



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

# Modern sustainable sanitary options

As part of the new school curriculum, your tweens and teens will be taught about sustainability in all areas of health, including menstruation. Below are the four main types of modern sustainable period products. There is an option to suit everybody and every lifestyle. Don't be left in the dark – join in the conversation today!

This information sheet was prepared for the Sustainable Period Project.

## BIODEGRADABLE SINGLE- USE

These are a good option if you really can't stand the thought of using re-usable items, or want to use it as a 'stepping stone' for a greener alternative. There are a number of brands on the market and most are now stocked in supermarkets. The biodegradable pads are made of cotton and any waterproof layers, such as the backing, are made of plant polymers. This makes the whole pad compostable and biodegradable. They take up to 12 months to decompose in landfill (instead of 300 years like conventional plastic pads!)

## REUSABLE CLOTH PADS

These are a great option if your teen wants to try something reusable at home while using disposable when out. Then when they've gained confidence they can use them all the time! They are a triple layer pad with a patterned waterproof backing, bamboo core and a colourful bamboo velour top. Wings and snaps help to keep the pad from moving around in the gusset of the underpants. They are available from health food shops and online.

## REUSABLE PERIOD UNDERPANTS

These are a great option for early menstruators who are still getting to know their own body and period cycle. They come in light to heavy flow. Using modern fabrics, the absorbent gusset is super thin (3mm - not at all bulky!). Your teen can wear them all day at school like normal underwear. They are available from some supermarkets, health shops or online.

## MENSTRUAL CUPS

These are the most cost-effective option, with the smaller model 1 designed especially with teens in mind. Made of soft medical silicone, it holds up to 25ml of menstrual fluid (2-3 super tampons) and can be worn overnight. There are plenty of tips for first time users and fantastic positive feedback from menstruators as young as 12. Remember that practice makes perfect and to allow 3-4 cycles to master how to use a menstrual cup. Available from health shops and online.

### Here's how these parents talked to their tweens and teens about green period options:

"I saw some reusable cloth pads at a local market. I knew what they were because my wife uses them. The designs were really nice, and my tweens asked what they were. It was a great conversation opener and I was surprised how well the conversation went, they were very open to the idea of reusables."

"The period underwear are awesome, I have bought a pair for my tween and although they haven't started their period yet, we have talked about what to do if it happens at school, so they are in the school bag for just in case."

"I already use a menstrual cup so it wasn't a difficult conversation for us. When they asked I kept it really casual like this, "That's just my menstrual cup, I use it for my period, what colour menstrual cup do you think you will use?""

"I was caught out by my period one month and ended up with spotted white underwear, I was at home and thought it was a good opportunity to show my tween. I don't want her to be frightened of blood, and I've heard this is the main thing that puts tweens off reusables because they think what they see is 'gross'. I said something like, "Look I just got my period when I wasn't expecting it, this is probably what it will look like when you first get your period.""