

How well are Australian schools teaching students about menstrual health?



Findings from a survey looking into young Australian women's experiences of menstruation indicate the **need for better menstrual health education** in Australian schools. A thematic analysis revealed 3 key sub-themes in the 2692 responses to the open-ended survey question, **'What was the most useful information you got in your HPE class about menstruation?'**

1



'It's all just biology'

Respondents felt that their Health and Physical Education (HPE) focused more on biology than practical strategies for dealing with menstrual pain.

*'There was **no practical information** focused on pain management related to menstrual management, such as relieving symptoms and the use of sanitary items, only the biological effect on the body such as how hormones come into play.'*

- Year 11 student

2



'The cause but not the effect'

Respondents felt their concerns about menstruation weren't adequately addressed in HPE classes, downplaying the effect of period pain.

*'Health classes should do more to **teach what isn't always normal** to do with menstruation and vaginal health because I had many issues, I had to work through to overcome these problems that I was unaware of at the time ...'*

- Year 12 student

3



'Too little, too late'

Respondents felt that information about menstrual health was often overdue, delivered well after the arrival of puberty.

*'Nothing was really helpful due to the fact of **learning the information too late**. Learning about growth and development should happen in primary school, not year 8/9.'*

- Year 12 student

Source: Curry, C., Ferfolja, T., Holmes, K., Parry, K., Sherry, M., & Armour, M. (2022). Menstrual health education in Australian schools. *Curriculum Studies in Health and Physical Education*. 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25742981.2022.2060119>

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