

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

The Choices

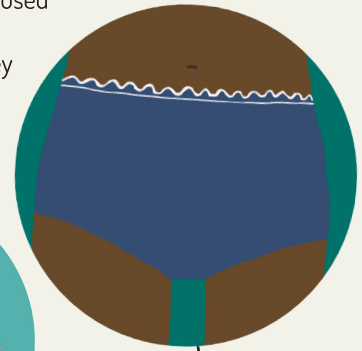
PADS + PANTS

These external products are easy to use but can't be worn whilst swimming.

These **pants** have a ultra-thin micro-layer lining which absorbs fluid. They replace panty liners, can be used in conjunction with tampons and menstrual cups. On their own they will hold up to 4 regular tampons worth of blood.



Pads are worn in underwear and changed every 3-6 hours. They are available in different thicknesses from panty liners to ultra-thick pads for different flows.



	DISPOSABLE PAD	ORGANIC DISPOSABLE PAD	REUSABLE PAD	PANTS
MATERIALS (see below for more information)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic Synthetic materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic cotton Bioplastics Wood pulp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cotton & synthetic fabrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthetic
EASY TO USE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HOW TO WEAR	Stick the adhesive strips to underwear	Stick the adhesive strips to underwear	The wings have poppers that fit around underwear	They replace underwear
THICKNESS/FLOW	Various thicknesses/ suitable for different flow	Various thicknesses/ suitable for different flow	Various thicknesses/ suitable for different flow	Hold between 1-4 regular tampons of blood
COSTS (guidance only)	23p-£3 depends on packet size and if branded	£2-£5 depending on pack size	£4-£6 or you can also make your own for a few pounds	£10-£25 Initial high cost but saves money over the years
HOW MANY TIMES CAN I WEAR IT?	Once	Once	100s, wash after every use	100s, wash after every use
WHERE TO BUY	Supermarkets, chemists, online shops, machine in public toilets	Chemists and online shops	Online shops, or make your own (instructions online)	Online shops
WHAT TO DO AFTER USE	Fold and dispose of in the bin. Never flush	Fold and dispose of in the bin or home compost. Never flush	Wash and reuse. Put in a wet bag if changed away from home	Wash and reuse. Put in a wet bag if changed away from home

PLASTIC & SYNTHETIC MATERIALS & FABRICS

- Derived from oil and plastic bases which can be made into a range of waterproof, thin and hard-wearing fabrics and materials
- Chemicals are required to make materials
- Cheap to produce so generally cheaper to buy

NON-ORGANIC COTTON

- Cheaper to produce
- Cotton production uses more pesticides & insecticides than any other single crop each year (this is for all cotton products, not just menstrual products)¹
- Workers health is affected by the chemicals
- Farmers face uncertain prices for crops

MEDICAL GRADE SILICONE

- Made from quartz and sandstone
- Tested and approved for use inside the body, including implants, medical devices and menstrual cups

PLANT-BASED FABRIC & BIOPLASTICS

- Derived from plant and wood crops
- Often chemical free although natural materials like cotton are processed with chemicals unless organic

ORGANIC COTTON

- More expensive to produce
- Organic cotton grown without chemical pesticides & fertilisers so better for the soil, water, air and workers
- Reduces water usage and improves water quality
- Organic certification stipulates worker's rights & factory conditions
- Increases the income of smallholder farmers

LATEX

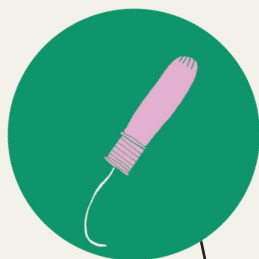
- Produced from the sap collected from rubber trees
- Some people may be allergic to latex

TAMPONS + CUPS

These Internal products **CAN** be worn swimming & doing exercise but can take a bit of getting used to inserting.



Tampons are used internally and the material absorbs blood. There are different sizes for different flows and a choice of applicator and non-applicator types.



Menstrual Cups are a reusable internal option, that sits inside the body (below where a tampon would go) and collects the blood. The blood is emptied into the toilet. The same cup can be used throughout a period as they can accommodate a range of flows. Different brands have slightly different shapes and most have two sizes, one for under 30's who haven't given birth and another for those over 30 or who have given birth.

	NON-APPLICATOR TAMPONS	APPLICATOR TAMPONS	ORGANIC TAMPONS	MENSTRUAL CUPS
MATERIALS (see table over)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bleached cotton or viscose with a thin cover of polyester Plastic wrappers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bleached cotton or viscose Plastic or paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic unbleached cotton Bioplastic wrappers Cardboard applicator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical grade silicon or latex TPE-plastic (Not recommended)
EASY TO USE	Requires more practice than applicator tampons	Applicator helps with insertion	Applicator helps with insertion	Requires some practice
HOW TO WEAR	Worn internally	Worn internally	Worn internally	Worn internally
THICKNESS/FLOW	Various sizes/suitable for different flow	Various sizes/suitable for different flow	Various sizes/suitable for different flow	One cup suitable for all flows
COSTS (guidance only)	75p-£3.50 a pack depending on quantity	89p-£3.50 a pack depending on quantity	£2.80-£3.50 pack depending on quantity	£15-25 each
HOW MANY TIMES CAN I WEAR IT?	Once	Once	Once	100s, it will last up to 10 years
WHERE TO BUY	Supermarkets, chemists, online shops, machine in public toilets	Supermarkets, chemists, online shops, machine in public toilets	Online shops, chemists, health food shops, some supermarkets	Online shops, some chemists, health food shops, some supermarkets
WHAT TO DO AFTER USE	Wrap in toilet paper and dispose of in a bin. Never flush	Wrap in toilet paper and dispose in the bin. Never flush tampons or applicators	Wrap in toilet paper and dispose in the bin or home compost. Never flush	Rinse or wipe after emptying. Sterilise with boiling water after each cycle

All menstrual products used internally should be changed every 6-8 hours, as there is a risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). This very rare but serious condition causes flu-like symptoms, high temperature and a rash (NHS website has more information)

The average menstruator will spend about 3,500 days having a period, which equates to 11,000-15,000 disposable products.²



The majority of menstruators (59%) dispose of products in the bin, however those that flush down the loo cause issues down the chain.³



80% of sewer flooding incidents are caused by blocked sewers - caused by people flushing tampons, applicators, pads, wipes, or pouring fats, oils and grease down the sink which causes damage to houses as well as river and sea pollution.⁴



¹Soil Association ²APHMA ^{3,4}Anglian Water

