

# Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding

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## **DEFINITION**

Dysfunctional Uterine Bleeding (DUB) is characterized by abnormal bleeding from the vagina that is due to changes in hormone levels.

## **SYMPTOMS**

A female with dysfunctional uterine bleeding may experience the following changes in her menstrual cycle:

- Bleeding that lasts for more than normal, or more than 7 days.
- Bleeding is very heavy, and is often characterized by large clots, necessitating the change in protection during the night, or soaking through a sanitary pad and/or tampon every 2-3 hours.
- Vaginal bleeding or spotting that occurs between periods.
- Menstrual periods may occur more frequently than 28 days, or in some instances, occur more than 35 days apart
- Fatigue or tiredness from loss of blood, which may result in anemia

Some other symptoms caused by changes in hormone levels are:

- Hot flashes
- Mood Swings
- Tenderness and dryness of the vagina

## **CAUSES OF DYSFUNCTIONAL UTERINE BLEEDING**

During a typical menstrual cycle, important hormone levels (particularly estrogen and progesterone) fluctuate up and down. Ovulation (when an egg is released from the ovaries) occurs during a normal menstrual cycle. The most common cause of dysfunctional uterine bleeding is when the ovaries do not release an egg. When this happens, the hormone levels in the body fluctuate, causing a woman's period to be later or earlier than usual, and the menstrual flow to be excessive.

## TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES

Typically, initial treatment is designed to help regulate hormone levels and to control the menstrual cycle. Often the use of oral birth control pills or the insertion of an intrauterine device (IUD) that releases progestin will reduce the severity of the bleeding and pain. Doctors often proscribe iron supplements to forestall or counter the effects of anemia.

If symptoms persist or are not eased by hormone intervention, surgical treatments may be indicated:

- Dilation and Curettage (D and C) may be performed to remove polyps and provide better diagnosis.
- Endometrial ablation or resection: Cauterizing or removing the lining of the uterus to stop or reduce the bleeding.
- Hysterectomy (not as common a therapy as once performed).

## WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

If you are experiencing one or more of the symptoms listed above, make a note of them and schedule a visit that includes time for a blood test, as many of these symptoms are also indicative of other health conditions.

It is helpful for the doctor if you can keep a written record all symptoms over the course of entire bleeding episodes so that you are able to provide your doctor with accurate and specific data.

## PARTICIPATE IN A CLINICAL RESEARCH STUDY

**You may want to consider participating in a clinical research study related to this or other women's health conditions. Please click here to complete an on-line inquiry form or call:**

**602-931-4507**

**Compensation may be available to qualified study participants for travel in the Phoenix, AZ area, including but not limited to Gilbert, Chandler, Mesa, Scottsdale, Glendale, Paradise Valley, Peoria, and Sun City.**

**Participation is voluntary, and you may leave a study at any time.**