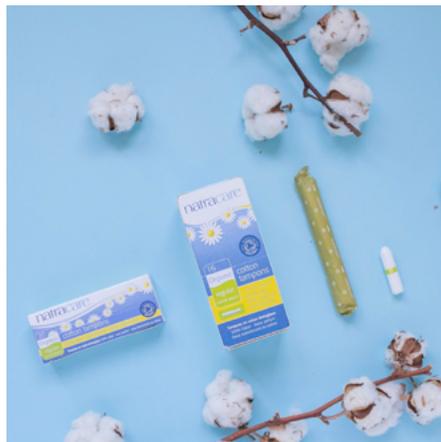




Sustainable sanitary options for use during your period



WHY SHOULD MY SANITARY OPTIONS BE SUSTAINABLE?

If you use conventional disposable pads and tampons, every time you have your period you'll be spending up to \$20 and throw away one shopping bag of plastics, fibres and wrappers. Each person menstruates for about 30-40 years. With over 7 million Australian and New Zealanders menstruating every month that is a lot of landfill and waterway pollution... and money wasted!

There are four modern sustainable options - Biodegradable pads & Tampons, Period Pants, Cloth Pads and Menstrual cups.

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 PERIOD PANTS

Period pants are underwear that are leak-proof, odour absorbing, moisture wicking and reusable. They are made from stain-resistant anti-microbial fabrics such as bamboo, sports merino and microfibre. They come in a variety of styles and absorbencies - from light up to heavy-so can hold between ½ a tampon to 2 tampons worth of menstrual fluid. Period panties should last just as long as any other pair of underwear.

CLOTH PADS

Cloth pads come in a variety of shapes, colours, sizes and absorbencies. They have the following features:

- A waterproof backing made from PUL (polyurethane laminated) material
- An absorbent material in the middle layer such as hemp fabric, bamboo velour or cotton fleece
- A soft cotton top fabric

You will need from 6-12 cloth pads to cover you during your cycle. Simply rinse in cold water then soak in a container with cold water and wash the pads within 48 hours of soaking. One cloth pad should last at least 5 years with proper care. They are fine to use for your whole cycle.

Not sure if period pants or cloth pads are for you? Why not start with three in your drawer? Try them at home and then use disposables when out, or use a mix of period pants and cloth pads. You will still be reducing waste, saving money and it is a great introduction to re-usable products.

MENSTRUAL CUPS

A menstrual cup is a small cup that is used instead of pads and tampons. It is made from soft medical-grade silicone and collects the blood lost during your period rather than absorbing it. They come in a variety of colours and two sizes depending on flow. Menstrual cups are becoming really popular within the modern generation. In Europe and the UK, they are now sold next to pads and tampons. Australia and New Zealand are starting to catch up!

The advantages of a menstrual cup

- A menstrual cup will last up to 10 years and you only need one.
- It only needs to be emptied 2-4 times a day. It holds up to 4x as much period blood as a tampon. It can be worn for up to 12 hours before emptying, depending on blood flow.
- Environmentally friendly and safe; there are no bleaches or dioxins, and no fibres.
- Many people find they can do more when they use a menstrual cup like sleep with it in and go swimming.

Menstrual cups can also be used by teenagers and those who haven't had intercourse

If you can use a tampon confidently, then you should be able to use a menstrual cup. They can be a little tricky to start with so be patient as you will need some practice at first. Allow at least three period cycles to become a menstrual cup pro

How is a menstrual cup used?



1. Wash your hands. Fold the cup to make a small rolled 'C' shape.



2. Insert rim first gently into the vagina, let it open slowly then push the cup the rest of the way in. It is not felt at all when inserted correctly.



3. Empty when full or after 12 hours. Rinse and re-use.

Always make sure you buy a menstrual cup from a well-known and registered brand. Some sold on the internet can be made of contaminated silicone, and the cup or stem may crack or break after only a few uses.