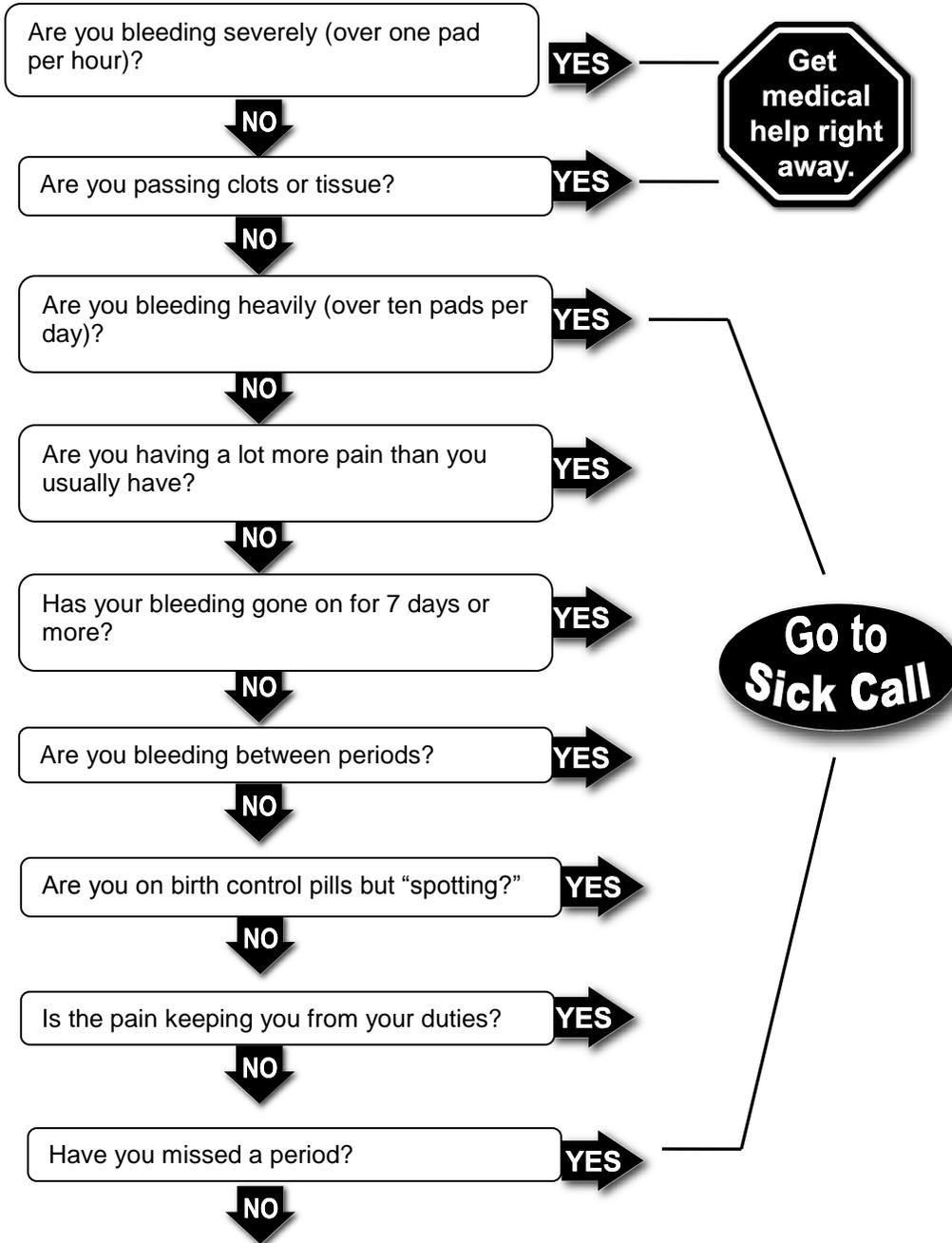


These instructions are to be used as part of the Self-care Program. The following diagram can help you decide if your ailment is minor enough to be treated with Self-care measures without seeing a healthcare provider. This information is not for clinical use.

1. Start at the top of the diagram.
2. Answer each symptom evaluation question in order by following the appropriate YES or NO arrow.
3. If you answer NO to all questions it is probably appropriate for you to use self-care measures.
4. You are the best judge of your own health. If you are having trouble performing your duties or have a symptom that is not listed, see a healthcare provider.

## Self-care Instructions for Menstrual Symptoms

As a woman, you know there are symptoms that normally go along with your period. Most come and go on a monthly basis and are not a cause for concern. However, there may be times when the pain or bleeding are out of the ordinary. If you have concerns about your period, use this symptom evaluation chart.



## Menstrual Symptoms – continued

Use self-care measures:

**Cramping** in your lower stomach and lower back is normal during your period.

- To help with cramps, use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen as directed.
- A heating pad or hot water bottle may relax your muscles and help the pain.
- A regular physical exercise program when you are not cramping may also help.
- You may consider using a hormonal birth control method to decrease menstrual symptoms such as heavy periods and/or cramping.

### **Premenstrual Syndrome**

A week or so before your period, you may get headaches, cramping, feel bloated or cranky, or have trouble sleeping. Here are some suggestions to smooth out those symptoms:

- Cut down on salt and salty foods.
- Cut down on drinks with caffeine.
- Use an over-the-counter pain reliever such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or acetaminophen as directed for headaches.
- Continue your regular exercise program.
- Eat healthy foods such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Get enough sleep.
- Find healthy ways to deal with stress.
- Avoid tobacco products.
- Consider using an oral contraceptive to help control symptoms.

If you have a problem with premenstrual syndrome or you feel severe and lasting symptoms of anxiety, panic, despair, suicidal thoughts, feeling out of control, or anger that affects other people, visit a health care provider.

**Go to sick call if you cannot perform your duties. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.**