

# **MENSTRUAL HYGIENE**

**Spread Awareness Among Women  
& Girls**

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# Menstrual Hygiene:-

Menstrual Hygiene is vital to the empowerment and well-being of women and girls worldwide. It is about more than just access to sanitary pads and appropriate toilets – though those are important. It is also about ensuring women and girls live in an environment that values and supports their ability to manage their menstruation with dignity.

## Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is defined as:

“Women and adolescent girls are using clean menstrual management materials to absorb or collect blood that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of the menstruation period, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials“.



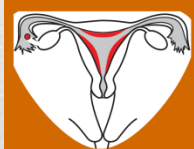
# The menstrual cycle

Many clients, in particular younger clients, may not know basic biological facts. This page will help you explain the normal menstrual cycle .

## Key points about the menstrual cycle:

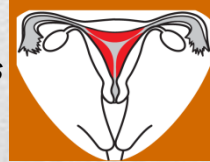
- The menstrual cycle is the process through which a woman's body prepares for pregnancy.
- Young women usually start to have periods (menstruate) between the ages of 11 and 17. Women stop having periods between the ages of 45 and 55 (menopause).
- The menstrual cycle is usually about 28 days long, but it varies from woman to woman and from month to month. It can range from 23 to 35 days.
- The **fertile time** of the menstrual cycle (when a woman can get pregnant) can last for up to 6 days, starting 5 days before ovulation and ending on the day of ovulation.
- Ovulation usually occurs between days 7 and 21 of the cycle (see below). It can, however, occur at ANY TIME in the cycle after the end of the menstrual period. The precise day of ovulation cannot be predicted.
- For best protection from pregnancy, a couple should use contraception throughout the menstrual cycle.

## 1. Ovulation *(usually occurs between days 7 and 21 of the cycle, often around day 14)*



One egg is released from the ovaries each cycle (usually once a month). The egg travels down a fallopian tube towards the womb and may become fertilized during this time by a sperm cell that has travelled upwards from the vagina.

## 2. Thickening of the womb lining *(usually about 14 days long after ovulation)*



The lining of the womb (the endometrium) becomes thicker during this time to prepare for a fertilized egg. Usually there is no pregnancy, and the unfertilized egg cell dissolves in the body.

## 3. Menstrual bleeding (period) *(bleeding usually lasts from 2 to 7 days, often about 5 days)*

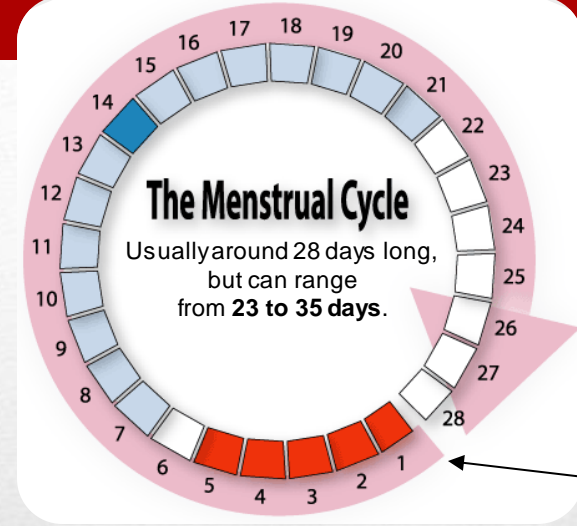
- If there is no pregnancy, the thickened lining of the womb is shed. It leaves the body through the vagina. This monthly bleeding is called menstruation. Contractions of the womb at this time can cause period pains (cramps).
- Menstruation is different in different women. Some women can bleed for a short time (for example, 2 days), while others can bleed for up to 8 days. Bleeding can be heavy or light.
- If the egg is fertilized by a man's sperm, the woman will become pregnant, and she will stop having periods.





Globally, at least 500 million women and girls lack proper access to menstrual hygiene facilities. Several factors influence difficult experiences with menstruation, including inadequate facilities and materials, menstrual pain, fear of disclosure, and inadequate knowledge about the menstrual cycle (World Bank 2018).

May 28 is **Menstruation Hygiene Day (MH Day)**; a day dedicated to bringing awareness around the vital role that good menstrual hygiene management (MHM) plays in empowering women and adolescent girls worldwide to become all that they can be. The vision behind MH Day is a world in which every woman and girl is able to manage her menstruation in a hygienic way- in safety, privacy, and with dignity- wherever they are.



- In India, only 1 in every 2 girls have knowledge about menstruation before their first period. In Tanzania and Ethiopia, only 1 in every 4 girls know about it before their first period.
- In Uganda, 1 out of 2 girls report missing one to three days of school per month due to menstruation.
- In India, for 1 out of 2 girls, mothers are the most important source of information about menstruation, followed by friends. (MH Day 2019)

## Pledge for Girls and Women

i will break the silence on menstruation

i will not feel shy; i will take pride

i will spread the word outside and inside the home

The silence around menstruation, lack of access to sanitation facilities and hygienic absorbents directly affect women's and adolescent girls' self-esteem, health and education.

- School attendance: 1 in 10 girls in Africa miss school during menses (UNESCO).
- Access to hygiene products: In India, up to 80% of girls use old cloths as absorbents.
- Health: Vaginal infections are 70% more likely when using unhygienic materials.
- Stigmatization and insecurity: In rural communities, women and girls are forced to sleep in separate sheds while menstruating

## Low Awareness On Menstruation Is Widespread In India

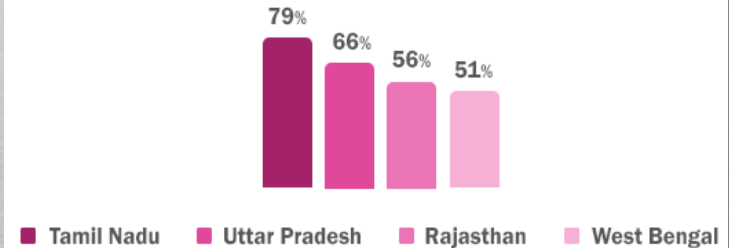


**70%**  
Of Menstruating Mothers  
Consider Menstruation As Dirty



**71%**  
Adolescent Girls Remained  
Unaware Of Menstruation Till  
Their First Period

### Percentage of girls remaining unaware of menstrual hygiene practices in Indian states (2014)



## Item Used During Menstruation

- **Soap, Sanitary Towels, Tissue papers, Cotton Wool, Panty Liners, Period Panties, Perfumes, Sanitizers, Disinfectants & Drugs, are all made by Chemists.**
- **Although water is from nature, it has chemical composition.**

## Sanitary Materials:

- **Sanitary Towels, Pads , Periods Panties**
- **Tampons**
- **Tissue Paper**
- **Cotton Wool**

## Sanitary Towels & Pads:-

- **Sanitary Towel is soft piece of material worn by woman to absorb blood during her period each month.**
  - **Until disposable sanitary pads were created or reusable pads used to collect menstrual blood.**
  - **Women often used a variety of Home-Made menstrual pads which they crafted from various fabrics, or other absorbent materials, to collect menstrual blood.**
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## Tampons:-

- A plug of soft material inserted into the vagina to absorb menstrual blood.
- Conventional Tampons may also contain dioxins, synthetic fibers & petrochemical additives.
- Tampons can react with bacteria in you body to create the ideal environment for bacteria to flourish, triggering potentially fatal toxic shock syndrome (TSS).



## Tissue Papers:-

- Sanitary paper include: toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, & facial tissues.
  - Tissue paper used for bathroom hygiene, wiping up spills & small bathroom chores amongst others.
  - Toilet paper can be one or two ply, meaning that it is either a single sheet or two sheets placed back to back to make it builder & more absorbent.
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# Periods Panties:-

- One crucial element in your feminine hygiene repertoire is period panties. It is made of a layer of special fabrics designed to pull blood or liquid away from the body, & trap it inside the underwear so it does not leak out.
- Most of them provide leak proof protection, some can actually be worn instead of a pad or tampons.
- Few brands offer panties with a kangaroo pocket in the front where you can place a heating pad to help with cramps.





## **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, chemistry has a great role to play in women's menstrual hygiene since most of the items used if not all are made by chemists.

However, we need to ensure that all waste emanating from the period of menstruation should be disposed in an environmental friendly manner, or else pollution will choke us.

Women in Chemistry (WIC) have a challenge to ensure women do not suffer from pains, diseases & illnesses resulting from menstruation.

Be a Woman in Chemistry (WIC) to make the difference & reduce women's suffering & stress.

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## Reproductive Health Indicators:

- 28% used sanitary napkins.
- Uneducated & poor woman less likely to use sanitary napkins.
- 16% have menstruation problem.
- More than half(55%) have never heard about RTI/STI
- 27% have the symptoms of RTI/STI.
- Only half of these sought treatment.

## Advantages of Sanitary Napkins:

- They Ensure Good Hygiene
- Their Absorption Capacity Is High
- Decrease chance of infection
- Sanitary napkins can be used & disposed in a much easier way as compared to cloth.
- Help in mobility & ease of daily routine.



## HOW OFTEN TO CHANGE SANITARY NAPKINS:

- Change at least once a day.
- Changing every 6-8 hours is recommended.
- During heavy menses, may need to change every 3-4 hours.
- Do not keep till completely soaked.

## WHAT IF USING CLOTH:

- Ensure that clean, soft, dry & absorbent cloth is used.
- In case, it is being reused, it must be washed thoroughly & dried in private but sunny place.
- After drying, if possible it ironed
- Stored in a clean & dry placed
- Don't share this cloth with anyone
- After multiple use, dispose off this cloth





## WHAT ARE THE HYGIENE PRACTICE SHOULD BE FOLLOWED DURING MENSTRUATION:

- Change napkin regularly.
- Remember to take change of napkin weather going out.
- Wash the genital area after each use of the toilet , also after urination.
- Keep the area between the legs dry otherwise soreness & chaffing may develop.
- One can take bath everyday during menses.
- Do not wash insides of vagina with soap or any other product.

## WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO DISPOSE OFF SANITARY NAPKINS:

- If they are left in the open, they are a sore sight.
  - May lead to transmission of infections like Hepatitis B & C.
  - No danger of HIV infection.
  - Will attract flies & insects.
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## HOW TO DISPOSE NAPKINS:

- Napkins should not be thrown into the toilets particularly the water closet.
  - It is better to keep a dustbin in the corner of the toilet. Wash the soiled napkins & squeeze dry. Keep old newspapers/waste paper ready to wrap the washed napkin. Drop it in the bin. You can dispose the contents of the bin after your cycle bleed is over or daily.
  - In case there is no disposal mechanism prevalent in your locality, see about disposing it within your backyard itself either by sanitary pit (burial) or incineration (burning).
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**THANK YOU**

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