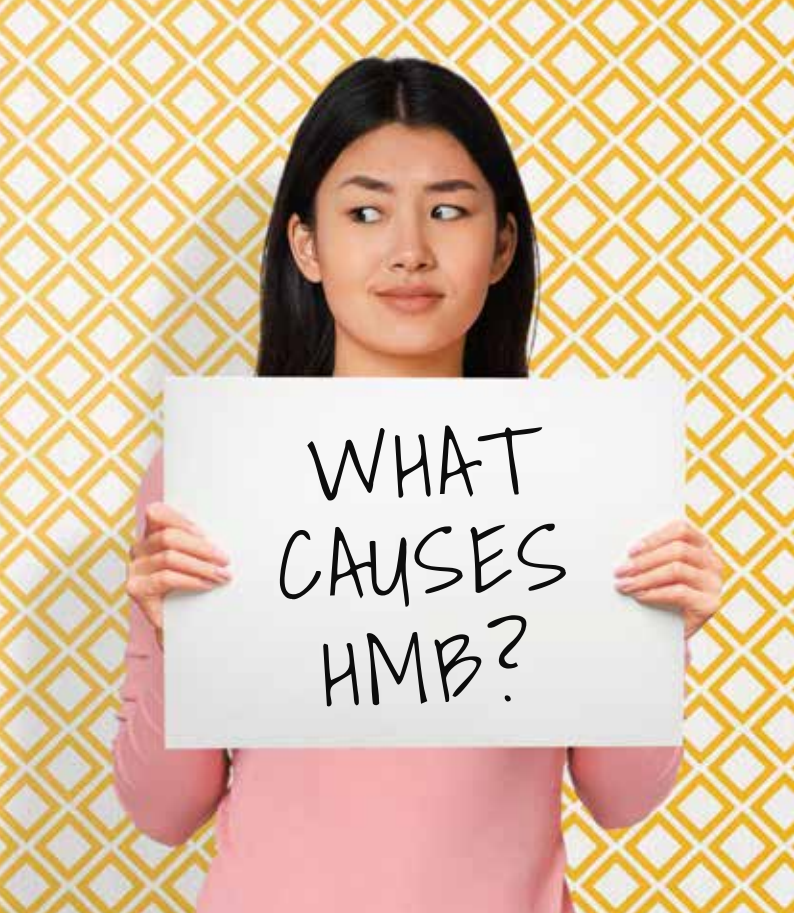
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.  
**1 IN 4** WOMEN OF  
REPRODUCTIVE AGE  
SUFFER WITH HMB<sup>3</sup>

# Spotting the signs - do I have HMB?

Think about the impact that your periods have on your life. If you tick 'yes' to any of these questions, you could have HMB:

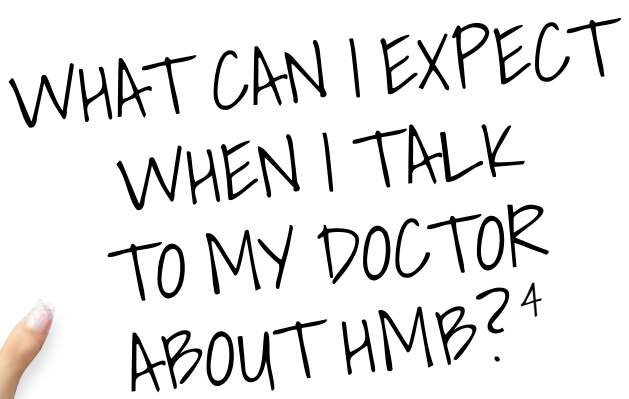
- Do you bleed so much that you have to change your pad/tampon/ menstrual cup every 1-2 hours?
- Do you need to use two types of period products (e.g. a tampon and a pad) at the same time?
- Do your periods last longer than eight days?
- Do you pass large clots or experience "flooding" when you bleed through to your clothes?
- Do you have to put a towel in your bed or use large maternity pads when you sleep?





HMB can be caused by a lot of different health conditions, so it is important to speak to your doctor if your period is so heavy that it makes it difficult for you to do your normal daily activities, or if you have any other concerns about your periods.

Even if no obvious reason for your HMB can be found - which is often the case - there are still effective treatments available.



# WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHEN I TALK TO MY DOCTOR ABOUT HMB?<sup>4</sup>

Your doctor may ask you questions about your periods and any other symptoms you have or any medications you are taking. They may also ask other questions about your health and sexual history to try and get some clues about what might be causing your HMB.

Your doctor may also need to do a physical examination. This may include (with your consent) an internal examination of your vagina and cervix and what is called a 'bimanual examination' of your uterus to detect any abnormalities. You may also need to have other tests if an underlying cause is suspected.

If no underlying cause is suspected or found, your doctor may recommend certain common medical treatments to reduce or stop your heavy bleeding and/or manage other symptoms.

# Medical treatments for HMB<sup>4</sup>

There are effective treatments available so you can stop having to make excuses for your HMB.



## AN INTRAUTERINE SYSTEM OR 'IUS'

(also known as a 'hormonal IUD'), a small T-shaped plastic device inserted into the uterus by a healthcare professional.



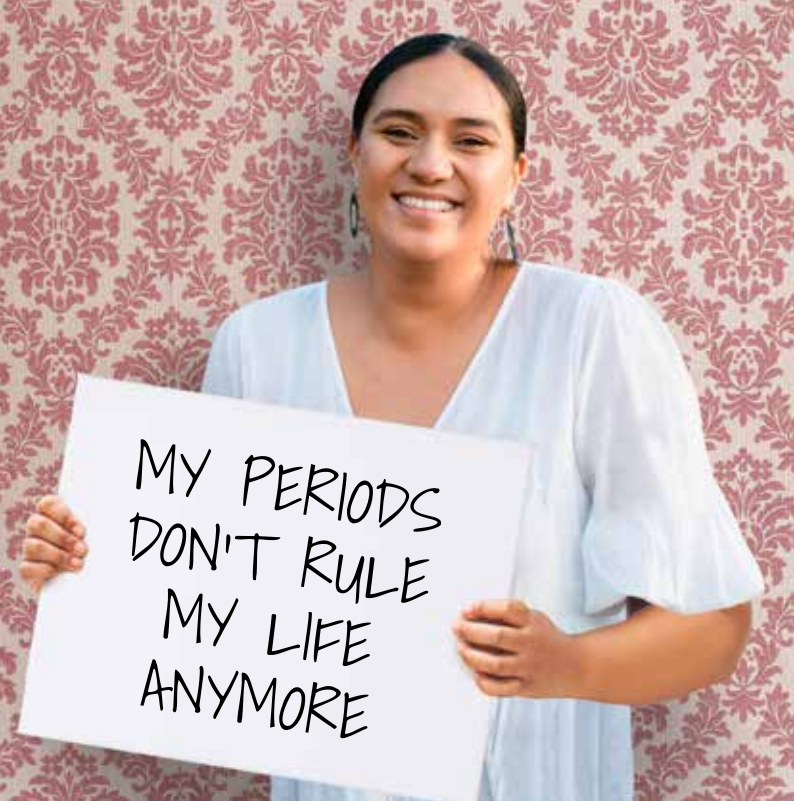
## ORAL HORMONAL PILLS

such as combined oral contraceptive pills or some pills that contain a specific type of progestogen.



## NON-HORMONAL TREATMENTS

Your doctor may prescribe other treatments such as tranexamic acid or mefenamic acid if a hormonal IUD or the oral contraceptive pill is not suitable for you.



## *Don't make excuses for your heavy periods - talk to your doctor*

All medicines have risks and benefits. Always speak to your Doctor to see what may be right for you. If symptoms persist or you have side effects, speak to your healthcare professional.

**References:** **1.** RANZCOG: <https://ranzocg.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Heavy-menstrual-bleeding.pdf> accessed June 2023. **2.** Healthify He Puna Waiora - Heavy Periods: <https://healthify.nz/health-a-z/p/periods-heavy-bleeding/>; accessed June 2023. **3.** Heavy Menstrual Bleeding Clinical Care Standard. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare. October 2017. **4.** BPAC NZ: Investigating and Managing Abnormal Vaginal Bleeding: an overview. <https://bpac.org.nz/2019/bleeding.aspx>; accessed June 2023.



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PP-MIR-NZ-0060-2. TAPS NP19488. August 2023. BY11659.