



Periods & Swimming at CSC

Information for all CSC swimmers, teammates and parents

Periods are a normal, healthy part of growing up, and something around half of our swimmers will experience. This guide is for everyone at the Club — not just those who have periods — so we can all understand what's going on and support each other, whichever squad you're in.

The Basics

Most people start their periods around age 12, though it's completely normal to start anywhere between 8 and 15. A period usually lasts 3–8 days and happens roughly every 21–35 days, though it's common for this to be irregular at first, especially in the first couple of years.

During a period, the lining of the uterus is shed and leaves the body as blood, over a few days. It's a normal, healthy process — not an illness, and nothing to be embarrassed about.

Common Signs & Symptoms

- Cramping or pain, especially in the first few days
- Bloating
- Mood changes — feeling weepy, irritable or tired
- Reduced concentration
- Breast tenderness
- Headaches or low back pain
- Food cravings
- Some people feel confident, energetic and focused instead

Managing Symptoms Around Training

Easing Discomfort

A warm bath, hot water bottle, or pain relief can help with cramps. Gentle exercise — including swimming — can actually ease period pain, so training isn't off the table.

Be Prepared

Keep a small bag in your kit bag with spare underwear, your preferred period products, and pain relief, so you're never caught out.

If it helps, tell your coach — they can't offer support if they don't know what's going on. Coaches won't penalise you for having your period, and should manage it positively, including adjusting a session's intensity if needed. Your privacy and dignity should always be respected.

Some swimmers find it useful to track their cycle using an app or training diary, to help plan around training and competitions. If you use a period-tracking app, it's worth checking how it handles your data and keeps it secure.

Training & Competing

In Training

Drag shorts or shorts on poolside for land warm-up can help with confidence. It can help to agree this as a squad, so nobody feels singled out.

On Race Day

A robe to cover up after racing, shorts for poolside exercises, and letting your coach or team manager know in advance can all help.

Period pants and specific period swim costumes can be worn during training at any time, and in competitions at every level held under Swim England Laws and Regulations — club, county, regional and national. This does not permit wearing two full swimming costumes together, in line with World Aquatics rules.

Your Rights, Confirmed by Swim England

- You do not need to tell the referee in advance that you're wearing period pants
- No official will ever directly question or challenge you about it
- No official will carry out any form of suit-checking, on poolside or in changing rooms
- This must always be handled sensitively, with your dignity fully respected

If an official believes a swimmer is wearing a full second costume (rather than period pants), it can still be reported to the referee — but only if there's a genuine visible sign, like a second pair of straps. Where there's no clear sign either way, the benefit of the doubt always goes to the swimmer.

Supporting Each Other

Whether or not you have periods yourself, understanding what a teammate might be going through helps everyone. A few things that make a real difference:

- Use the correct words (like "period" or "uterus") rather than euphemisms — it helps take away any stigma
- If you notice a teammate might need help — for example, a leak — have a quiet word privately, rather than mentioning it to others
- Never tease or joke about someone's period, or comment on period products in someone's bag
- Remember that mood changes or tiredness around a period are down to hormones, not anything personal
- Keep the conversation positive — periods are normal, not something to be embarrassed about

When to See a GP

Most period symptoms are normal, but it's worth seeing a GP if:

- Your period lasts longer than 7 days
- You're soaking through a pad or tampon every 1–2 hours
- You're passing large clots
- You feel unusually tired, breathless, or pale
- Something just doesn't feel right — you know your own body best

Support at CSC

We keep baskets of period products — tampons, pads and period pants — in the first aid rooms at both K2 and Horley. Take what you need, whenever you need it, no questions asked.

We'd recommend all swimmers aged 10+ keep a small bag with spare underwear and period protection in their swim bag, just in case.

Club Welfare Team

welfare@crawleysc.co.uk

Find Out More

Swim England — Periods FAQ

Training, competition and period wear advice

www.swimming.org/sport/periods-faqs-links-additional-resources

Swim England — Period Wear Guidance (PDF)

The official policy document on period wear at licensed meets

www.swimming.org/sport/period-wear-guidance-changed

NHS — Periods

General health advice and information

For CSC coaches, team managers and officials: any queries about how this guidance applies at a specific meet can be directed to Swim England's Officials Development team via swimming.org.

Crawley Swimming Club · Club Welfare Team: welfare@crowleysc.co.uk