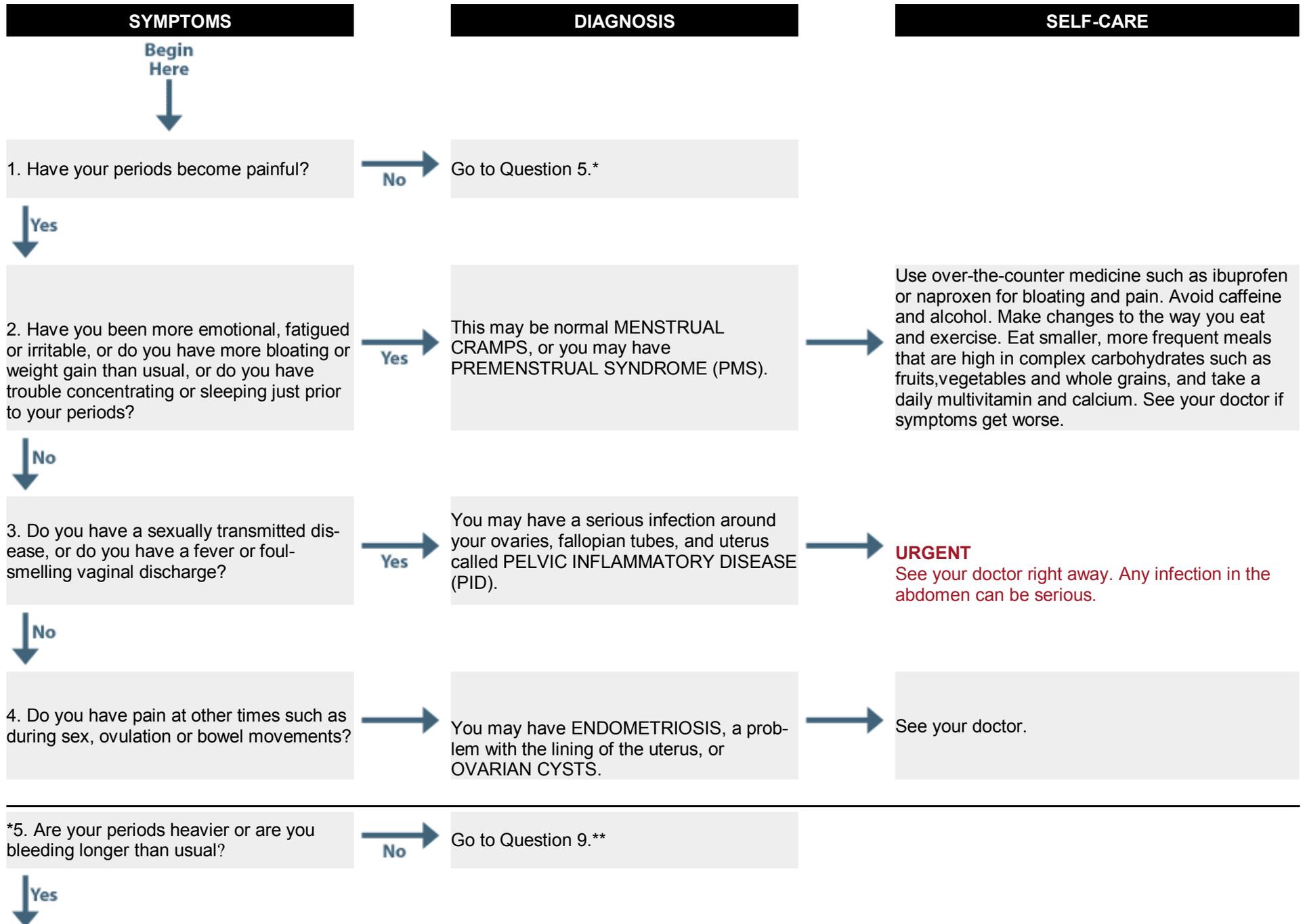


Menstrual Cycle Problems

From missed periods to painful periods, menstrual cycle problems are common, but usually not serious. Follow this chart for information regarding changes in your cycle.



6. Do you use an IUD?

Yes

The IUD may have caused this change in the pattern of your bleeding.

See your doctor.

No

7. Do you have a constant feeling that you need to urinate, or do you have pelvic pressure, constipation or pain in your back or legs?

Yes

Your symptoms may be from FIBROIDS, noncancerous tumors of the uterus.

See your doctor.

No

8. Do you have muscle aches, swelling or stiffness in your joints, tightness or swelling in your throat, and/or weakness in your legs?

Yes

You may have a problem with your THYROID GLAND such as HASHIMOTO'S DISEASE.

See your doctor.

**9. Are your periods irregular, infrequent or have they stopped?

No

Go to Question 14.***

Yes

10. Do you have breast tenderness, abdominal fullness or nausea?

Yes

You may have an OVARIAN CYST, or you may be PREGNANT.

If you could be pregnant, do an at-home pregnancy test. If it's positive, see your doctor for confirmation. If you don't think you're pregnant and symptoms continue, see your doctor.

No

11. Are you on birth control pills?

Yes

Some women will miss a period while on BIRTH CONTROL PILLS. There is a small chance you could be PREGNANT.

Wait to see if you have a period at the end of your next pack of pills. See your doctor if you have signs of pregnancy or you don't have a period after

No

12. Are you 35 years old or older?

Yes

Periods that stop after years of regularity may be caused by normal or premature MENOPAUSE. Irregular periods may be due to FIBROIDS, HORMONE PROBLEMS, or other medical conditions.

See your doctor.

No

13. Have you felt sluggish, or have you gained or lost weight without trying?

→ Yes →

You may have a HORMONE PROBLEM, such as a THYROID GLAND problem. Periods may stop or become irregular if your weight falls dramatically, as can occur with ANOREXIA NERVOSA.

→

See your doctor.

↓ No

***14. Are you bleeding at times other than your period, or again after having gone through menopause?

→ Yes →

Your bleeding could be from FIBROIDS, ENDOMETRIOSIS, or from a serious condition such as ENDOMETRIAL CANCER.

→

See your doctor right away. Early detection of endometrial cancer is important for successful treatment.

↓ No

For more information, please talk to your doctor. If you think the problem is serious, call your doctor right away.

This tool has been reviewed by doctors and is for general educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice. The information in this tool should not be relied upon to make decisions about your health. Always consult your family doctor with questions about your individual condition(s) and/or circumstances. Source: American Academy of Family Physicians. Family Health & Medical Guide. Dallas: Word Publishing; 1996.