Keeping track of your period is very helpful, whether you’re interested in general menstrual health or trying to avoid or achieve pregnancy. It can give you important insights into your body and alert you to when something is off.

There are various ways to track your menstrual cycle with the help of technology, including cycle tracking apps (also known as period trackers or fertility tracking apps), but many options make this sensitive information available to companies, data brokers and governments.

In this Data Detox guide, you’ll explore ways to track your cycle and how to do it as safely as possible.

Let’s cycle through this together!

1. WHAT TO DO YOU WANT?
   Now let’s figure out which of the many online and offline tracking options might work best for you. Read through the questions and tick them off once you’ve answered them for yourself:

   - How private is the tracking option you are using?
   - Depending on your situation and where you live, is safety a concern for you?
   - Are you trying to prevent or achieve pregnancy?
   - Are you taking hormones and want to track their impact on your cycle?
   - Do you prefer a gender-neutral tracking option?
   - Why are you tracking your cycle?
   - Are you trying to find out specific things about your cycle and, if so, what?
   - What indicators do you want to track?
   - When and how are you most likely to enter your tracking information?
2. METHODS TO TRACK YOUR CYCLE

*Explore the resources by scanning the QR code!

Your tracking data can be shared with many different actors, so figuring out how to track it in a safer way is important. Let’s go through some tracking options together:

Do you want to track offline?

There are printable period tracking charts and spreadsheets (annual, monthly, wheel chart, basal body temperature). You can print them or draw similar charts into a notebook.

Note: Keep your notebook or printouts in a private location!

Do you want to use an online document?

An online spreadsheet can be a good alternative to an app. It allows you to only track what you need and avoids your tracking data being in the hands of a company that you might not have the time to research.

Alternatively, take a look at the Menstrual Cycle Diary.

Do you want to use a cycle tracking app?

An app can be a particularly seamless option to track your cycle. Before you download an app, try to make sure your app follows these four criteria to make it a safer option:

- **Data storage:** data should be stored locally and encrypted.
- **The app should not share information** with third parties or law enforcement.
- It should be easy and **quick to delete your data** from the app.
- The app should **not track** your location or other unnecessary background information (camera, microphone, etc).

If you’re already using one, here are some tips:

- Think about what kinds of information you track and what it could be used for.
- If the app allows it, add a password.
- Some apps allow you to hide the icon or to switch off notifications to hide it from people looking at your phone.
- Find out how to delete your past data regularly, if you don’t rely on it.
- Disable the app’s access to other information on your phone (location, camera, microphone, etc).

3. CYCLING BACK

Finding the best tracking option is your choice, but remember data collection is something that affects everyone with a period, so you’re not alone in navigating this.

You can help others become aware about who wants to know their bodies, too. Next time you talk about menstruation with your friends, share what you’ve learned!