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1. The uterine epithelium receives more blood  
It increases in thickness

2. In the ovary, the Graafian follicle grows  
and matures.

3. On the 14th day, ovulation occurs; the  
Graafian follicle ruptures and the egg is  
released

In some women during ovulation  
slight bleeding occurs. Since this bleeding  
occurs in the middle of the menstrual  
cycle, it is called intermenstrual bleeding  
or Hartman's sign.

2) Secretory phase or Premenstrual phase  
(15th day to 28th day)

This phase lasts for 14 days from the  
15th day to 28th day. During secretory  
phase the following changes occur:

1) The uterine epithelium progressively  
increases in thickness. The uterus becomes  
highly vascular.

2) The uterine glands become elongated  
and much coiled. The glands secrete more  
and more mucous. The mucous is called

uterine milk. The uterine milk accumulates in the depression found in the uterus. It is nutritive in function and is utilized by the embryo later for its early stage of development.

3) The ruptured follicle is soon filled with blood. This blood filled ruptured follicle is called corpus haemorrhagicum. The follicle cells multiply rapidly and they are deposited with a yellow carotenoid substance. These yellow cells replace the clotted blood of corpus haemorrhagicum. The corpus haemorrhagicum is now yellow in colour and this yellow body is called corpus luteum. If pregnancy occurs, corpus luteum persists. If there is no pregnancy, it degenerates four days before menstruation. The degenerated corpus luteum is replaced by a connective tissue scar called corpus albicans. It has no functional significance.

3) Destructive phase or menses (1st day to the 5th day)

This phase lasts for 5 days. It occurs in the absence of pregnancy. This phase is characterised by menses or menstrual discharge. The discharge contains mucus, cellular debris and the blood shed from

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menstrual cycle

internal lining of the uterus:

The total loss of blood in normal women into the one menstrual period varies from 50 to 400 ml. This discharge often begins gradually diminishes. The average duration of the flow is four days, but it may continue for a week.

Menstrual bleeding occurs only on the failure of pregnancy. A physiologist aptly says that the uterus weeps due to disappointment and the weeping is swept out as the menstrual flow.

Another scientist describes menstruation as the funeral of the unfertilized ovum.