

Let's talk sustainable Menstruation

because it matters
to our bodies and our environment

A pan-India campaign to promote sustainable,
comfortable, new-age menstruation choices

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Green the Red

www.greenthered.in

Dr Meenakshi Bharath



Centre For Assisted Reproductive Techniques

We attain menarche between 10 years - 15 years
And reach menopause by 45 years - 50 years
We thus bleed for approx 35 years
→ 420 periods in our lifetime!

Very few professionals have actively engaged with the issue of menstrual hygiene, although it has crossed many a mind in passing.



What do we use during our PERIODS?





Sanitary Napkins and Tampons ?



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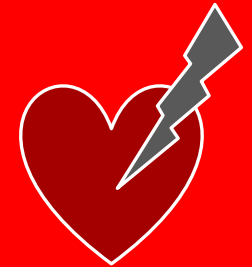
OUR PERCEPTION

- CONVENIENT
- THIN, WITH WINGS,
DON'T MOVE
- LEAK PROOF
- HYGIENIC

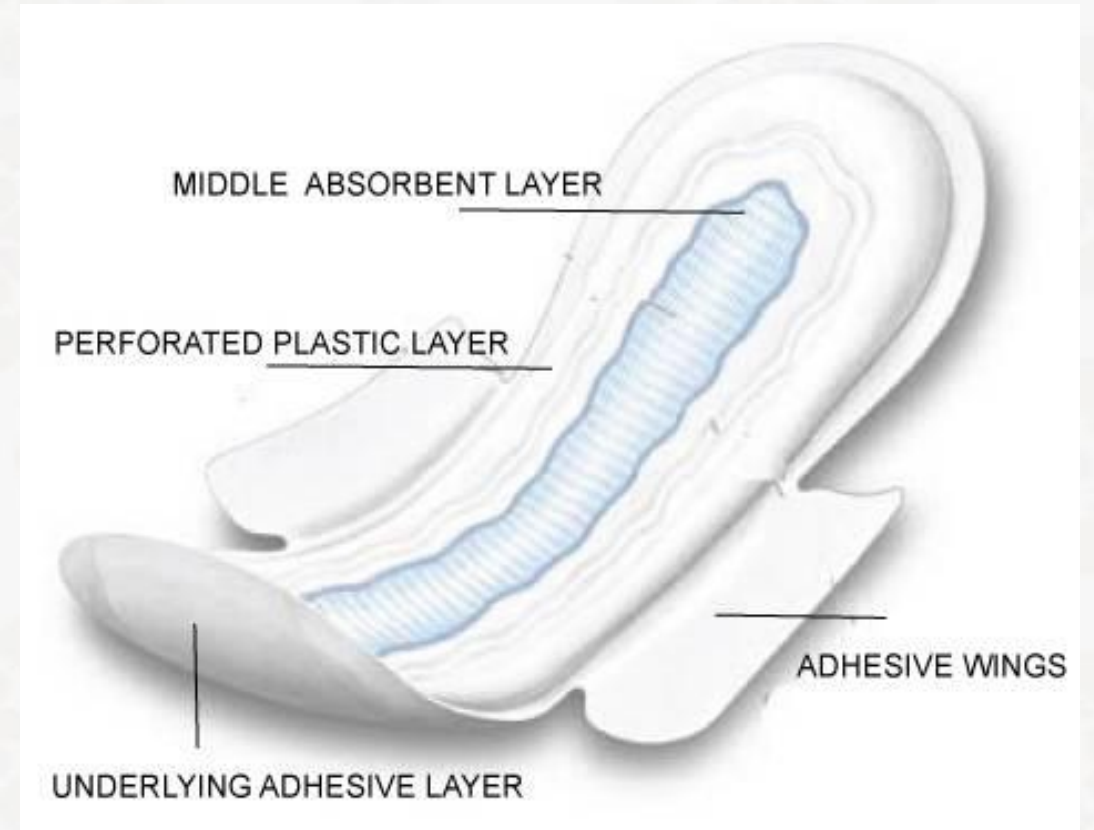
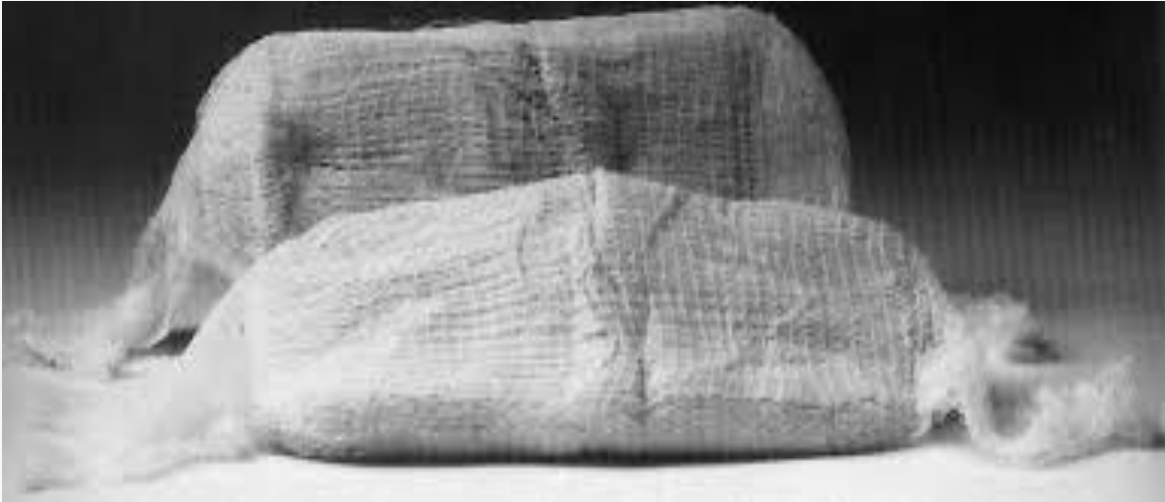


REALITY

- MADE OF PLASTICS AND CHEMICALS
- CAUSE INFECTIONS AND RASHES
- ASSOCIATED WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS
- **MAKE MENSTRUAL BLOOD
SMELL**
- NON BIODEGRADABLE
- CAN'T BE REUSED
- CAN'T BE RECYCLED
- BLOAT IN WATER, CLOG DRAINS



The evolution of a pad! From this.....to this!



What's Hiding in *always* Pads?

Testing shows chemicals linked to cancer, reproductive harm, and allergies.

None of these chemicals are listed on the label. We have a right to know.

Styrene

also used in car tires



Acetone

also used in nail polish remover



Chloromethane

also used in petroleum refining

Chloroethane

also used in styrofoam

Tell *always* to Detox the Box!

bit.ly/detoxthebox



WOMEN'S VOICES
FOR THE EARTH
OUR HEALTH. OUR FUTURE. TOXIC FREE.



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Problems faced using disposable products

PADS

- Chaffing of the thighs and the genitals
- Cystitis –e coli carried from the rectum to the urethra.
- Spreading of the TV infection
- Contact dermatitis
- The mal odour associated with periods.
- Bulge of the pad is visible under the clothes that we wear

TAMPONS?

- Leaks
- Dryness in the vaginal mucosa
- Infections of TV and Moniliasis





Impact on HEALTH



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Rashes, burns, Itches?



It may be your
sanitary pad...

Studies show that up to a 1/3rd of women who complain of vaginal itching and rashes, soreness and/or discharge may be experiencing the symptoms of Vulval Dermatitis or intimate Irritation due to sanitary pads.

Pena 1962
Obstetrics and Gynaecology 19(5)

Chemicals in pads/tampons can lead to various health risks.

DIOXIN: by-product of bleaching process

Effects: once exposed to our bodies, it starts to accumulate in our fat stores. Research says, it can stay up to 20 years after exposure

Potential health risks:

- Ovarian cancer
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Immune system dysfunction
- Impaired Thyroid
- Impaired fertility
- Hormone dysfunction
- Early menopause
- Diabetes





Impact on ENVIRONMENT



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Sanitary waste

Picked up from your
doorstep/ work place

By housekeeping staff,
paurakarmikas,
waste-pickers

Exposing them to health
hazards.



in the sewage...

...super absorbent gel
makes them bloat and
clog the drains...

...cleaners have to get
into these drains to
clean them for us.



Why is Sanitary Waste a problem?



Cannot Recycle or Reuse
Dumped in the landfill
Serious Environmental &
Health Effects
Disposing Natural
Resources
If burnt –produces
dioxins and furans



SOLUTIONS ?

Pads/
Tampons/
Diapers



Chemicals/
Plastics



Health &
Environment
Problems



Cloth Pads/
Menstrual
Cups/
Cloth Diapers



Reusable/
Bio-
Degradable



Better for
Health & the
Environment





Reusable CLOTH PADS



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Cloth Pads

HEALTHIER • GREENER



LEAK PROOF



FASTEN TO UNDERWEAR



Money Spent on
Sanitary pads in 10 years

Rs. 12-45,000/-



Money Spent on
Cloth pads in 10 years

Rs. 5-8,000/-





Reusable MENSTRUAL CUPS



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Menstrual Cups

HEALTHIER • GREENER



Completely Safe



Made of Soft, Medical Grade Materials Like Silicone or TPE

They collect menstrual flow, rather than absorbing it.



COLLECT

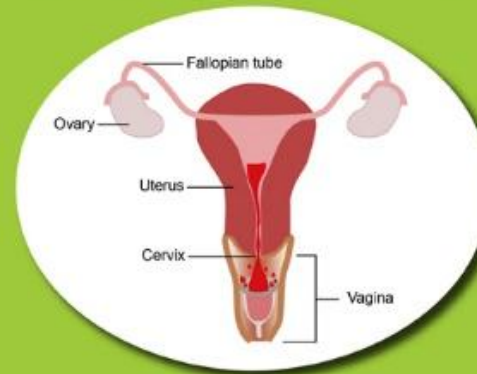


EMPTY



REINSERT

They form a **seal** with vaginal walls, and don't leak.





1 cup can be used
for upto 8 years
saving you money, and less
dump in the landfill



Money Spent on
Sanitary pads in 10 years
Rs. 12-45,000/-

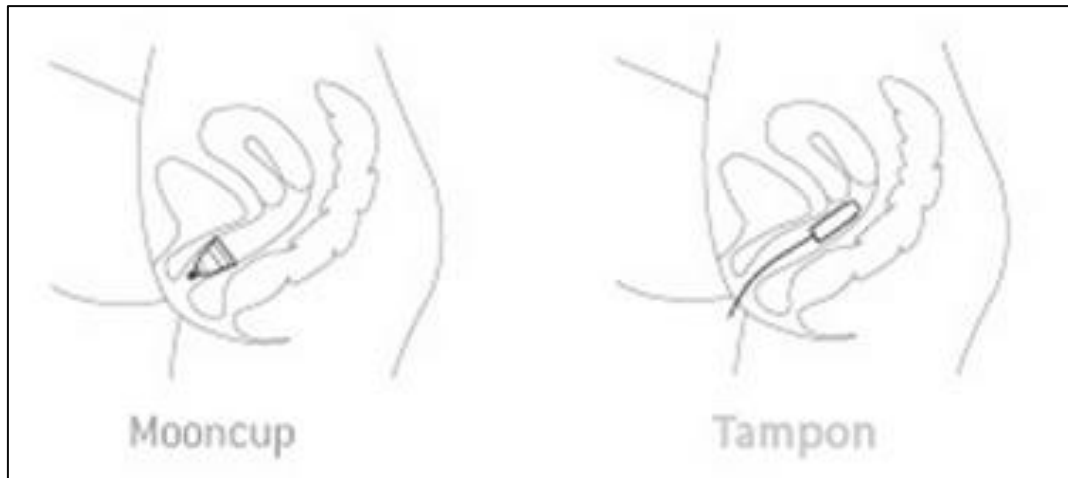


Money Spent on
Menstrual Cups in 10 years
Rs. 700-3,000/-

Made of medical
grade Silicone



How to wear? FOLD and INSERT

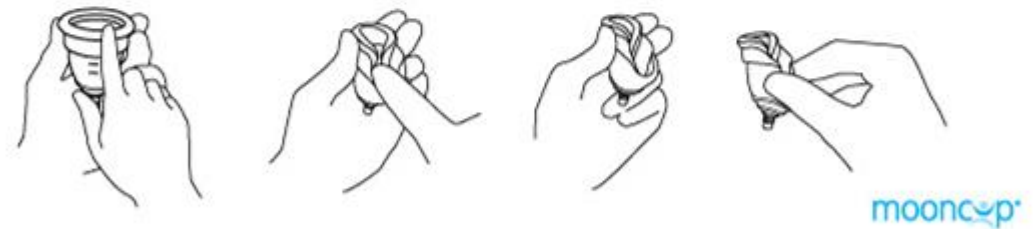


First, choose the fold that suits you best:

Folding technique 1



Folding technique 2



The Mooncup is designed to be worn as low as it can comfortably sit in the vagina. Once folded, hold onto the Mooncup firmly with your finger and thumb as low down the cup as possible whilst keeping it folded. With the other hand, part the labia (folds of skin around the vagina), find the entrance to the vagina and guide the Mooncup up and towards your back.

Insertion needs lubrication-can be water / your own menstrual blood is the best.

Scared of inserting it? Why?

Squat to be able to insert it easily.



- Learning curve for insertion and removal is One to two cycles
Once learnt then they will not get back to pads as they are so comfortable.
- May feel it is messy –initially during removal –but that needs getting used to . Quantity of water used to clean it is very minimal.
- No back flow is possible as the cervix contracts if any liquid is introduced.
- Less bacterial vaginosis
- Mobility is the biggest advantage
- Cleaning is very easy and takes only a few minutes –water required for this is very little- WASH and WEAR

*Peer effects in menstrual cup uptake -Oster Thornton Journal of the European Economic Association December 2012
10(6):1263–1293*

Phillips-Howard PA, et al. BMJ Open 2016;6:e013229.- Study among school children in Kenya

Juma J, et al. BMJ Open 2017;



How to Remove?
PINCH, FOLD and PULL OUT



- The vagina is not a sterile organ-unlike the bladder.
- It is also a wet organ like the mouth.
- No need to sterilize the cup-just wash it with water and keep it dry and in a clean small cloth bag



Wear while:

swimming
sports
sleeping

- Comfortable
- Won't feel it
- Holds more than pads/tampons
- Empty when full or every 8-10 hours

Travelling?

Carry a bottle of water
OR
Wipe with tissue
OR
Just empty and reinsert



Use a **menstrual cup** or a **cloth pad**
and enjoy a happy Period

Trash free, Rash free, Cash free periods



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Join the **Green the Red** campaign

And start a conversation about
sustainable menstruation!

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QUESTIONS?

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