

girls only

Selected for
hundrED
2023
Global Collection



A MUST-READ PERIOD AND PUBERTY GUIDE FOR EVERY YOUNG GIRL

BROUGHT
TO YOU BY:
**pad
her**

THIS GUIDE IS

FREE



The Team

PadHer is a women-led non-profit organization based in Lagos, Nigeria, and Nairobi, Kenya. Our organization educates young African schoolgirls from underserved communities on periods and puberty via the use of comic books so that they can effectively manage their periods and build the self-confidence they need to take control of the future and succeed.

We are ending period stigma, one comic at a time!



**Chika
Nwaogu**
Founder /
Executive
Director

**Thelma
Ahamba**
Director of
Operations and
Partnerships

**Elvinah
Nyambaso**
Regional
Director
(East Africa)

**Deborah
Henshaw**
Regional
Director
(West Africa)

**Camilla
Jussab**
Regional
Director
(Central Africa)

**Kelebohile
Dalaseni**
Regional
Director
(Southern
Africa)

**Karen
Ashraf**
Regional
Director
(North Africa)

**Serah
Wambui**
Country
Manager
(Kenya)

Menstruation is a natural and healthy part of life. Approximately half of the female population is of reproductive age, accounting for around 26% of the global population. Every month, most girls have their period for three to seven days. Menstruation, as common as it is, is still stigmatized over the world.

Lack of knowledge about menstruation can lead to harmful beliefs and discrimination. It can also prevent girls from participating in regular childhood activities. Young girls are denied the opportunity to learn about menstruation and develop healthy behaviors due to stigma, taboos, and myths.

Girls Only was created to make it **free, fun, easy, and comfortable** teaching young school girls such as yourself about periods and puberty.

Periods are normal. Every girl gets them at some point in life, so it is nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. So always remember...It's normal, Period!™

Donate.

HELP US REACH MORE YOUNG SCHOOLGIRLS IN
UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES BY DONATING TODAY.
VISIT: [PADHER.ORG/DONATE](https://padher.org/donate)

Credits

EDITORS: WANJIRU KINUTHIA, BRENDA JEBET ROTICH | ILLUSTRATOR: CHIKA NWAOGU
GYNAECOLOGIST, MEDICAL CONSULTANT: DR. JACKSON KINYUA MWANGI
AUTHOR, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, AND PRODUCTION MANAGER: CHIKA NWAOGU
PROJECT AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATE: SHEILA OMONDI



meet the characters



AMANDA

AMANDA IS THE MAIN CHARACTER OF THIS COMIC SERIES. SHE IS 12 YEARS OLD, AND SHE JUST GOT HER FIRST PERIOD. AMANDA'S FAVORITE SUBJECTS ARE MATH AND SCIENCE. AMANDA WANTS TO BE AN ENGINEER.



JOSHUA

JOSHUA IS AMANDA'S YOUNGER BROTHER. HE IS 10 YEARS OLD AND LOVES TO DANCE. JOSHUA'S FAVORITE SUBJECT IS ENGLISH, AND HE LOVES TO BE A WRITER WHEN HE GROWS UP.

JOSHUA IS INCLUDED IN "GIRLS ONLY" BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT BOYS SHOULD LEARN ABOUT PERIODS TOO. JOSHUA ASKS COMMON QUESTIONS BOYS ASK ABOUT PERIODS.



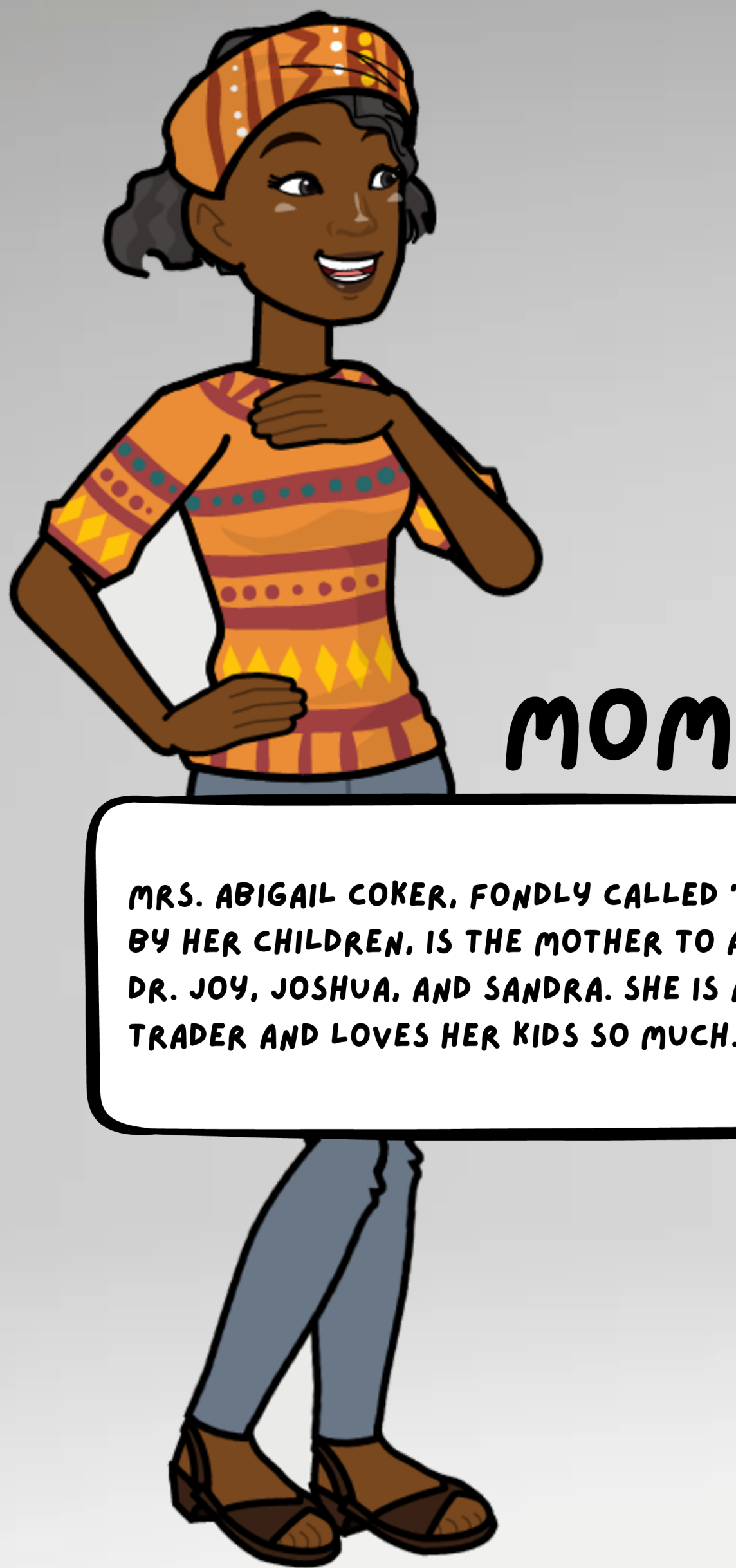
SANDRA

SANDRA IS 8 YEARS OLD AND LOVES TO SING. HER FAVORITE SUBJECT IS COMPUTER SCIENCE, AND SHE WILL LOVE TO BE A COMPUTER PROGRAMMER WHEN SHE IS OLDER.

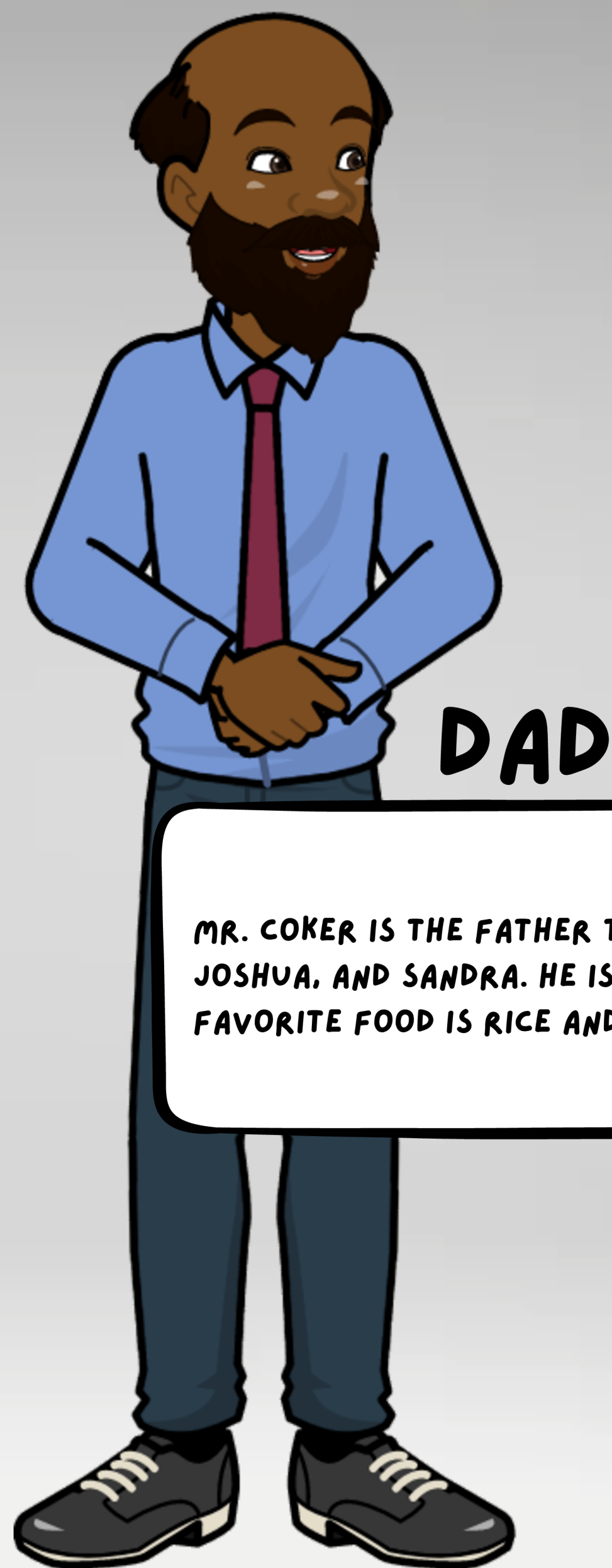


DR. JOY

DR. JOY IS AMANDA'S OLDER SISTER, AND SHE IS A MEDICAL DOCTOR. SHE IS 28 YEARS OLD AND LOVES TO TEACH AMANDA AND HER SIBLINGS ABOUT PERIODS AND PUBERTY.



MRS. ABIGAIL COKER, FONDLY CALLED "MOM" BY HER CHILDREN, IS THE MOTHER TO AMANDA, DR. JOY, JOSHUA, AND SANDRA. SHE IS A PETTY TRADER AND LOVES HER KIDS SO MUCH.



MR. COKER IS THE FATHER TO AMANDA, DR. JOY, JOSHUA, AND SANDRA. HE IS A BANKER. HIS FAVORITE FOOD IS RICE AND CHICKEN STEW.

"GIRLS ONLY" HELPED ME UNDERSTAND PERIODS BETTER.
— Beryl (10 years old, Nairobi)



Copyright ©2021 Africa54, All right reserved.

This comic book is a work of fiction that may be based on some personal experiences.

DISCLAIMER: The content in this comic book is offered solely for educational purposes and should not be regarded as a substitute for professional medical advice.

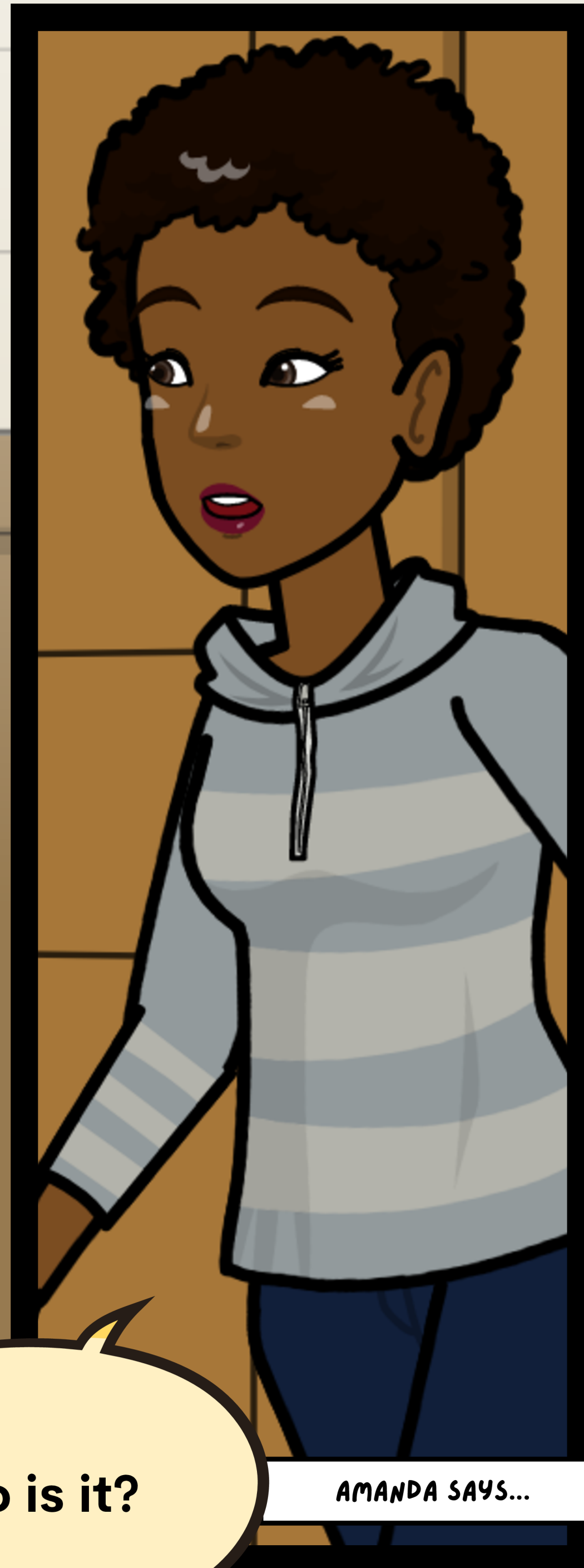
No part of this comic book may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted by any means, be it auditory, graphic, mechanical, or electronic, without the written permission of Africa54, except in the case of brief excerpts used in reviews and critical articles. Unauthorized reproduction of any part of this comic book is illegal and is punishable by law.

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SUNDAY MORNING...



AMANDA'S OLDER SISTER DR. JOY CAME VISITING...

Knock



Who is it?

AMANDA SAYS...



Amanda! It's
your Big Sis!



I'm coming!

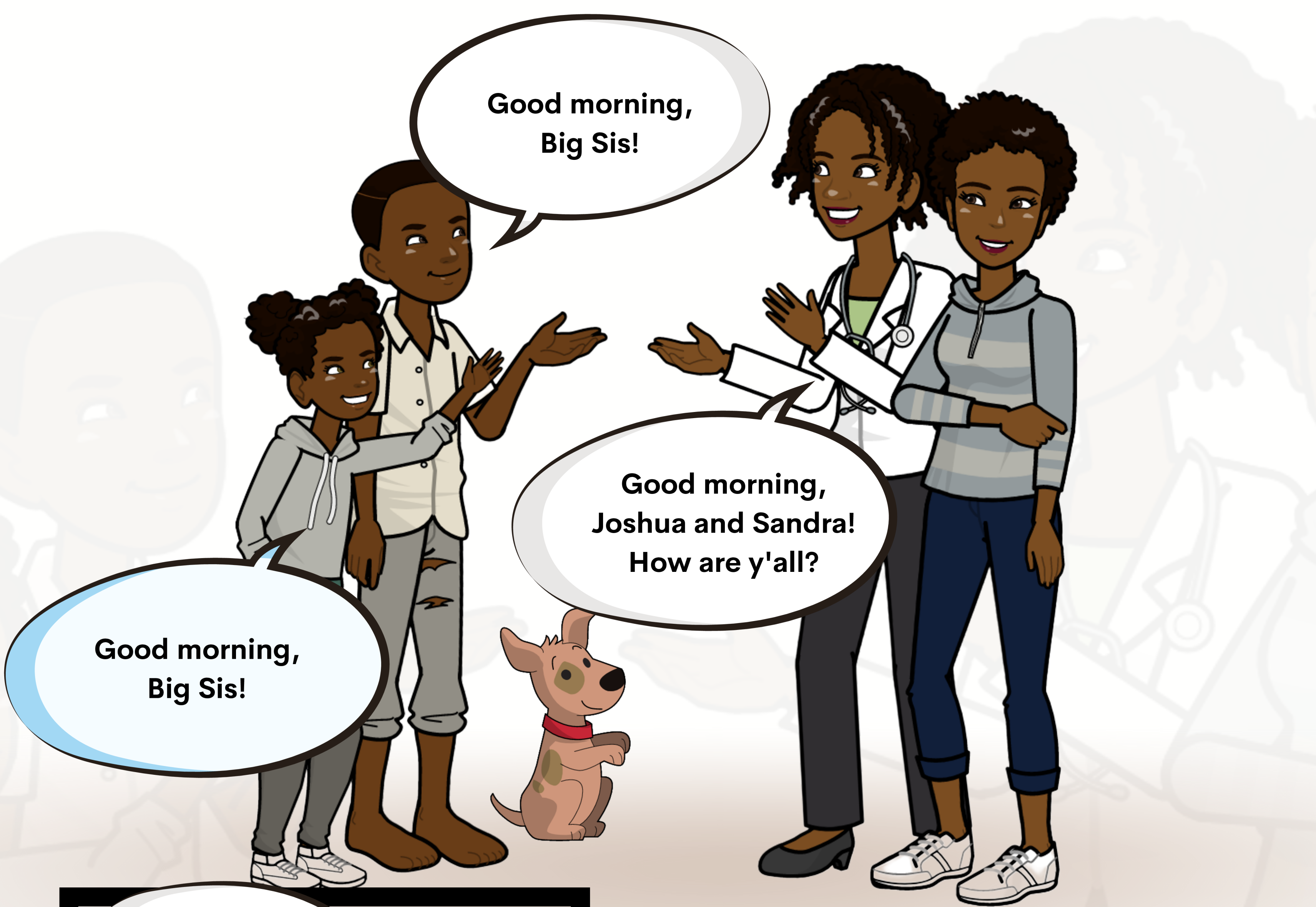
AMANDA REPLIES...



Good morning,
Big Sis!

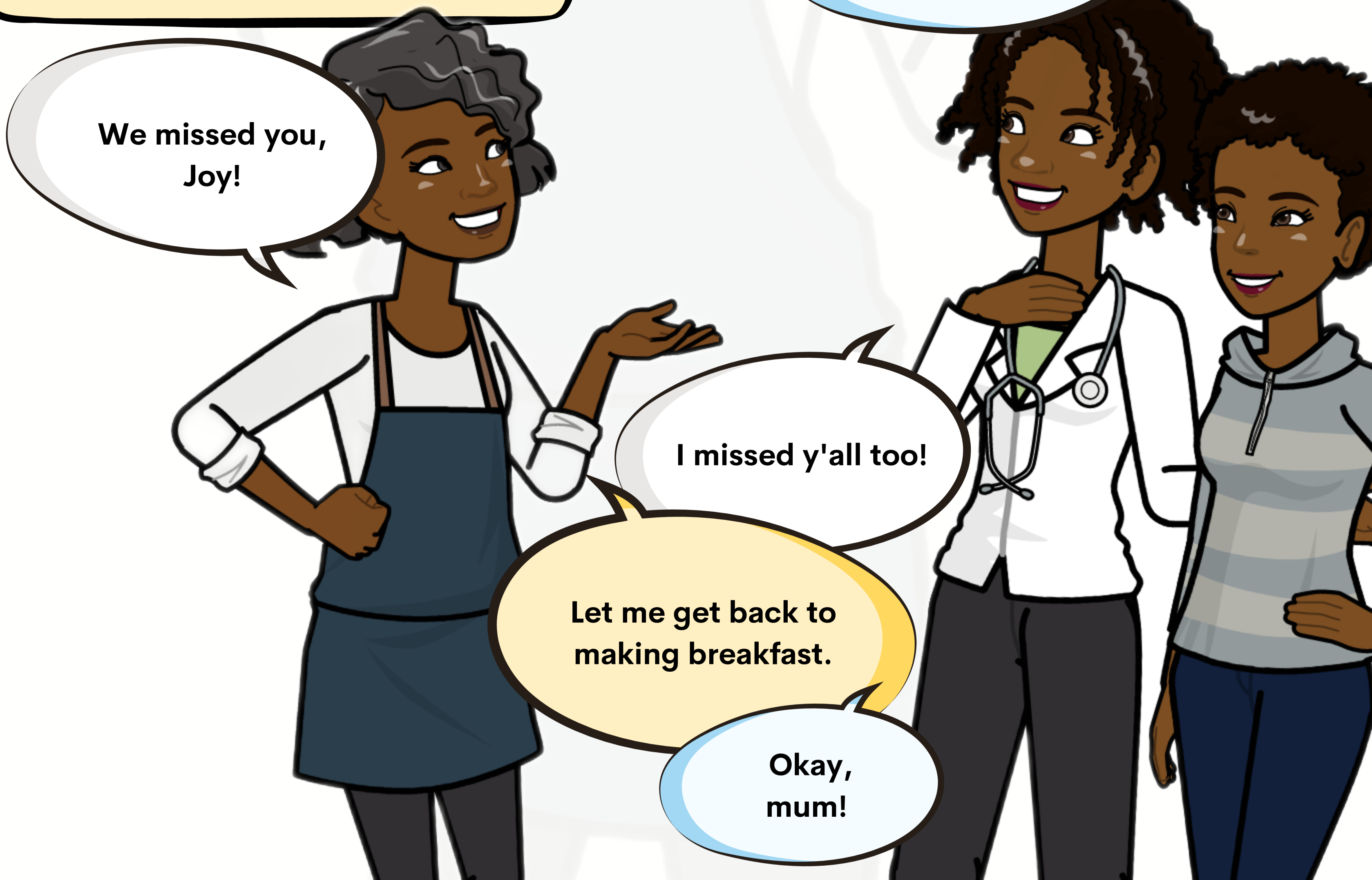
Good morning,
Amanda! How are
you?

I'm fine, Big Sis!



AMANDA'S MUM SAYS...





DEBUNKING PERIOD MYTHS

Big Sis! I will like to ask you some questions.

Oh sure, Amanda, I would love to answer all your questions. What are they?


Is it true that you cannot get pregnant during your period?

That is not true, Amanda. That is a myth! Who told you that?

Some girls at school were saying it, and I overheard them.

Contrary to popular belief, this is not true. Yes, you cannot ovulate while on your period, but because sperm can remain in the body for up to 3 days following sex, pregnancy can occur from intercourse that occurs during your period. If you do not want to get pregnant, do not have sex.

DR. JOY EXPLAINS...



Thank you, Big Sis!
I still have more
questions to ask!

Pls ask, I will love to
answer all of them.

Okay! To my second
question.
Is *menstrual blood*
different from regular
blood?

This myth is likely to have become
popular because menstrual blood
flows from the vagina, but be rest
assured that menstrual blood is the
same as regular blood. Menstrual
blood is neither unusual nor
abnormal. That is a fact!

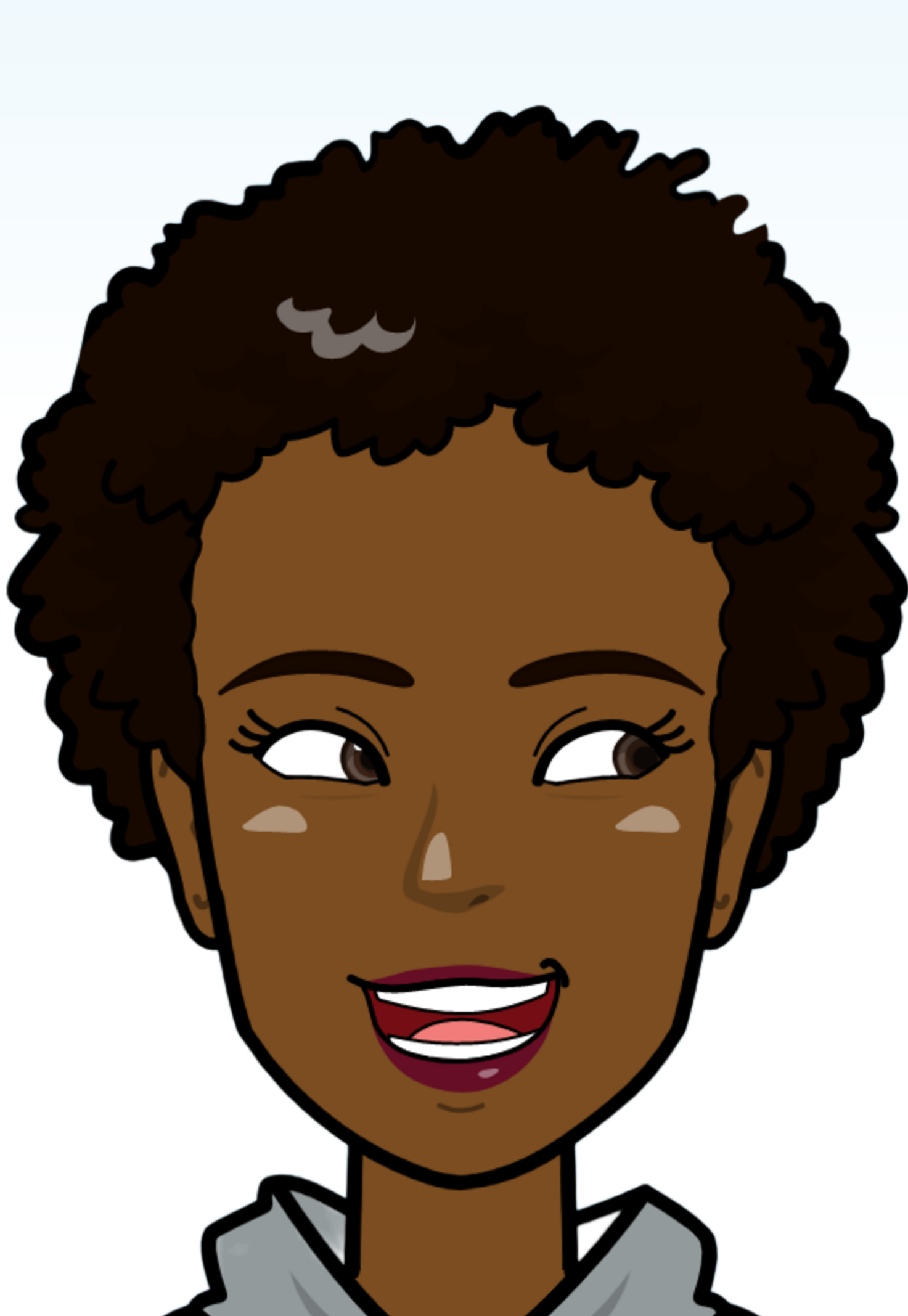
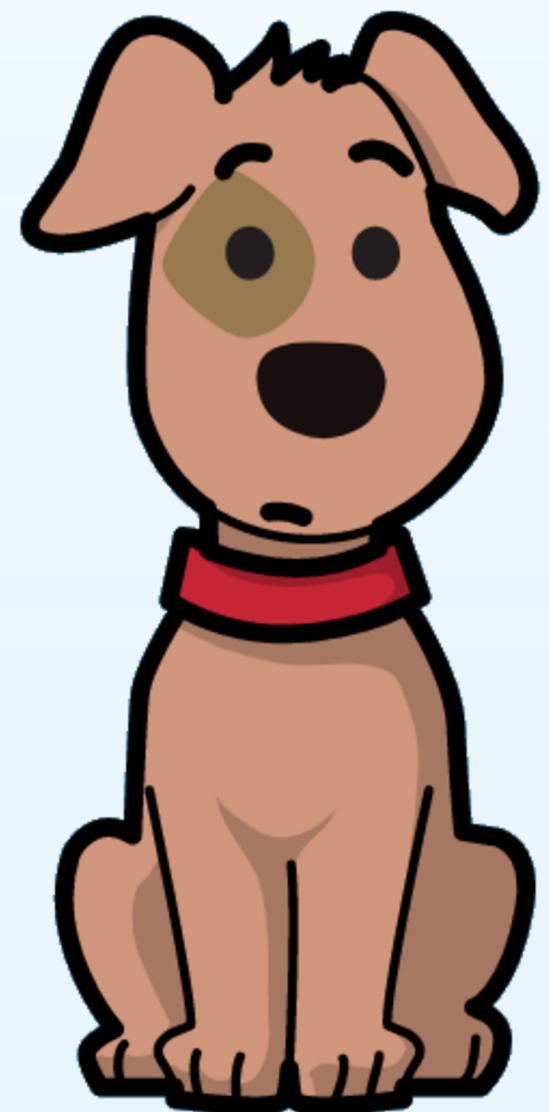
Now I know!

DR. JOY: Keep the questions coming Amanda!

AMANDA: Hahaha!
Okay, Big Sis!

AMANDA: So, can one shorten or delay a period?

DR. JOY: This is not correct. You cannot and should not attempt to stop your body's natural menstrual cycle. It could result in health issues.





I love the questions you are asking and I am impressed that you really want to know about your body

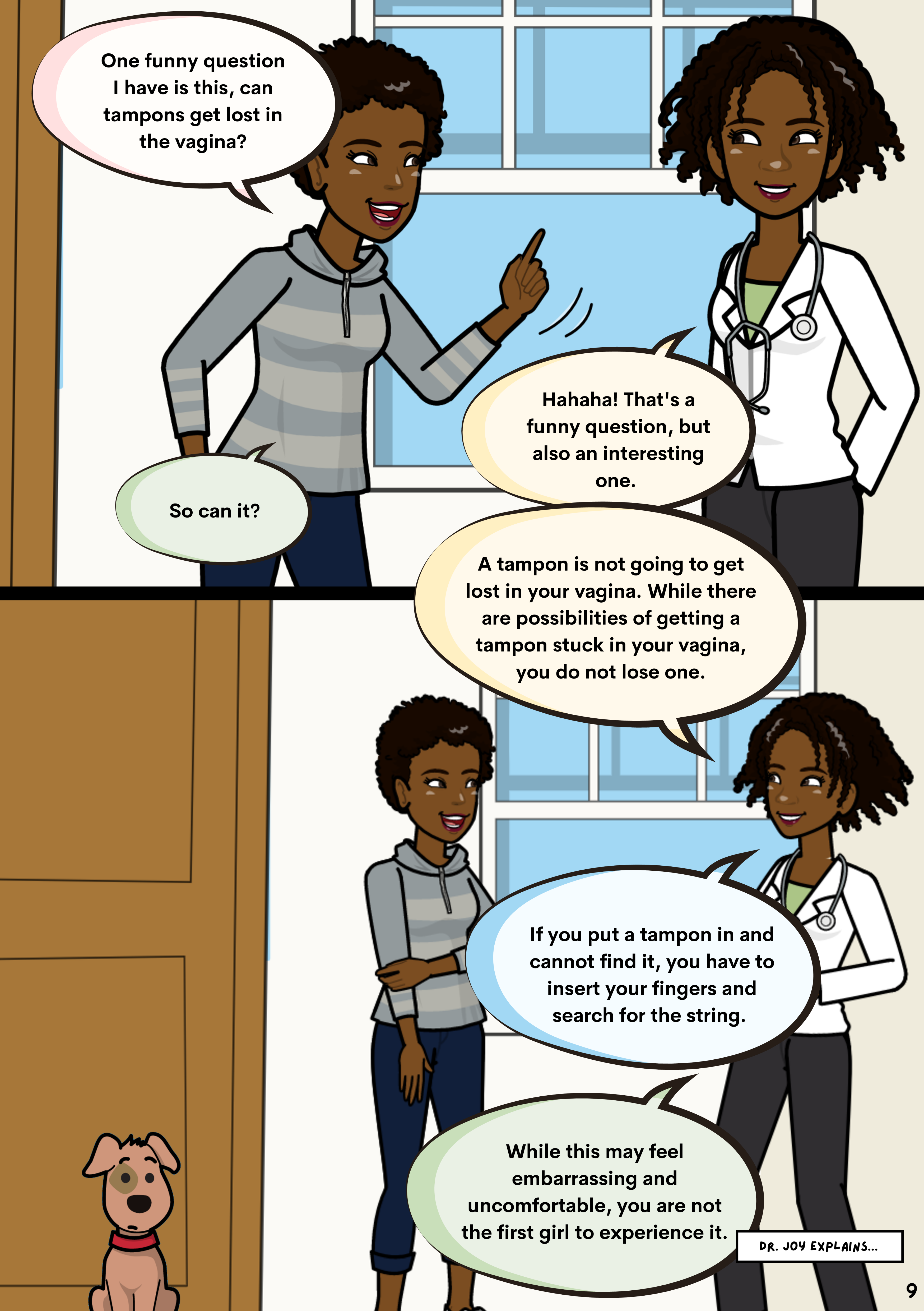
Thank you, Big Sis!

That brings me to my next question. Why does period blood have a bad smell?

I know it is difficult to believe that the idea of period blood smelling bad is a myth. Period blood does not have an odor!

When it is combined with naturally occurring bacteria in your body, it can smell a little pungent

VAGINAS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO SMELL LIKE A BED OF FLOWERS, BUT MAKE SURE YOU KEEP YOURSELF CLEAN.



One funny question I have is this, can tampons get lost in the vagina?

So can it?

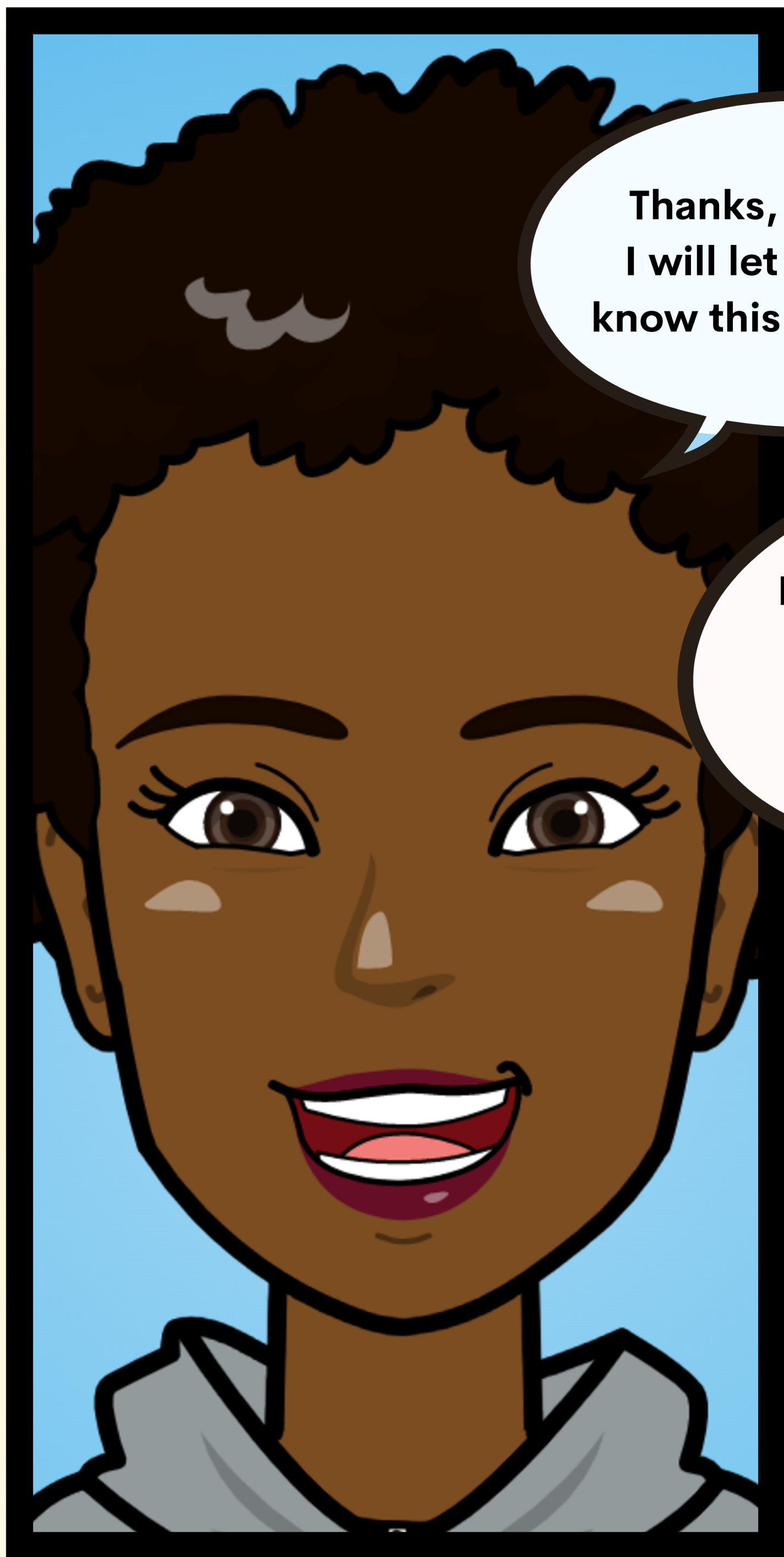
Hahaha! That's a funny question, but also an interesting one.

A tampon is not going to get lost in your vagina. While there are possibilities of getting a tampon stuck in your vagina, you do not lose one.

If you put a tampon in and cannot find it, you have to insert your fingers and search for the string.

While this may feel embarrassing and uncomfortable, you are not the first girl to experience it.

DR. JOY EXPLAINS...



Thanks, Big Sis!
I will let the girls
know this in school.

Now to my next question,
if a girl misses her period,
does this mean she is
pregnant?

You see, Amanda, a girl
missing her period isn't
always due to pregnancy.



Missing your period could also be
due to a variety of factors other than
pregnancy, such as high stress,
body weight fluctuations, or
medication.

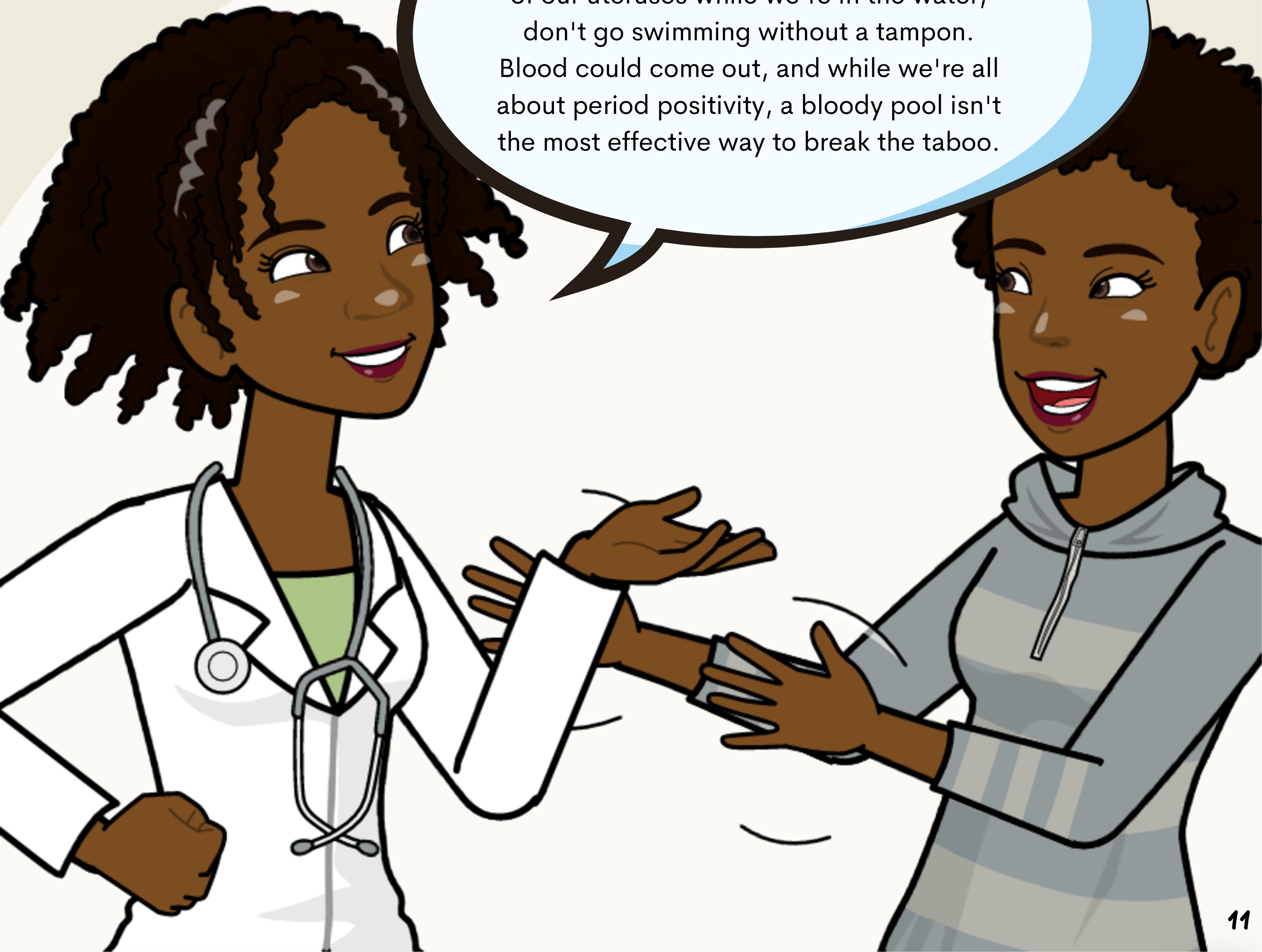
DEBUNKING PERIOD MYTHS

AMANDA: Big Sis, I have a few more questions for you! Is it true that spicy or sour foods worsen menstruation cramps?

DR. JOY: Menstrual cramps have nothing to do with eating sour foods. For some people, spicy food causes heartburn or stomach upset, but it does not worsen menstrual cramps.

AMANDA: Okay! Is it also true that periods stop when you get in the water?

DR. JOY: Even though gravity helps our vaginas by not pulling menstrual blood out of our uteruses while we're in the water, don't go swimming without a tampon. Blood could come out, and while we're all about period positivity, a bloody pool isn't the most effective way to break the taboo.

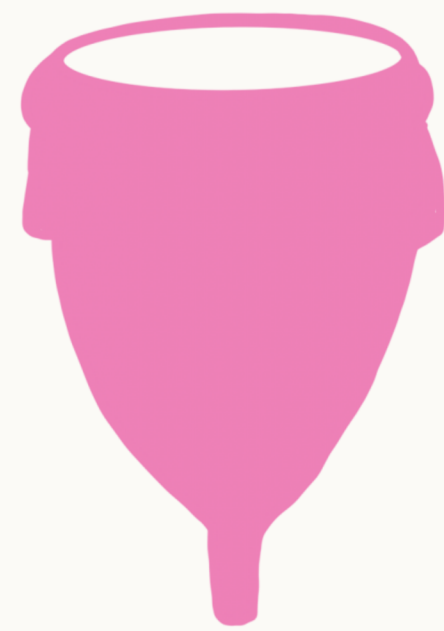


AMANDA: What about period pain, does exercising make it worse?

DR. JOY: No, Amanda, exercise relieves menstrual pain, improves mood by releasing serotonin, and reduces the bloating that many girls experience before their periods.

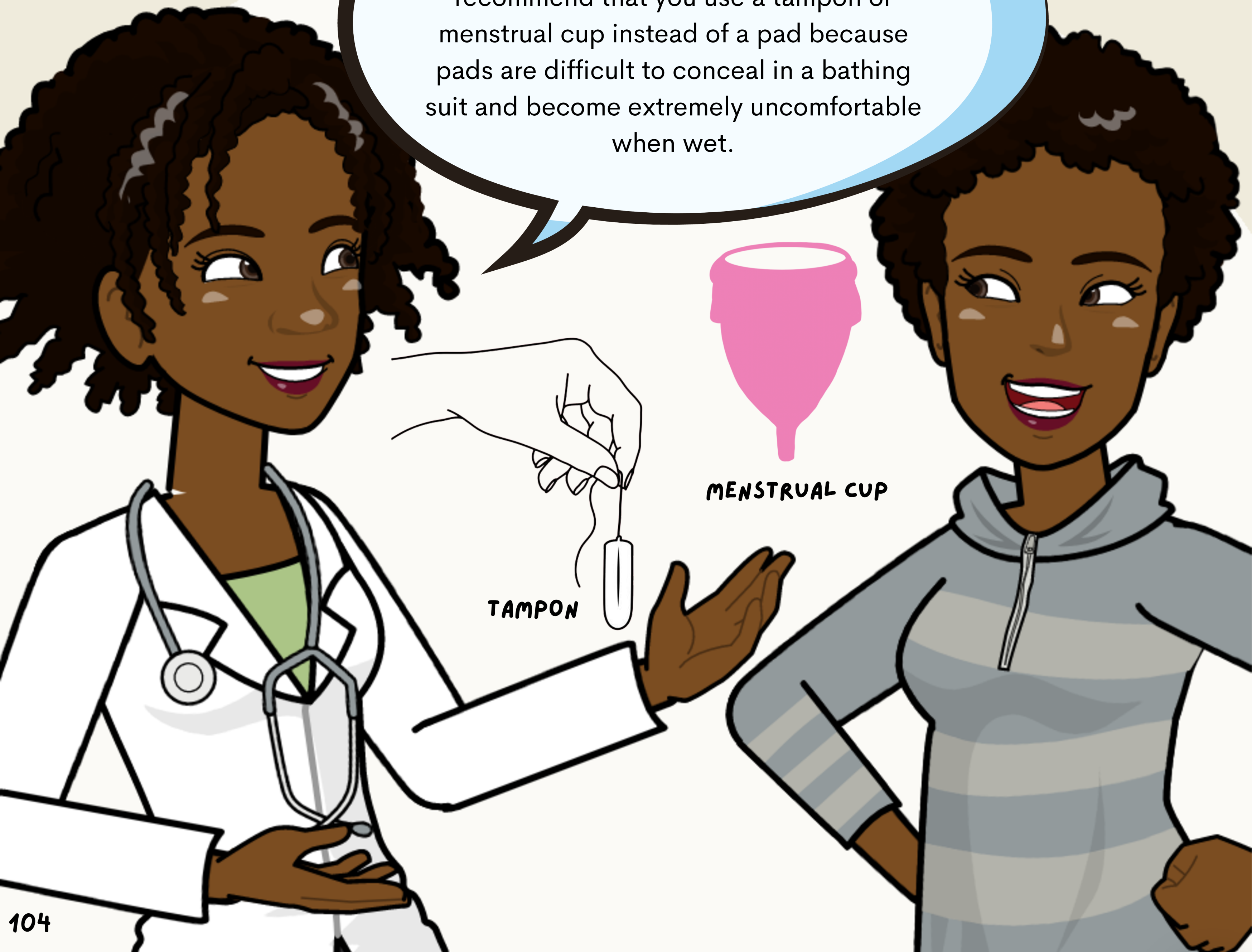
AMANDA: Also, is it okay for me to go swimming when I'm on my period?

DR. JOY: There is no reason why you should be unable to swim. However, we recommend that you use a tampon or menstrual cup instead of a pad because pads are difficult to conceal in a bathing suit and become extremely uncomfortable when wet.



MENSTRUAL CUP

TAMPON



DEBUNKING PERIOD MYTHS

I'm eagerly looking forward to going to school and sharing all of this information with my friends.

I'm delighted, Amanda, that learning about your body is something that interests you.

Thanks, Big Sis! My next question is whether virgins should use tampons.

Many people believe that a virgin cannot use tampons, or if a virgin does use a tampon she's no longer a virgin. The fact is using a tampon is not related to virginity at all. A virgin is someone who has not had sexual intercourse therefore, it is not related to tampon use. The hymen of a woman could break even with sports or other activities.






Thanks, Big Sis! More questions are coming!

HAHA!

Yes, please keep them coming!

Okay! Do you need to see a doctor when you get your first period?


You don't need to see a doctor unless there is a serious problem, such as severe bleeding or pain. Be sure to have a chat with a parent or trusted friend who can fill you in on personal hygiene, products to use, and how to take care of yourself while you are on your period.



Interesting! Is bed rest
a must during your
period?

Yes, you should get plenty of rest
during your period, but you should
also get plenty of exercises. You
will feel better if you get up and
move around, especially since
exercise has been shown to relieve
cramps and improve mood.

However, I've heard that
you should get plenty of
rest because you'll be
losing a lot of blood.



This is not true. During periods, you only lose a small amount of blood. During your period, you typically lose two tablespoons of blood. Losing two to six tablespoons of blood during your period is considered normal by doctors.

Oh! Okay. Is it okay to use tampons for vaginal discharge?



When you use a tampon in a dry vagina, you risk developing Toxic Shock Syndrome, a rare but life-threatening infection.



This is because, even when there is discharge, your vagina is much dryer than when you have your period. Instead of tampons, use an organic pantyliner to avoid the possibility of this happening.

OH!

That reminds me, are menstrual cycles always 28 days?

That is simply an average. The days of the menstrual cycle differ from one girl to the next. Your body will tell you when your cycle begins and ends.


MENSTRUAL CYCLES CAN BE AS SHORT AS 21 DAYS FOR SOME GIRLS AND AS LONG AS 35 DAYS FOR OTHERS. EVERY GIRL IS DIFFERENT.



Does hot water
increase period flow?

Your own body is the only thing that
can alter your flow. As a result, you
can't make it lighter or heavier.
Cramps can be relieved by taking a
warm bath or shower or by placing a
hot water bottle wrapped in a towel
on your belly.

Is it possible to hold
one's period?



**Ask
Dr. Joy**

Hi, I am Dr. Joy, and I am here to answer all your
questions on periods and puberty. Have a question?


visit: padher.org/askdrjoy



No, Amanda, it is not possible. While you can hold your urine in, you cannot do the same with your period blood because it comes from the vaginal area, which lacks sphincters to help keep the blood in.

Some boys at school claim that PMS is a figment of the imagination and all in our heads.

PMS is not a myth. The pain is real, so is the PMS. Your hormones are constantly changing throughout your menstrual cycle. Estrogen and progesterone levels fluctuate, causing cramping, irritability, and other unpleasant symptoms in the body and the brain. Every girl suffers from at least one PMS symptom every month, and you can not argue with a known fact.



This brings me to my final question. Is it wrong to bathe or wash your hair during menstruation?

This myth has been around for a long time. Bathing was thought to either increase or decrease menstrual flow. There is, however, nothing like that. Maintaining hygiene is the most important thing while having your periods, so you should bathe more to feel fresh and clean.

I have learned so much today. Thank you, Big Sis!

You're welcome, Amanda!



Breakfast is ready!



YEAH!

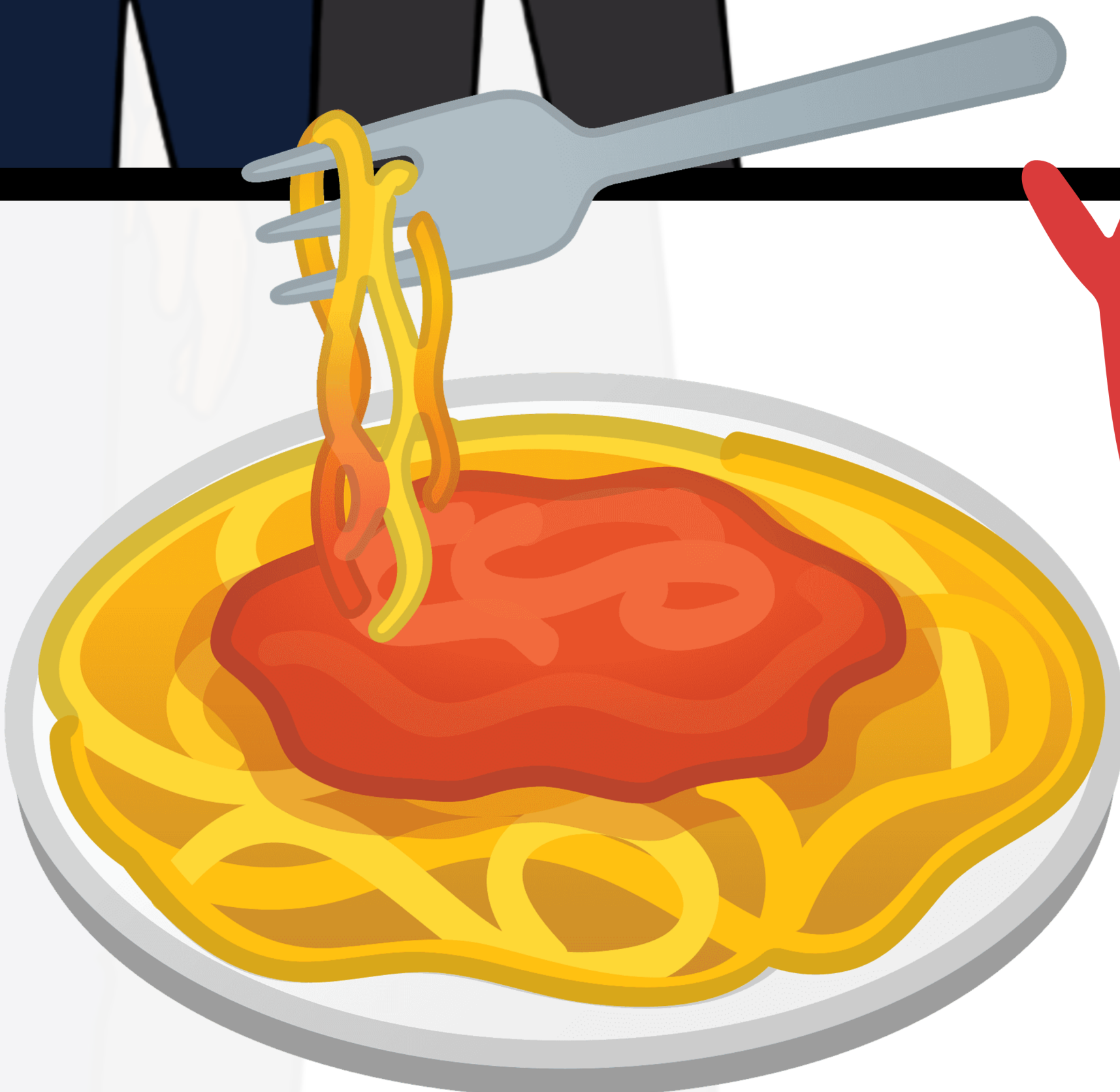
JOSHUA AND SANDRA
ARE VERY EXCITED!

Finally! I'm
really hungry!

What are we
having for
breakfast, Mum?

Your favorite,
Pasta!

Yummy!

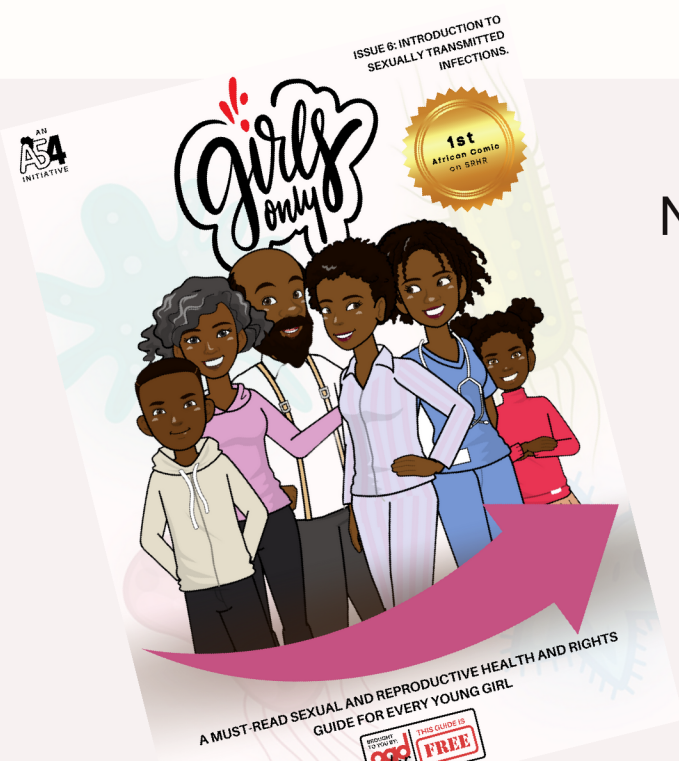




HAHA!



 **ON THE
NEXT
ISSUE!**



Next month, Girls Only will return with an all-exciting new issue titled **Introduction to Sexually Transmitted Infections.**

In the upcoming issue, Dr. Joy teaches Amanda about sexually transmitted infections, the risk factors, and how to prevent them. To download this issue for free and/or newer issues, please visit

padher.org/download



WHAT MAKES GIRLS ONLY GREAT?

- Well-researched
- Designed for Boys Too!
- Medically accurate contents
- Based on real-life experiences
- Fun for school girls
- Comfortable for Parents and Teachers

**...I DEEPLY APPRECIATE PADHER'S WORK TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY
AND EQUITY FOR GIRLS...**

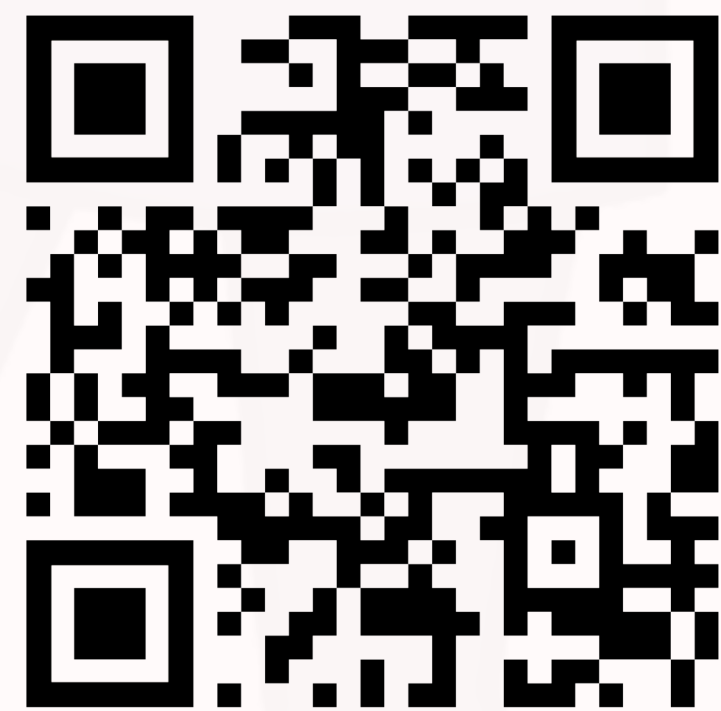
— Meghan Hammond, Project Manager, HundrED



**Want to help your
daughter manage her
period?**

Visit
padher.org/for/parent
for a comprehensive
parent guide

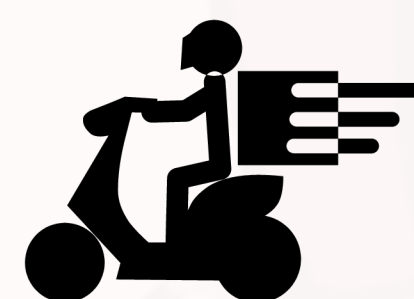
OR



BROUGHT
TO YOU BY:



Age: 8 yrs and above
Price: FREE



Order our comic
books today via
padher.com/shop

