

TAMPONS



Short description

The tampon absorbs menstrual blood in the vagina.
Tampons are practical if pads are difficult to use, for example when swimming.



Size

There are different tampons for different levels of menstrual flow.
To start with, you can try "small" tampons (mini tampons) to find out which absorbency is most suitable.

Tips:

- Mini tampons are good when menstruation occurs for the first time or if the flow is very light.
- If the tampon needs to be changed frequently because it fills quickly and blood leaks through, a larger tampon is needed (Normal, Super, Ultra).



Recommended wearing time

- The tampon should be changed after no more than 6 hours, depending on the size of the tampon and the level of menstrual flow.
- The tampon does not need to be changed every time you go to the toilet.
The vagina (where the tampon is inserted), urethra and anus are separate body openings.

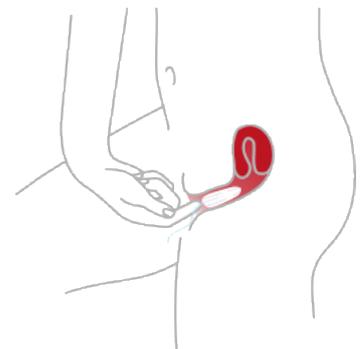


Use

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the protective wrapping.
3. Pull on the string (removal cord):
The cord makes it easier to remove the tampon later.
4. Find a comfortable position. Tips for this can be found [in the FAQs](#).
5. Insert the tampon into the vagina using a finger (e.g. index finger).
The removal cord hangs outside.

A so-called applicator can be used instead of a finger to insert the tampon.
These are available in pharmacies and drugstores.

6. Check the fit: The tampon is in the correct position if it can no longer be felt.
If you can still feel it, insert it further.



Tips:

- If it is always very painful, even when inserted correctly, it may be a reason to see a gynaecologist.
- If you are unsure whether the tampon is properly in place and no menstrual blood will leak, it can help to wear an additional pad, panty liner or period underwear.

➔ After use

1. Wash your hands
2. Gently remove the tampon by pulling on the removal cord or with your fingers.

Note: The removal cord cannot be found – what to do?

A tampon cannot get lost inside the body. It will stop at the cervix (after about 10 cm) at most. It can always be reached with your fingers, even if the removal cord is missing. Squat down and push the tampon downwards, as when going to the toilet. Then remove it with your fingers. If you cannot manage this yourself, a gynaecologist can help. You can also call the health advice line on 1450.



Disposal

- Tampons should only be used once.
- Do not throw used tampons into the toilet. They can block pipes and sewage treatment plants.
- In public toilets, there are sometimes bags for used menstrual products. Tampons can be placed in these bags and disposed of in this way. If no bags are available, wrap the tampon in toilet paper and dispose of it.



Health aspects

Always choose tampons **according to the strength of your menstrual flow**.

This helps to avoid drying out the vaginal flora and prevents bacteria from developing.

When to avoid tampons?

- If there is **pain when inserting or wearing them**: If the pain does not stop even though the tampon is correctly positioned, remove the tampon and see a gynaecologist.
- If **menstrual flow is light** or there is **spotting**, tampons should not be used or only used for a short time. Tampons should not be used just because menstruation is expected. They can dry out the vagina, which increases the risk of infection.
- During **vaginal intercourse**, as it can cause pain and make the tampon difficult to remove.

Tampons should not be used during **pregnancy or for postpartum bleeding**. Pads or period underwear are best for this.

In cases of **female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) type 3 (infibulation)**, the use of tampons is not possible.



Further important information on menstrual products and health

gesundheit.gv.at/leben/frauengesundheit/menstruationsprodukte/menstrual-products

- [unicef.org/media/91346/file/unicef-guide-menstrual-hygiene-materials-2019.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/91346/file/unicef-guide-menstrual-hygiene-materials-2019.pdf)
- [nj.gov/health/womenshealth/reproductive-health/periods-menstruation/period-products/tampons.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/womenshealth/reproductive-health/periods-menstruation/period-products/tampons.shtml)
- [nhs.uk/conditions/toxic-shock-syndrome/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/toxic-shock-syndrome/)
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- [loveline.de/themen/maedchen/meine-menstruation/tampons-binden-tasse-schwamm/](https://www.loveline.de/themen/maedchen/meine-menstruation/tampons-binden-tasse-schwamm/)

PADS



Short description

Pads collect menstrual blood outside the vagina. They are worn in underwear. There are pads that are used only once (disposable pads with adhesive strips on the underside). There are also pads that can be used multiple times. These are called "cloth pads" or "reusable pads". Pads can be used on their own or as additional protection with other menstrual products.

Size

- There are different pads for different levels of menstrual flow.
- Disposable pads are available with or without wings. Wings provide additional protection at the sides.
- If menstrual flow is very light, panty liners can also be used. They are thinner and absorb less blood than pads.

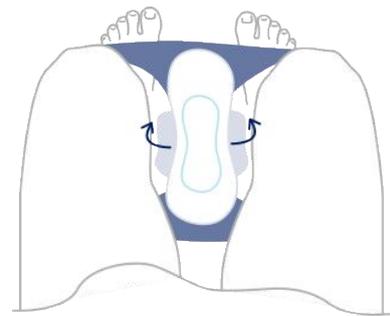
Recommended wearing time

- The pad should be changed after no more than 8 hours.
- Cloth pads (reusable pads) should be replaced after about one year.

Use

Disposable pad:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the packaging and the paper from the adhesive strips and dispose of them.
3. Place the pad in the middle of your underwear with the adhesive side facing downwards.
4. If there are wings:
Fold the wings over and stick them to the outside/bottom of the underwear.



Cloth pad (reusable pad):

Before the very first use, rinse or wash the cloth pad with water.

1. Wash your hands.
2. Place the pad in your underwear with the soft (absorbent) side facing upwards.
3. Fold the wings over.
4. Fasten the press studs on the wings underneath the underwear.

➔ After use

- Disposable pads should only be used once and disposed of immediately afterwards.
- Cloth pads (reusable pads) can be reused after washing. When "on the go", a used pad can be stored in a bag.

✦✦ Recommended cleaning

Cloth pad (reusable pad):

1. Rinse/clean: After wearing, first rinse the reusable pad with cold water. Blood can be washed out more easily with cold water than with warm water.
2. Wash: Before the very first use and after rinsing. Many cloth pads can be washed at 30–40 °C, or even at 60 °C, with normal laundry.
3. Dry: Allow the cloth pad to air dry thoroughly.

🗑 Disposal

- Remove the **disposable pad** from the underwear and dispose of it.
- Do not throw used pads into the toilet. They can block pipes and sewage treatment plants.
- In public toilets, there are sometimes bags for used menstrual products. Pads can be placed in these bags and disposed of in this way. If no bags are available, wrap the pad in toilet paper and dispose of it.

👐 Health aspects

- Pads can irritate the skin and, in some cases, cause infections. Therefore, **change them regularly** as recommended, wash your hands, and wash and dry cloth pads (reusable pads) properly.
- Pads are suitable during **pregnancy and for postpartum bleeding**.
- Pads are suitable for all types of **female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)**.



Further important information on menstrual products and health

gesundheits.gv.at/leben/frauengesundheit/menstruationsprodukte/menstrual-products

- [unicef.org/media/91346/file/unicef-guide-menstrual-hygiene-materials-2019.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/91346/file/unicef-guide-menstrual-hygiene-materials-2019.pdf)
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- loveline.de/themen/maedchen/meine-menstruation/tampoons-binden-tasse-schwamm/

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PERIOD UNDERWEAR



Short description

Period underwear is underwear with different layers. These absorb menstrual blood outside the vagina. Period underwear looks like normal underwear. It can be washed and reused.



Size

- Period underwear is available in different clothing sizes and styles, depending on the strength of menstrual flow.
- One pair of period underwear can absorb the equivalent of 1 to 4 tampons.



Recommended wearing time

Period underwear should be changed after no more than 12 hours, depending on the strength of menstrual flow.



Use

- Before the very first use, rinse the period underwear with water or wash it.
- Period underwear is worn in the same way as normal underwear.
- It can be used on its own or as additional protection with other menstrual products.



After use

Period underwear can be reused after washing.



Recommended cleaning

1. Rinse/clean: After wearing, first rinse the period underwear with cold water. Blood can be washed out more easily with cold water than with warm water.
2. Wash: Before the very first use and after rinsing.
Do not use fabric softener when washing and do not iron.
Both can reduce the ability of the underwear to absorb menstrual blood effectively.
3. Dry: Allow the period underwear to air dry thoroughly (do not tumble dry).

Tip: If period underwear is properly washed and dried, it will not smell. If, however, it no longer smells fresh, it should be disposed of.



Disposal

Period underwear can be **reused** after washing.

It will effectively absorb menstrual blood for about 1 year, but this varies from product to product.

Often, the packaging states how many times the period underwear can be washed (for example:

40 to 50 times) before it can no longer absorb menstrual blood effectively.

After that, it can either be disposed of or worn as normal underwear.



Health aspects

- It is important that period underwear **does not contain** (nano) silver or chemicals. These can affect health. The materials used can be checked on the packaging.
- Period underwear is suitable during **pregnancy and for postpartum bleeding**.
- Period underwear is suitable for all types of **female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)**.



Further important information on menstrual products and health

gesundheits.gv.at/leben/frauengesundheit/menstruationsprodukte/menstrual-products

- nj.gov/health/womenshealth/reproductive-health/periods-menstruation/period-products/period-underwear.shtml
- unicef.org/media/91346/file/unicef-guide-menstrual-hygiene-materials-2019.pdf
- maedchenbeschneidung.ch/public/documents/Netzwerk-Dokumente/2023_Empfehlungen_FGMC.pdf

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MENSTRUAL CUPS



Short description

A menstrual cup is a soft container, usually made of silicone. It collects menstrual blood in the vagina. When it is full, the menstrual cup is removed, washed, and reused.

A menstrual cup can be used for many years. If it is well cleaned and properly stored, the same cup can be used for up to 10 years.



Size

- Menstrual cups come in different sizes and shapes. Sizes are often indicated as S (small), M (medium) and L (large). As every vagina is different, the correct size can also vary.
- For heavier menstrual flow or weaker pelvic floor muscles (for example, after giving birth), a larger menstrual cup can be used.
- Start with the smallest size at the first menstruation.



Recommended wearing time

4 to 12 hours, depending on the size of the menstrual cup and the strength of menstrual flow.



Use

1. Sterilise: Before the very first use, and also whenever your period starts again, the menstrual cup should be sterilised (the time is stated on the packaging); for example, in a pot of boiling water or in a cup of water in the microwave.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Find a comfortable position. Tips for this can be found in the FAQs.
4. Fold the menstrual cup with two fingers and insert:
 - When the menstrual cup is folded, it looks like the letter "C". This is why it is also called the "C-fold".
 - The menstrual cup unfolds on its own inside the vagina. It creates a suction effect and is held in place by the pelvic floor muscles.
5. Check the fit: The menstrual cup is in the correct position if it can no longer be felt.



Tips:

- Run a finger around the base of the menstrual cup to check if it has fully opened. If not, it often helps to tense the pelvic floor muscles a few times.
- If you are unsure whether the menstrual cup is positioned correctly so that no menstrual blood will leak, wear an additional pad, panty liner, or period underwear.

After use

1. Wash your hands.
2. Removal: Before the menstrual cup can be pulled out of the vagina, it must first be released. To do this, pinch the menstrual cup inside the vagina with two fingers. When the cup can be moved easily, the "suction effect" is released. The menstrual cup can then be carefully removed using the "stem" or with your fingers.
3. The menstrual cup can then be emptied into the toilet.
4. After rinsing or cleaning, the menstrual cup can be reinserted.

Tips:

- The same applies as when inserting – it is easiest in a comfortable position.
- Emptying or removal can be practised in the shower or bathtub, as blood may spill the first few times.

Recommended cleaning

1. Rinse/clean: Rinse the menstrual cup with clear water (cold first, then warm). If necessary, it can be washed with a very mild soap. Perfume or other ingredients in soap can irritate the skin.

Tip: If no tap is available, water from a bottle can also be used.

2. Sterilise: After your period and before the next one, sterilise the menstrual cup again. Information on sterilising can be found above under "Use".
3. Storage: Keep in a place where it is dry, but always with some air circulation, until your next period.

Important: Do not store airtight, as this can encourage bacteria or mould.

Disposal

A menstrual cup can be reused after cleaning for up to 10 years. When no longer used, it should be disposed of in general waste.



Health aspects

- Menstrual cups should only **ever be used by one person** to avoid the risk of infection.
- Menstrual cups **do not dry out the vagina** and therefore do not disturb the vaginal flora. This means the risk of irritation and infection is lower.
- Caution with **silicone or latex allergy**: Menstrual cups are also available without silicone or latex. The packaging will state “hypoallergenic” in this case.
- **Menstrual cup and intrauterine device (IUD) or copper chain**:
The suction of the menstrual cup could dislodge the IUD or copper chain. If an IUD or copper chain is in place, it is important to discuss with your gynaecologist whether a menstrual cup can be used.
- During **pregnancy and for postpartum bleeding**, a menstrual cup should not be used. Sanitary pads or period underwear are best for this purpose.
- In cases of **female genital mutilation (FGM/C) type 3 (infibulation)**, the use of menstrual cups is not possible.



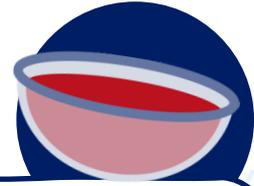
Further important information on menstrual products and health

gesundheit.gv.at/leben/frauengesundheit/menstruationsprodukte/menstrual-products

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MENSTRUAL DISCS



Short description

A menstrual disc is a flat, soft container, usually made of silicone. It collects menstrual blood in the vagina. Compared to a menstrual cup, the menstrual disc is flatter and wider and can therefore hold more blood. This makes it particularly helpful for heavy menstrual bleeding. When it is full, the menstrual disc is removed, washed and reused.

The menstrual disc can be used for many years. If it is cleaned well and stored correctly, the same menstrual disc can be used for up to 10 years.



Size

Menstrual discs are available in different sizes, often listed as S (small), M (medium) and L (large). As every vagina is different, the correct size may vary. For heavier menstrual bleeding, a larger menstrual disc may be helpful.



Recommended wearing time

Up to 12 hours, depending on the size of the disc and the strength of menstrual flow.



Use

1. Sterilise: Before the very first use, and again whenever menstruation begins, the menstrual disc should be sterilised (see packaging for duration); for example, in a pot of boiling water or in a cup of water in the microwave.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Find a comfortable position. Tips for this can be found [in the FAQs](#).
4. Squeeze the sides of the menstrual disc together and insert:
The menstrual disc will open on its own inside the vagina and encircle the cervix.
5. Check the fit: The menstrual disc is in the correct position if it can no longer be felt.



Tip: If unsure whether the menstrual disc is seated properly so that no menstrual blood leaks, also wear a sanitary pad, panty liner or period underwear.

After use

1. Wash your hands.
2. Then either
 - **Empty** the menstrual disc (this is possible without removing it): Use your fingers to tilt the disc back inside the vagina. Sometimes this also works by bearing down, i.e. moving the pelvic floor muscles. The menstrual blood will then be released through the vagina.
- or
 - **Remove** the menstrual disc: Use your fingers to locate the menstrual disc and pull it out. The menstrual disc can then be emptied into the toilet.
3. After rinsing or cleaning, the menstrual disc can be reinserted.

Tips:

- The same applies as when inserting – it is easiest in a comfortable position.
- Emptying or removing can be practised in the shower or bathtub, as some blood may spill the first few times.

Recommended cleaning

1. Rinse/Clean: Rinse the menstrual disc with clear water (cold water first, then warm water). If necessary, it can be washed with a mild soap. Perfume or other substances in soaps can irritate the skin.

Tip: If no tap is available, water from a bottle can also be used.

2. Sterilise: After menstruation and before the next cycle, sterilise the menstrual disc again. For information on sterilising, see above under "Use".
3. Storage: Store until the next menstruation in a place that is dry but allows air to circulate.

Important: Do not store in an airtight container, as this can encourage bacteria or mould.

Disposal

A menstrual disc can be reused after cleaning, for up to 10 years. When it is no longer in use, dispose of it in general waste.



Health aspects

- Menstrual discs should **only ever be used by one person** to avoid the risk of infection.
- Menstrual discs **do not dry out the vagina** and therefore do not disturb the vaginal flora. This means the risk of irritation and infection is lower.
- Caution with **silicone or latex allergy**: Menstrual discs without silicone or latex are also available. These are labelled "hypoallergenic" on the packaging.
- **Menstrual disc and intrauterine device (IUD) or copper chain:**
The menstrual disc does not create suction in the vagina in the same way as the menstrual cup. Therefore, it can generally be used together with an IUD or copper chain. However, because displacement of the contraceptive device cannot be ruled out completely, it is advisable to consult a gynaecologist beforehand.
- A menstrual disc can be worn during vaginal intercourse as it sits higher up. However, it is **NOT a contraceptive**. It also cannot slip into the uterus during intercourse.
- During **pregnancy and for postpartum bleeding**, a menstrual disc should not be used. Pads or period underwear are best for this purpose.
- In cases of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) type 3 (infibulation), the use of menstrual discs is not possible.



Further important information on menstrual products and health

gesundheit.gv.at/leben/frauengesundheit/menstruationsprodukte/menstrual-products

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Imprint

Media owner: Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG)
Stubenring 6, 1010 Vienna, www.goeg.at FN 281909y, Commercial Court of Vienna, VAT ID: ATU62777178
Commissioned by the BMASGPK. Funded by the Health Promotion Agenda. Stand: October 2025
Graphic design and illustrations: Mariella Drechsler, Icons: Flaticon