



Hormonal Cycle Tracking Tool for PDA Girls

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Many PDA girls and women notice that their demand tolerance, regulation capacity, and meltdown threshold change across their menstrual cycle. Tracking this is a practical tool for proactive support planning — not a prediction of behaviour, but a way of understanding patterns.

How to use this tool:

How to use this tool: Track across at least two to three cycles before drawing conclusions. You're looking for patterns, not certainties. This is for the girl or woman herself — or for a parent supporting her with her permission.

Why the Cycle Affects PDA Regulation

Fluctuating oestrogen and progesterone levels across the cycle directly affect neurological regulation. Many autistic and PDA women are more sensitive to these hormonal shifts than the general population — experiencing greater anxiety, lower demand tolerance, heightened sensory sensitivity, and reduced emotional regulation at particular cycle phases.

Typical Cycle Phase Pattern

- Follicular phase (Days 1–13): Oestrogen rising — often better regulation, higher demand tolerance
- Ovulation (around Day 14): Peak oestrogen — often peak regulation capacity
- Luteal phase (Days 15–28): Progesterone dominant — regulation often more challenging, demand tolerance lower
- Pre-menstrual days (Days 25–28): Both hormones drop — often most difficult phase for PDA nervous systems
- Menstruation (Days 1–5): Hormones lowest — often high dysregulation, pain, sensory sensitivity

This is a general pattern — individual variation is significant. Some PDA girls find ovulation more difficult; others find the early luteal phase challenging. Tracking reveals the individual pattern.

What to Track — Simple Daily Log

Section 1: Basic Cycle Information

Date: _____ Cycle Day: _____ Approximate Phase: _____

Section 2: Regulation

Overall regulation today (circle): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (1 = very dysregulated; 10 = well regulated)

Section 3: Demand Tolerance

Demand tolerance today (circle): Very low / Low / Moderate / High Things felt more demanding than usual today:

Yes No Not sure



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Section 4: Physical Symptoms

- Pain level: ___ /10
- Fatigue: Low / Moderate / High
- Nausea or stomach upset: Yes / No
- Headache: Yes / No
- Sleep quality last night: Poor / Okay / Good

Section 5: Sensory Sensitivity

Sensory sensitivity today: Higher than usual / Usual / Lower than usual Most notable sensory difficulty today:

Section 6: Notes

Anything else to note (specific triggers, anything that helped, significant events): _____

Using the Pattern for Support Planning

Once a pattern emerges across two or three cycles, it becomes possible to plan proactively:

- Reduce scheduled demands in high-difficulty cycle phases where possible
- Flag to school if exam periods or major events fall in high-difficulty phases
- Increase recovery time and reduce after-school activities in luteal/pre-menstrual phase
- Plan medical or dental appointments for follicular or early luteal phase
- Don't schedule difficult conversations, new routines, or changes in pre-menstrual phase

Menstrual Pain and PDA Girls

Menstrual pain (dysmenorrhoea) is common in the general population but may be experienced more intensely by PDA girls due to heightened pain sensitivity. If period pain is significantly affecting school attendance or daily functioning, discuss this with a GP — it is treatable, and the impact on a PDA nervous system is real.

Helpful Tip

This tool is designed to be low-demand and optional. If completing it feels like too much, it's okay to skip days. Some data is more useful than none. Visit pdaaustralia.com.au/girls for more resources.