Irregular Menstrual Cycles

The average menstrual cycle lasts 28 days; however, this varies a lot from one woman to another and even from cycle to cycle. Depending on your hormone levels, you could get your periods every 20 or 35 days or even more. Irregular menstrual cycles or irregular periods are not necessarily due to fertility problems and are not unusual. 30% of women in their reproductive life experience irregular menstrual cycles. Many women may also experience irregular menstrual cycles in the form of a missed period, continuous periods or periods that occur twice in one menstrual cycle.

What are the causes of an irregular menstrual cycle?

Irregular menstrual cycles are often caused by hormonal deregulation. Menstrual cycles and periods are regulated by several hormones, such as progesterone, estrogens, FSH (Follicle Stimulating Hormone), LH (Luteinising Hormone) and GnRH (Gonadotropin Releasing Hormones) which are coordinated to trigger ovulation or menstruation. Irregular cycles usually result when these hormonal signals are deregulated.

Hormones can be deregulated by many factors:

- Stress: Stress is a common cause of irregular periods. Fatigue and anxiety can often cause fertility hormones to be unbalanced.
- Diet: Extreme weight loss or weight gain can also cause irregular menstrual cycles or periods by affecting hormone levels. Women with anorexia often have irregular menstrual cycles.
- Excessive exercise: Intense exercise is another cause of irregular menstrual cycles as it can cause hormonal imbalance.
- Menopause: Irregular menstrual cycles can be a signal that menopause is approaching.
- Hormonal birth control: When you stop using the contraceptive pill, your body needs time to readjust and it is quite common to experience irregular menstrual cycles for a few months.
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Some sexually transmitted diseases or STDs can also cause irregular menstrual cycles.

Other medical causes of irregular menstrual cycles

- Polycystic Ovary Syndrome: Polycystic ovary syndrome or PCOS is a condition affecting about 10% of all women. It is when cysts appear on the ovaries and interfere with regular ovulation.
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Inflammatory bowel disease is an inflammation of the lower intestines or bowel and is linked to irregular menstrual cycles.

Treating irregular menstrual cycles:

If you have been experiencing irregular menstrual cycles or irregular periods for a short time (6 months or less), it is likely that your cycles will adjust themselves. If you are experiencing irregular menstrual cycles due to a medical condition, treatment for the condition should help you to start ovulating regularly again. Certain hormonal supplements can help you in certain cases. Do not hesitate to ask your healthcare professional for more information if you are experiencing irregular menstrual cycles.

If you are experiencing irregular menstrual cycles, DuoFertility will help you to identify your fertile days with an extremely high level of accuracy as it also takes into account other ovulation signs or fertility clues which are important for the identification of your fertile days and increasing your chances of getting pregnant.
und that the caffeine intake of many women exceeded the recommended limits. So far, the effect of caffeine intake on infertility and other health problems is relatively unknown.