

## Reaching the Age of Adolescence

### Menstrual cycle

#### MENSTRUAL CYCLE

**1. Definition:** Menstrual cycle involves the series of cyclic changes occurring in the ovaries and female reproductive tract during the reproductive period of female.

**2. Introduction:** Reproductive period of female extends from puberty and is termed menarchae (i.e. 10- 14 years) to menopause (i.e. 45-55 years). During this period, every month a menstrual cycle occurs whose peculiar feature is 'period' - the vaginal bleeding (called menstruation) that lasts for about four days. Primary aim of menstrual cycle is to prepare the female for fertilization and pregnancy.

**3. Period:** On average a menstrual cycle is completed in 28 days (mensem means a month) though it may vary by 1 or 2 days.

**4. Phases:** During the menstrual cycle, the wall of the uterus passes through several phases, which are controlled by two hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. The first phase of the menstrual cycle usually lasts for about 4-6 days. During this period the lining of the uterus, is shed, accompanied by a loss of blood. This duration of the first phase is called a woman's period. This phase is called the menstrual phase or menstruation.

