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Dr Sabrina Kitaka, a pediatrician at Mulago hospital, says parents need to be mindful of their child's development process right from pregnancy. Below are some ways to boost a child's intelligence:

**Start before birth**  
According to Kitaka, babies get 70 per cent of their knowledge from their moth-

ers. She notes that this mostly happens during pregnancy. She advises mothers to avoid stress, alcohol and drugs during pregnancy. Instead, eat nutritious foods that boost brain development and activity.

**Feed them well**  
Dr Richard Asaba of Holima Regional Referral Hospital, says



a well balanced diet will support the development of the child's body and brain.

**Talk to them**  
According to Dr Kitaka, parents should talk to their babies, whether born or unborn. This will boost language processing skills and vocabulary.

**Music**  
Dr Kitaka says music has rhythm, pitch and tone. Through listening to and joining in with simple songs, babies and toddlers learn important auditory skills. She also adds that songs develop memory and cognitive skills.

**Play with your child**  
Dr Asaba advises buying your child toys that will challenge them to think act and think smarter.

ADVICE. SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE ON PAIN KILLERS

# Exercises that ease menstrual cramps

If 'that time of the month' causes you pain every time the cycle rolls around, you will be happy to learn that a few simple exercises can ease your discomfort.

BY ESTHER BRIDGET NAKALYA  
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Susan Kutasakwe got her first period when she was 11 years old. From the beginning, her periods became a source of dread for her. "I was out of school a couple of days every month because the pain was so bad," says. "The school nurse would give me tablets for the pain, until I was finally put on injections that helped for a while.

While at university, Kelly found something that worked even better, exercise. "I joined the aerobics class in a nearby gym, and I found that the pain was reducing," she says. "After sometime, I didn't need the injections anymore."

According to Dr Peter Sekweyema, a gynecologist at Nsambya Hospital, menstrual cramps (dysmenorrhea) are throbbing or cramping pains in the lower abdomen. Many women experience menstrual cramps just before and during their menstrual periods.

"The pain may come constantly, or on and off," says Dr Sekweyema.

He recommends the following exercises;

**1. Cross your legs and breath**

Crossing your legs over each other and breathing deeply can help you relieve tension. Martha Busingye, a businesswoman, says this has worked for her.

"After getting a new job in a business firm, I was required to sit at a desk and

**PAIN KILLERS OR NOT?**

Pain killers can help reduce the abdominal pain during menstrual periods depending on which type of pain. The pain may be primary or secondary caused by say fibroids, which would then be caused by the cervix's struggle to open so blood can flow freely. The form or pain should determine which pain killers to use.

Dr Peter Sekweyema says if the drugs have a high ceiling effect and the body cannot respond to them any more, opt for herbs, a hot water bottle or Chinese acupuncture massage technique to reduce abdominal pains.

If you have occasionally been dreading the thought of experiencing your next periods due to the horrible abdominal pains that always mess up your days, you ought to try out the above recommendations and you won't be disappointed.



this is the only exercise I could afford to do and it helped," she says.

**2. Walking**

Hassan Khalil, a fitness instructor, recommends walking because it aids your body's blood flow which reduces pain.

Dr Sekweyema notes that more often, pains are a result of clotting or too much cholesterol in your system which distorts and disrupts oxygen circulation in your body. Such can be a cause for more pain, hence the need for exercise.

**3. Rope skipping and sit ups**

Sumaia Katembe, 25, a student at Makerere University Business School, found solace in rope skipping. She says it works especially before the period starts.

"I also do sit ups for about five minutes. The more I do this, the more relief I get for the rest of the day," Katembe says.

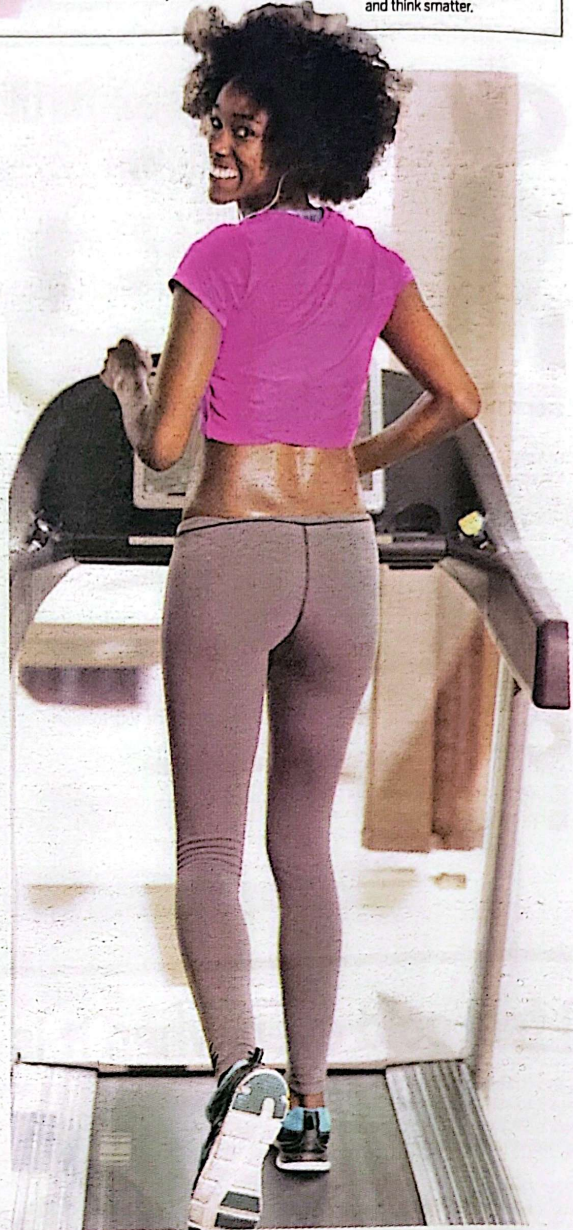
**4. Swimming**

Dr Abaho says swimming is a low-impact exercise that does not place extra strain on your body. It elevates your heart rate and causes you to release endorphins, which are feel-good chemicals that can help relieve pain and muscle aches. If the water is warm, the temperature also can help soothe tense muscles.

Even if you do not swim, you can walk in the shallow end of a pool.

**5. Jogging**

Sweating helps with the bloating that normally comes with period pain. It also reduces the pain of cramps and can actually help to lessen the discomfort. Hit the road or the treadmill; just let



SIMPLE GUIDES

Work out

**Bridges**  
It is done while the person is lying down on his or her back, with knees bent and arms flat on the ground at the sides.

**Climbing the stairs**  
The stairs do not have to be any different. You just need to make numerous small steps.

**Ridding a bicycle**  
If you can ride around the block...