

Menstrual Health

Menstrual health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in relation to the menstrual cycle.

Achieving menstrual health implies that women, girls, and all other people who experience a menstrual cycle, throughout their life-course, are able to:

Information about the menstrual cycle

access accurate, timely, age-appropriate information about the menstrual cycle, menstruation, and changes experienced throughout the life-course, as well as related self-care and hygiene practices.

Materials, facilities, and services to care for the body

care for their bodies during menstruation such that their preferences, hygiene, comfort, privacy, and safety are supported. This includes accessing and using effective and affordable menstrual materials and having supportive facilities and services, including water, sanitation and hygiene services, for washing the body and hands, changing menstrual materials, and cleaning and/or disposing of used materials.

Diagnosis, care and treatment for discomforts and disorders

access timely diagnosis, treatment and care for menstrual cycle-related discomforts and disorders, including access to appropriate health services and resources, pain relief, and strategies for self-care.

A positive and respectful environment

experience a positive and respectful environment in relation to the menstrual cycle, free from stigma and psychological distress, including the resources and support they need to confidently care for their bodies and make informed decisions about self-care throughout their menstrual cycle.

Freedom to participate in all spheres of life

decide whether and how to participate in all spheres of life, including civil, cultural, economic, social, and political, during all phases of the menstrual cycle, free from menstrual-related exclusion, restriction, discrimination, coercion, and/or violence.

This definition has been developed by the Terminology Action Group of the Global Menstrual Collective. The definition of menstrual health offers a concise statement aligned with the World Health Organization's definition of health, in addition to the requirements needed to achieve menstrual health. It builds on the foundation laid by advocates for menstrual health and hygiene.

The definition was developed through a consultative process with 51 expert stakeholders from Europe, Americas, Asia, and Africa.

We encourage the adoption of this definition to unify, guide, and

inform advocacy, policy, practice, and research. The definition can be used to situate menstrual health across sectoral priorities and funding portfolios for other health priorities such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, water, sanitation and hygiene, and adolescent and women's health.

This unified definition offers a point of consolidation and foundation for partnerships to address the broad scope of this challenge.

The full citation provides an elaboration on each part of the definition, and description of the development process.

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