



#ME BRACELET

HOW TO MAKE & WHY

Start using #ME on the first day of your period. Make sure the knot is to the left hand side of the first red bead. Your cycle always starts with a red bead and ends with a black bead, flowing clockwise. Each bead represents a day in your cycle.

The first red bead is the most important. It is the only definitive bead and all the others follow. It represents the first day of your period. Red for blood!



As you complete a day move the knot through one bead. It's a way of keeping track of where you are in your cycle. Just remember that the bead the knot is on the left of is the day of your cycle you are living that day. The beads are the days and YOU are the knot, moving through life one day at a time.

The #ME bracelet flows clockwise through red, white, pink, white again and ending in black. Most women bleed between 3-7 days, with 5 being the average which is why there are 5 red beads. If you bleed a day or two more or less you are still considered within the average range. The #ME bracelet is based on the average menstrual cycle which is 28 days.

The blood we shed is the thickened lining of the uterus that did not receive a fertilized egg. Periods can be light, moderate or heavy in terms of how much blood is shed and how quickly.



White beads symbolize calm with regards to the impact on your body. In the first half of the cycle, levels of estrogen (the "female hormone") start to rise. Estrogen plays an important role in keeping you healthy, especially by helping you to build strong bones and to help keep them strong as you age. Estrogen also makes the lining of the uterus grow and thicken. This lining is the place that will nourish the fetus if a pregnancy occurs. At the same time the lining of the womb is grown, an egg, in one of the ovaries starts to mature. During this phase we usually feel no change in our body or emotions. It just happens!



Pink beads represent ovulation and fertility. The brighter the pink, the higher the probability you are ovulating. Most women will ovulate on a fuchsia (the brightest) beads.

At about day 14 of an average 28-day cycle, the egg leaves the ovary. This is called ovulation. After the egg has left the ovary, it travels through the fallopian tube to the uterus. Hormone levels rise.

A woman is most likely to get pregnant during the 3 days before or on the day of ovulation. Keep in mind, women with cycles that are shorter or longer than average may ovulate before or after day 14. So be careful if you are sexually active.

During this phase we usually enjoy a positive disposition and physical well being. It is when hormone levels create a complex chemistry that increases our libido and pleasure of the senses.

DO NOT USE THIS BRACELET FOR CONTRACEPTION!

If you are sexually active use contraceptives and practice safe sex!

The second white grouping of beads represent the post-ovulatory stage.



A woman becomes pregnant if the egg is fertilized by a man's sperm. The fertilized egg will then attaches to the uterine wall.

If the egg is not fertilized, it will break apart and be released from the body within 48 hours and hormone levels will drop. During this phase we feel little emotional or physical stress as associated with our cycle, hence the white beads. You may also feel nothing at all.



Black beads indicate days shadowed by symptoms associated with premenstrual syndrome or PMS. PMS is a group of symptoms linked to the menstrual cycle. PMS symptoms usually occur before your period starts.

The symptoms generally go away after you start bleeding. PMS can affect menstruating women of any age and the effect is different for each woman. For some people, PMS is just a monthly bother. For others, it may be severe. PMS usually goes away when your monthly periods stop, such as when you are pregnant or go through menopause.

The causes of PMS are not completely clear, but several factors may be involved. Changes in hormones during the menstrual cycle seem to be an important cause. These changing hormones levels may affect some women more than others.

Some other possible causes include;

- Low levels of vitamins and minerals
- Eating a lot of salty foods, which may cause you to retain fluid
- Drinking alcohol and caffeine, which may alter your mood and energy level

PMS often includes both physical and emotional symptoms, such as:

- Acne
- Swollen or tender breasts
- Feeling tired
- Trouble sleeping
- Upset stomach, bloating, constipation or diarrhea
- Headache or backache
- Appetite changes or food cravings
- Joint or muscle pain
- Trouble with concentration or memory
- Tension, irritability, mood swings, or crying spells
- Anxiety or depression



Symptoms vary from woman to woman, and even within the same woman during different months.

Not every woman suffers from symptoms associated with PMS but approximately 80% or more do at some point in their reproductive years. Consider yourself fortunate if you don't but do not assume it will always be that way.

After the black days we will likely start the cycle all over again by getting our period.

#ME works best for women with a 28 day cycle, however if you get your period on any black or red bead you are still considered average and #ME will assist you in developing a greater understanding of your cycle.

If you are just starting your period chances are your period will not be regular. You may bleed for a shorter or longer time. Don't panic! It will eventually settle down.

If you have any questions or concerns talk to an elder, see a doctor or email Thandi - thandi@dignitydreams.com.

Please remember, that this #ME bracelet is a guideline only. It is a bit of fun to share with your friends and welcome your sisters to womanhood!

Understanding your menstrual cycle and dispelling the myths and taboos will help us empower and enable women through education.

These #ME bracelets help us with spreading the word and fundraising.

For more information on the Dignity Dreams Mission and Goals visit our website www.dignitydreams.com

Donate today by signing a monthly debit order, using the Zapper Code, Give us your Smart Shopper Points or direct deposit. Every single cent makes a significant and sustainable solution to a monthly challenge.

**Follow the design in the picture -
READ WHY on our website**

-  Represents the days we may suffer from PMS!
-  Represents the days of your period. The first bead is NB.
-  Represents the days our hormones are calmer.
-  Represents the beginning of ovulation & fertility.
-  Represents the days when you are most fertile & could fall pregnant!

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Bracelet**



Dignity Dreams

For more information on Dignity Dreams & Menstruation visit www.dignitydreams.com