

COVID -19

MENSTRUAL HEALTH & HYGIENE (MHH) SAFE PRACTICES

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BACKGROUND

At a time when the global community is hit by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of safe sanitation and hygiene to prevent diseases and live a healthy and fulfilling life is more obvious than ever before. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) works to enable people including women and girls and those in vulnerable situations to practice the right to sanitation and hygiene across the course of their lives with dignity and safety. As the international community rapidly responds to the pandemic, through this document WSSCC intends to explore the use and care of menstrual materials, not to distract from the wider challenges which everyone is currently facing, but to ensure that no one is left behind in having their basic sanitation and hygiene needs met in the midst of the wider crisis.

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a normal biological process experienced by half of the world's population for a significant part of their lives, including women, girls, trans, nonbinary, intersex, and agender people who menstruate. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global community faces a shortage of necessities, supplies, and commodities that are central to women and girls' health, empowerment, and dignity.

National Family Health Survey 2018 estimates that of the 336 million menstruating women in India, about 121 million women use sanitary napkins, locally or commercially produced. There are different menstrual materials that absorb or collect menstrual blood available and can be used as per availability, feasibility, and choice of user. Unhygienic handling and usage of menstrual hygiene materials would make women vulnerable to infections. The issue might increase a woman's chances of contracting cervical cancer, Reproductive Tract Infections, Hepatitis B infection, various types of yeast infections and Urinary Tract Infection, further pushing women and trans-men from marginalized intersections who mostly do not have financial access to healthcare and health insurances to the tenebrous pit of death.¹

¹ Anon., 2020. *Inaccessibility To Menstrual Hygiene In Times Of COVID-19*, s.l.: FEMINISM IN INDIA.

Hence, maintaining proper menstrual hygiene becomes an important part of safely managed water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services which are an essential part of preventing and protecting human health during infectious disease outbreaks. This document explores different types of menstrual materials, their hygienic usage and disposal in different situations. While practicing vigilant hand washing and sanitizing the house due to COVID-19, it is important to practice the same type of hygiene care with your menstrual products. Also, access to menstrual products may be limited during current pandemic situation, in such a case, usage of the available material in a hygienic way is very important.

UNDERSTANDING

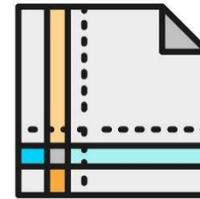
MENSTRUAL HYGEINE MATERIALS

Menstrual materials are used to contain or collect menstrual blood. The preference of sanitary protection material is based on personal choice, cultural acceptability, economic status, and availability in local market. The choice of materials varies among rural and urban women and girls. In rural areas, the most preferred materials are reusable cloth pads and in urban areas women prefer to use commercial sanitary pads.² Commercially produced reusable pads are also increasingly available, again at a range of qualities. Other menstrual materials include biodegradable pads, disposable tampons, and menstrual cups.

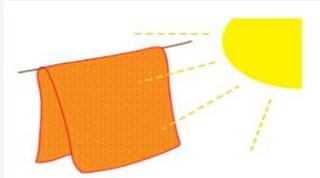
The following section presents an overview of available menstrual hygiene materials and, for each material, this guide elaborates on its use and care, affordability and waste management systems.

²Rajanbir Kaur, K. K. a. R. K., 2018. Menstrual Hygiene, Management, and Waste Disposal: Practices and Challenges Faced by Girls/Women of Developing Countries. *Hindawi*, p. 2.

MENSTRUAL CLOTH



CHARACTERSTIC	SPECIFIC INFORMATION
<p>Description</p>	<p>Cloths are reusable pieces of fabric worn externally to the body, in underwear or tied to the waist to absorb menstrual flow. They are made from either newly purchased pieces of fabric (mostly cotton) or old and clean fabric repurposed from clothing or another use.</p>
<p>Use and Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is advised to use a cotton cloth (instead of other types of cloth) as it prevents rashes and acts as good absorbent. • Always wash your hands with soap/handwash before and after changing the cloth. • Proper washing with clean water and drying it (preferably in sunlight, or if this is not feasible it should be dried in a clean, dry, open-air space) to be ensured before use. If the cloth is old and has been lying unused for a long time use an antiseptic solution to clean/sanitise. Wearing damp or unclean material can lead to rashes and infections. • The cloth needs to be kept in a bag or other accessible place for easy access. • It should be ensured that any embroidery, hooks, buttons, metal, or any extraneous materials are removed as any material remaining on the cloth can be extremely dangerous. <div data-bbox="1161 1659 1461 1879" data-label="Image"> </div>

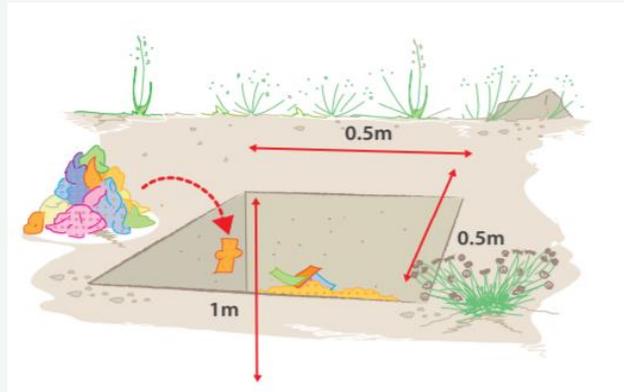
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before inserting the cloth, make sure that you fold the cloth evenly. Number of folds, height and width of the cloth depends upon your flow. Generally, 3-4 folds would be enough to have it as a good absorbent. Avoid making too many folds as it might make you uncomfortable. • Relax your muscles and get into a position which makes it comfortable for you to insert the cloth, preferably a squat position. • Place the cloth on the underwear and wear the underwear making sure the cloth stays directly underneath the vagina. • Depending on need, change the cloth a minimum of 3-4 times a day. • Always carry some paper or a bag to store used cloth. • Collection bins/Dustbins should have lids on top to keep the waste protected from flies and animals • Used cloth should be washed in cold water with soap to remove blood and then treated either with antiseptic (if available) or boiled water to remove germs for use.  • Dry the cloth in direct sunlight until it is completely dry because this is most sanitary. If this is not possible, dry the material in a clean, dry, and open-air space until it is completely dry. Store in a clean, dry place for next use. 
<p>Cost and Affordability</p>	<p>Cloths are easily available at home in the form of old clothes and are also cheap to procure locally. The average cost is about 40-50 Rs a square metre.</p>

Disposal

Cloths are environmentally friendly as they can be reused and are mostly made from natural fabrics. However, eventually they must be disposed of, and in some contexts, they are discarded after one use. Cloths should be disposed if they become irritable when you wear them or if you cannot get a smell out of them after cleaning. In that case the following should be kept in mind.

1. **DEEP BURIAL**

Dig a pit 0.5m wide x 0.5m in breadth x 1m deep and bury the cloth. A pit this size can last for two years. Once filled, another pit can be dug and used. Such pits should be dug a minimum of seven meters from water sources, including hand pumps, tube wells, open wells, ponds, reservoirs, and rivers.



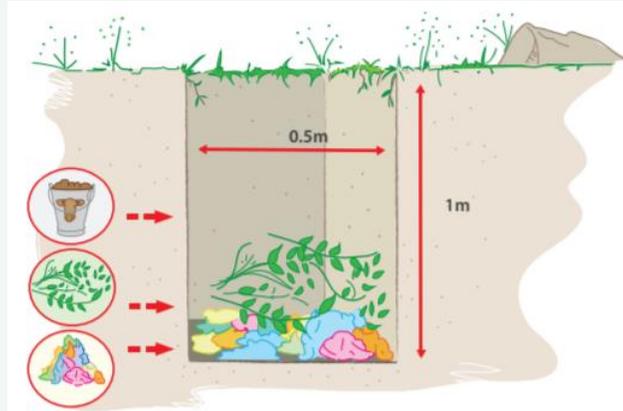
If ground is unavailable, wrap the cloth in paper and dispose it into a regular waste management collection and disposal system.

2. **REGULAR WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:**

If ground is unavailable, wrap the cloth in paper and dispose it into a regular waste management collection and disposal system. The regular waste management practice involves collecting waste from sources through a community collective bin system, after which it gets transported to a low-lying landfill system with intermediate processing of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)

3. **COMPOSTING:**

Used cloth could be buried in a simple pit. In a pit 0.5m wide x 0.5m in breadth x 1m deep, deposit the waste cloth along with leaves, other wet biomass, and dung slurry. The additional material needs to be added every time cloths or napkins are disposed. Cover the material with a layer of soil.



RECOMMENDATIONS

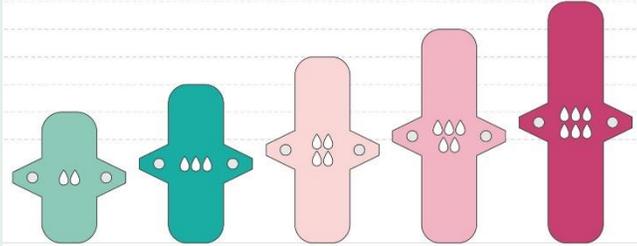
- Do not drop the cloth in the latrine pit as this can cause problems with emptying the pit and if it is a water seal pour flush pan it could easily become blocked.

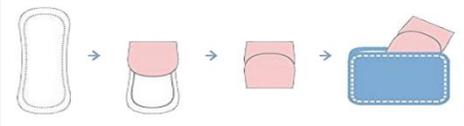
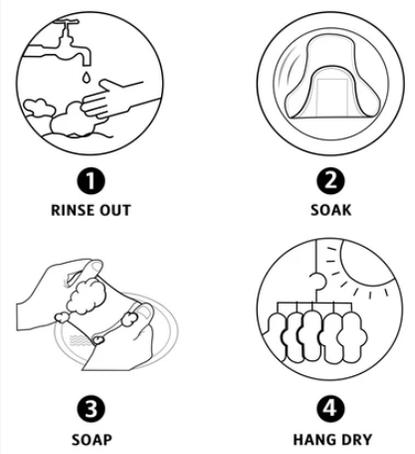


- The cloth should not be disposed in any body of water, near any body of water, or in an open area where community gatherings happen.

REUSABLE CLOTH PAD



CHARACTERSTIC	SPECIFIC INFORMATION
<p>Description</p>	<p>Reusable pads are worn externally to the body in the underwear, to absorb menstrual flow and held in place usually by snaps. They are made from a variety of natural or synthetic materials. After use, they are washed, dried and re-used for approximately one year.</p> <p>Most of the commercially available pads are manufactured locally or through small businesses and can be purchased through some health and speciality stores, and via Internet stores and marketplaces. They are available in a range of lengths and thicknesses, like disposable pads, with longer pads for night use and thinner and shorter pads for light use.</p> 
<p>Use and Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloth Pads need to be kept in a bag or other accessible place for easy access. • Washable pads are worn like any other sanitary pads. Place the pad on the underwear and fasten press buttons on the pad beneath the underwear. 

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on need, change the pad a minimum of 3-4 times a day. Washable pads are worn like any other sanitary pads. Place the pad on underwear and fasten the pad's press buttons beneath the underwear. Always carry some paper or a bag to store used pads.  Collection bins/Dustbins should have lids on top to keep the waste protected from flies and animals Used pads should be washed in cold water with soap to remove blood and then treated either with antiseptic (if available) or boiled water to remove germs. Hand scrub with mild soap and water. Do not use brush.  Dry the cloth in direct sunlight until it is completely dry because this is most sanitary. If this is not possible, dry the material in a clean, dry, and open-air space until it is completely dry. Store in a clean, dry place for next use.
<p>Cost and Affordability</p>	<p>These cloth pads are reusable, so they are cost-effective over time. The average cost of a single cloth pad costs between 130-170 Rs a piece and can be used for a year. The life cycle cost is usually lower than that of disposables, if the family can afford the initial purchase.</p>
<p>Disposal</p>	<p>Reusable pads can be used for approximately one year and thus produce significantly less solid waste than single-use, disposable materials.</p> <p>While disposing, similar disposal techniques as that for a menstrual cloth can be followed.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do NOT drop the pad in the latrine pit as this can cause problems with emptying the pit and if it is a water seal pour flush pan it could easily become blocked.• The pad should not be disposed in any body of water, near any body of water, or in an open area where community gatherings happen.
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DISPOSABLE SANITARY PAD



CHARACTERSTIC	SPECIFIC INFORMATION
<p style="text-align: center;">Description</p>	<p>Sanitary pad, which is also known as sanitary napkin or menstrual pad, is a thin pad made of absorbent material that absorbs the menstrual fluid during menstruation. Some sanitary pads are disposable and are meant for single use only. Pads come in various sizes, absorbencies and materials and consist of a layered design made of blends of plastics, rayon, and cotton.</p> <p>Local procurement is often easy and cheap as disposable pads are available in most contexts with varying brands, but not in very remote areas. Locally produced disposable pads are sometimes available, though with varying quality. In many states Self Help Groups are involved in production of locally made disposable pads.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Use and Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pads need to be kept in a bag or other accessible place for easy access. • Always wash your hands with soap/handwash before and after changing the pad. • Disposable pads are worn externally to the body in the underwear to absorb menstrual flow. They are easy to use as it is placed on the underwear. Remove the strip of adhesive on the back and place it on the underwear directly under the vagina. If the pad has wings, fasten the wings beneath the underwear. <div style="text-align: right;"> </div>

	<p>Some people prefer pads with wings because they can help prevent leakage and keep the pad more securely in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on need, change the pad a minimum of 3-4 times a day. They are disposed of after a maximum of 8 hours. • Always carry some paper or a bag to store used pads in a bin. • Trash bins/Dustbins should have lids on top to keep the waste protected from flies and animals <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single use, unscented thick menstrual pads are usually worn to absorb medium to high flow and night-time flow, and ultra-thin menstrual pads are usually worn to absorb low flow. People sometimes prefer pads with adhesive backing and wings to attach to underwear. • Paying attention to the expiry date is important. In fact, the requirements for hygienic standard of sanitary napkin are extremely strict and the sanitary napkin degrades in quality if it is closer to the expiry date.
<p>Cost and Affordability</p>	<p>Relatively higher prices and reoccurring costs render disposable pads unaffordable for many. However, sanitary napkins are available in a wide variety of range depending upon its quality. One ‘unit’ is a pack containing a minimum of 20 pads. The average cost of a packet with 20 pads cost between 50-60 Rs which makes it 2-3 Rs per pad.</p>
<p>Disposal</p>	<p>As non-reusable pads are disposed after one use, they create large quantities of litter and accumulate in landfills. Like other menstrual products, they can also block sanitation systems when thrown in toilets and release toxins when burned incorrectly.</p> <p>While disposing, similar disposal techniques as that for a menstrual cloth can be followed.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

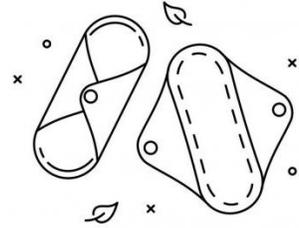
- Do NOT drop the pad in the latrine pit as this can cause problems with emptying the pit and if it is a water seal pour flush pan it could easily become blocked.



- The pad should NOT be disposed in any body of water, near any body of water, or in an open area where community gatherings happen.



BIODEGRADABLE SANITARY PAD



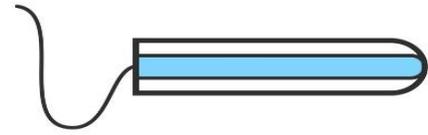
CHARACTERSTIC	SPECIFIC INFORMATION
<p>Description</p>	<p>Biodegradable sanitary pads are eco-friendly, compostable pads that are made using natural raw materials like bamboo fibre, organic cotton, corn starch, banana fibre. These are of two types: disposable sanitary pads and reusable cloth pads.</p> <p>These are available in various brands and sizes and can be easily found at medical stores and online selling platforms. The government is exploring partnership with a company that produces biodegradable options to increase their use.</p>
<p>Use and Care</p>	<p>Biodegradable Pads have the same use and care as that of regular disposable and reusable sanitary pads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pads need to be kept in a bag or any other accessible place for easy access. • Always wash your hands with soap/handwash before and after changing the pad. • They are easy to use as it is placed on the underwear. In case of disposable pads, remove the strip of adhesive on the back and on the wings and fasten the wings beneath the underwear. • In case of reusable pads, Place the pad on the underwear and fasten press buttons on the pad beneath the underwear.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on need, change the pad a minimum of 3-4 times a day. • Always carry some paper or a bag to store used pads. Dispose the disposable pads in a dustbin. • Collection bins/Dustbins should have lids on top to keep the waste protected from flies and animals. • In case of a reusable pad, while washing rinse and scrub them. Used pads should be washed in cold water with soap to remove blood and then treated either with antiseptic (if available) or boiled water to remove germs. Hand scrub with mild soap and water. Do not use brush. • Dry the cloth in direct sunlight until it is completely dry because this is most sanitary. If this is not possible, dry the material in a clean, dry, and open-air space until it is completely dry. Store in a clean, dry place for next use.
<p style="text-align: center;">Cost and Affordability</p>	<p>Biodegradable Cloth Pads: Cloth pads are reusable, so they are cost-effective over time if families can afford the initial cost, and the life cycle cost is usually lower than that of disposables. The average cost of a single biodegradable cloth pad costs between 100-130 Rs a piece and can be used up to 2 years, depending upon the brand.</p> <p>Biodegradable Disposable Pads: Biodegradable disposable pads come at a higher price point than that of cloth ones. The average cost of a pack of 10 costs between 200-300 Rs making it 20-30 Rs a pad.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Disposal</p>	<p>The biodegradable pads are usually made of organic materials such as bamboo, corn, jute, or banana fibre hence produce less waste and are easily compostable than the majority pads used. It usually takes 6-8 months for a bio-degradable pad to compost in ideal compost conditions.</p> <p>While disposing, similar disposal techniques as that for a menstrual cloth can be followed.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS

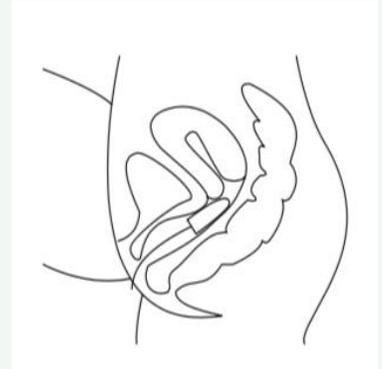
- Do NOT drop the pad in the latrine pit as this can cause problems with emptying the pit and if it is a water seal pour flush pan it could easily become blocked.
- The pad should NOT be disposed in any body of water, near any body of water, or in an open area where community gatherings happen.
- It is always recommended to research about the brand before buying, if it is 100% biodegradable, how long and under which conditions the biodegradation would take place.

TAMPONS



CHARACTERSTIC	SPECIFIC INFORMATION
<p>Description</p>	<p>Tampons are absorbent materials made from cotton and/or rayon that are inserted into the vagina to absorb menstrual flow. They expand with moisture and thereby avoid leakage. They can be worn for up to 8 hours, after which they are removed using the removal string, and disposed of. They come in a variety of sizes, materials and with or without an applicator to assist insertion.</p> <p>These are available with various brands at speciality and medical stores, and online selling platforms but are often not available and are rarely used in rural and peri-urban areas.</p>
<p>Use and Care</p>	<div data-bbox="553 1098 1438 1388" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing the right size of tampon is the first and foremost step of using a tampon. Not all tampons are created equal, they come in different sizes and each size indicates the amount of menstrual fluid it can absorb. • Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water to prevent dirt and germs from getting into or near your vagina. • Get comfortable. Try sitting on the toilet with knees apart or standing with one foot on the toilet seat. If you are squatting, relax your body as much as you can while squatting.

- Most tampons come with applicators made of cardboard or plastic. These applicators surround the cotton tampon and make it easier to insert it into your vagina.
- **Gently insert the tampon applicator into your vagina:** hold the No-Slip Grip applicator plunger using your thumb and middle finger. Place the applicator tip into your vagina at a 45° angle. Now, gently slide the smooth, tapered applicator all the way into your vagina until your fingers touch your body. Push gently and slowly until it the bottom of the tampon is fully inserted. If it has an applicator, you can then pull the applicator out and throw it away.
- You should be able to see the string hanging down from your vagina. This is there to help you take the tampon out later. Inserting a tampon should never hurt. If it does, it may mean you are using one that is too thick, that you must relax your body more, that you need to change the angle in pushing in the tampon, or it is not inserted far enough.
- **Remember to always wash your hands** after removing or inserting tampons.
- **Tampon Removal:** relax your muscles. Try getting into the position you used during insertion. Gently pull down on the strings. The tampon should slide out easily. **DO NOT** flush the used tampon in the toilet. Wrap the tampon in toilet paper and place it in an appropriate waste container.



	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to change your tampon every 4-8 hours a day. If you are leaking a bit, consider moving up to a higher-absorbency tampon for a few days to help manage the flow. Changing your tampon frequently can help prevent toxic shock syndrome (TSS).³ • To lower the risk of (TSS) the use of a tampon with the lowest absorbency is recommended, depending on your flow. • Do NOT dispose of the tampon in toilet as it may clog the drainage system.
Cost and Affordability	<p>Relatively higher prices and reoccurring costs render tampons unaffordable for many. The average cost of a piece of tampon costs between 2-3 Rs per piece. However, a pack has varying number of tampons depending upon what the brand offers.</p>
Disposal	<p>As tampons are disposed after one-time wear, they create large amounts of waste.</p> <p>While disposing, similar disposal techniques as that for a disposable or non-reusable sanitary pad can be followed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do NOT drop the tampon in the latrine pit as this can cause problems with emptying the pit and if it is a water seal pour flush pan it could easily become blocked. • The tampon should NOT be disposed in any body of water, near any body of water, or in an open area where community gatherings happen.

³ TSS is a rare but serious and sometimes fatal disease. It is caused by a toxin produced by strains of a bacterium known as Staphylococcus aureus, which normally lives harmlessly on the skin and in the nose, armpit, groin or vagina of one in three people. Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) can occur in several settings, including post-partum, from infected skin, surgical interventions or as a result of menstrual hygiene practices. Menstrual-related TSS results from insertion of a fomite (an object or substance that can carry infectious organisms).

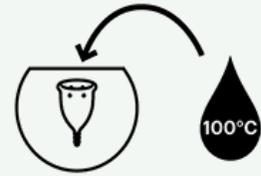
MENSTRUAL CUP



CHARACTERSTIC	SPECIFIC INFORMATION
Description	<p>The menstrual cup is a non-absorbent bell-shaped device with a stem that is inserted into the vagina to collect menstrual flow. It creates a seal and is held in place by the walls of the vagina. It is typically made of medical-grade silicone. A menstrual cup can hold 1 ounce of liquid, roughly twice the amount of a super-absorbent tampon or pad and needs to be emptied every 6-12 hours, after which it is rinsed and re-inserted.</p> <p>These are available in various brands and can be easily found at medical and speciality stores and a wide variety available on online selling platforms.</p>
Use and Care	<p>Cups are easy to use in relation to ease and discretion of washing, drying, storing, comfort, leakage protection, odour development, quality, and length of wear.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">INSERTING A MENSTRUAL CUP</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Choosing the right size of a menstrual cup is the first and foremost step before using one. It is more important to find a cup that fits you properly than to try to find a cup that you can wear for the maximum amount of time, or that holds the most blood2. Menstrual cups are available in 2 main sizes large and small. (generally coded as A and B). The smaller size is recommended for women under 30 and who have not given birth vaginally. The

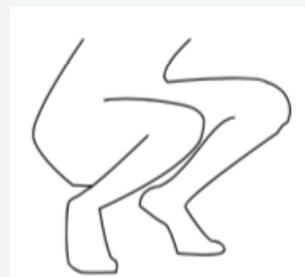
larger size is recommended for women either who are over 30, have given birth vaginally, or have a heavy flow.

3. Before using your cup for the first time you should sterilize the cup in boiling water for 3-5 minutes. Remember to prevent the cup from touching the bottom of the pot.



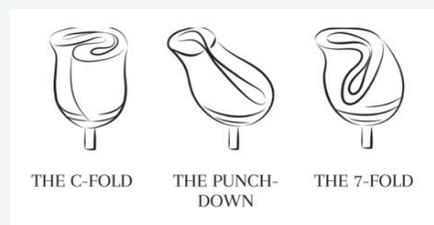
4. **WASH** / Remember to wash your hands and your cup using clean water and a mild soap before inserting it.

5. **RELAX**: It is important to relax your muscles when inserting your menstrual cup, so find a comfortable position. You can lie down, squat, sit on the toilet or simply stand up. You will find the position that works best for you over time. If a position is uncomfortable, do not force the cup in.



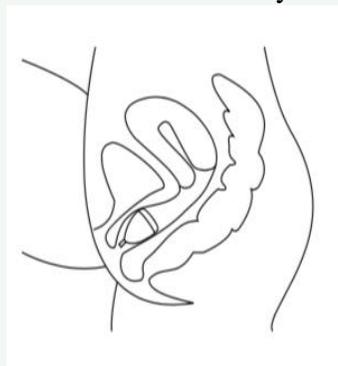
6. **FOLD**: There are many different folding techniques so experiment and find the one that works for you. Three of the most popular methods are: **The Punch-Down Fold, The C-Fold, and the 7-Fold.**

- **C-fold or U-fold**: Press the sides of the cup together so that from the top it resembles a long oval. Fold the cup in half, so it looks like the letters C or U.
- **Punch-down fold**: Put a finger on the top rim of the cup and push it into the centre of the cup (near the base), forming a triangle.
- **7-fold**: Press the sides of the cup together so that from the top it resembles a long oval. Fold one side down diagonally, so it looks like the number 7.



7. **INSERT AND RELEASE:** Insert the folded menstrual cup and once the entire cup is inside of you, simply remove your fingers and let it unfold. If the menstrual cup has been inserted correctly, you might hear a “pop” or a suction sound which means that the cup has folded out completely and created the necessary suction seal.

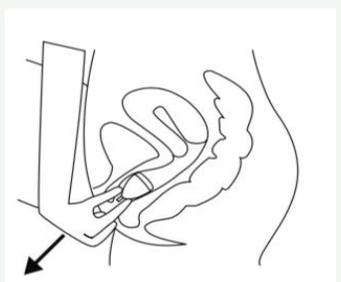
8. **ROTATE:** If you feel any dents or folds on the base of your menstrual cup and you’re not quite sure the suction seal has been created, then gently grip the base of the cup (not the stem), and rotate it to make it unfold. Once your menstrual cup is in place, try to pull the stem a bit, if you feel resistance, the suction seal has been created and the cup has been placed successfully.



9. You can wear a cup up to 12 hours but depending upon your flow you may have to empty it twice a day.

REMOVING A MENSTRUAL CUP

1. **Wash your hands thoroughly** with warm water and soap and rinse them thoroughly with clean water.
2. Get back into a position which is comfortable for you to remove the cup. You can lie down, squat, sit on the toilet or simply stand up.
3. Insert a finger alongside the Menstrual Cup to release the seal. If you cannot reach the base of the cup either pull gently on the stem, or 'push down' with your vaginal muscles until you can grasp the base of the cup. You may hear the seal



release and the Menstrual Cup should then come easily away from the wall of your vagina. Relax and be gentle when removing the cup – if you feel pain removing it, it usually means the seal is not yet broken. If there is resistance to pulling the Menstrual Cup out, try again to break the seal of the cup by re-inserting a finger along the menstrual cup until you feel the tension released and you can pull the cup out.

4. Empty and Wash, once you have removed your menstrual cup, you should empty the collected fluid into the toilet or sink and rinse the cup with water. Make sure the small air holes along the top of the cup's rim do not still have blood in them. Re-insert the cup.
5. When your period has ended: Wash the cup with soap and water, then boil the cup for 3-5 minutes in water to disinfect it and store your cup in a cotton bag. Do not store in a plastic bag or sealed container.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is a good idea to boil the cup in water for 5–10 minutes between each menstrual cycle.
- Remove your Menstrual Cup and contact your doctor if you experience symptoms such as general pain, burning, irritation, inflammation in the genital area or discomfort during urination.
- If you feel uncomfortable while using a menstrual cup, it may not have unfolded within your vagina. Gently remove the cup and try again, including trying one of the other types of folds to see what works best for you. Some brands also suggest trimming the stem at the bottom of the Menstrual Cup – check the instructions for your brand and, if you do decide to trim the stem, only cut a small part off at a time and see how it feels.
- There is no need to remove the Menstrual Cup for urination or bowel movements.

<p style="text-align: center;">Cost and Affordability</p>	<p>The cup allows its user to safely handle menstruation without reoccurring costs for many years, as a menstrual cup easily lasts up to 5-10 years. The cost of a menstrual cup ranges between 300-900 Rs depending upon its size and quality.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Disposal</p>	<p>The cup can be used for 5-10 years and thus produces significantly less waste than other MHH materials. However, while disposing, dispose the cup into a regular waste management collection and disposal system or similar disposal techniques as that for a menstrual cloth can be followed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do NOT drop the cup in the latrine pit as this can cause problems with emptying the pit and if it is a water seal pour flush pan it could easily become blocked. • The cup should NOT be disposed in any body of water, near any body of water, or in an open area where community gatherings happen.

4DIY SANITARY PAD

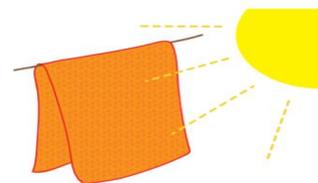
In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire world is facing a shortage of necessities and supplies including MHH supplies. With extensive lockdown, strict rules, access has become increasingly challenging as a result of stock-outs of supplies. In such situations the following are easy steps to make a sanitary reusable cloth pad at home. In this section, we will learn how to make clean, hygienic, eco-friendly sanitary napkins.

1. To start with examine different types of cloth and identifying sources of cotton clothing such as petticoats, cotton vests, bed sheets, towels etc., which can be used as sanitary products.

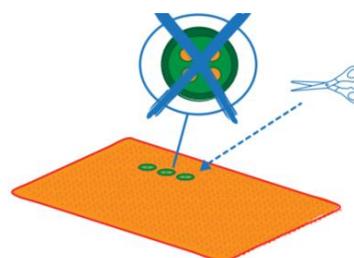
2. Clean a piece of cloth with warm water and detergent. If the cloth is old and has been lying unused for a long time use an antiseptic solution to clean/sanitise, if you cannot afford an antiseptic solution use saponified edible organic coconut oil, sodium bicarbonate, white vinegar or purified and structured water.



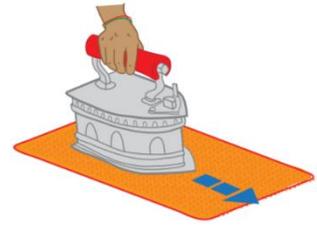
3. Dry the cloth in direct sunlight to ensure it is free of any infection causing germs or organisms.



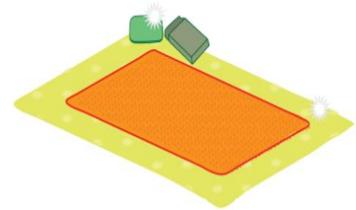
4. Important: make sure that any embroidery, hooks, buttons, metal, or any extraneous materials are removed as any material remaining on the cloth can be dangerous.



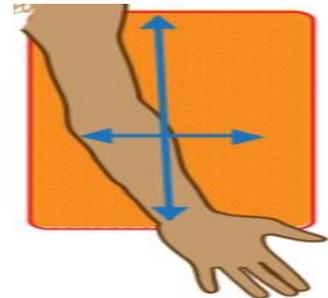
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5. If necessary, iron the cloth to make sure that it is moisture-free.



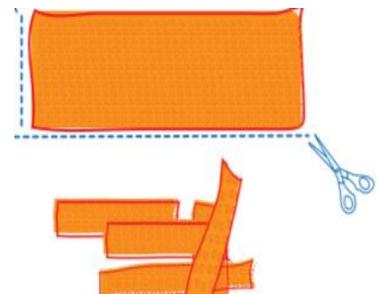
6. Place the cloth in a clean area.



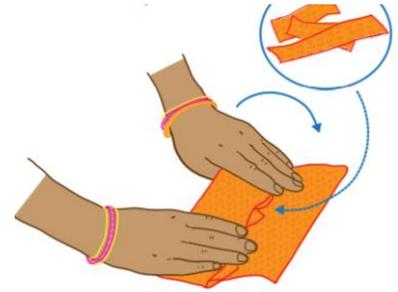
7. Measure the cloth to approximately one arm length
And half an arm's width. (Modify size based on personal
comfort and convenience.)



8. Save the cuttings from the cloth to fill the pad to provide
comfort and better absorption.



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9. Put the cuttings in the centre of the pad and fold 1/3rd of the cloth along the length over the cuttings from one side then repeat on the other side to make one long rectangle.



10. Fold the open ends along the breadth of the pad to finish it off.



11. Wrap the pads in paper and store in a clean and dry place, ideally inside a clean box or container. Make sure, the pads are not vulnerable to mice, termites and other insects.



SAFE WASH PRACTICES

AMIDST COVID-19

Safely managed water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services are an essential part of preventing and protecting human health during infectious disease outbreaks, including the current COVID-19 pandemic. Good WASH and waste management practices, if consistently applied, serve as barriers to human-to-human transmission of the COVID-19 virus in homes, communities, health care facilities, schools, and other public spaces. Safely managed WASH services are also critical during the recovery phase of a disease outbreak to mitigate secondary impacts on community livelihoods and wellbeing. If not managed, secondary impacts can increase the risk of further spreading water borne diseases, including potential disease outbreaks such as cholera, particularly where the disease is endemic. This section explores different practices of WASH with a focus on Handwashing and Toilet Usage majorly catering to the demand of COVID responsive features.

HAND HYGEINE

Hand hygiene is a way of cleaning one's hands that substantially reduces potential pathogens (harmful germs) on the hands. Hand hygiene procedures include hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 secs or use of 60% alcohol-based hand rubs. Current evidence indicates that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets or contact. Contact transmission occurs when contaminated hands touch the mouth, nose, or eyes; the virus can also be transferred from one surface to another by contaminated hands, which facilitates indirect contact transmission. Consequently, hand hygiene is extremely important to prevent the spread of the COVID19 virus. It also interrupts transmission of other viruses and bacteria causing common colds, flu, and pneumonia, thus reducing the general burden of disease. Here is everything you need to know about how to wash your hands the right way:



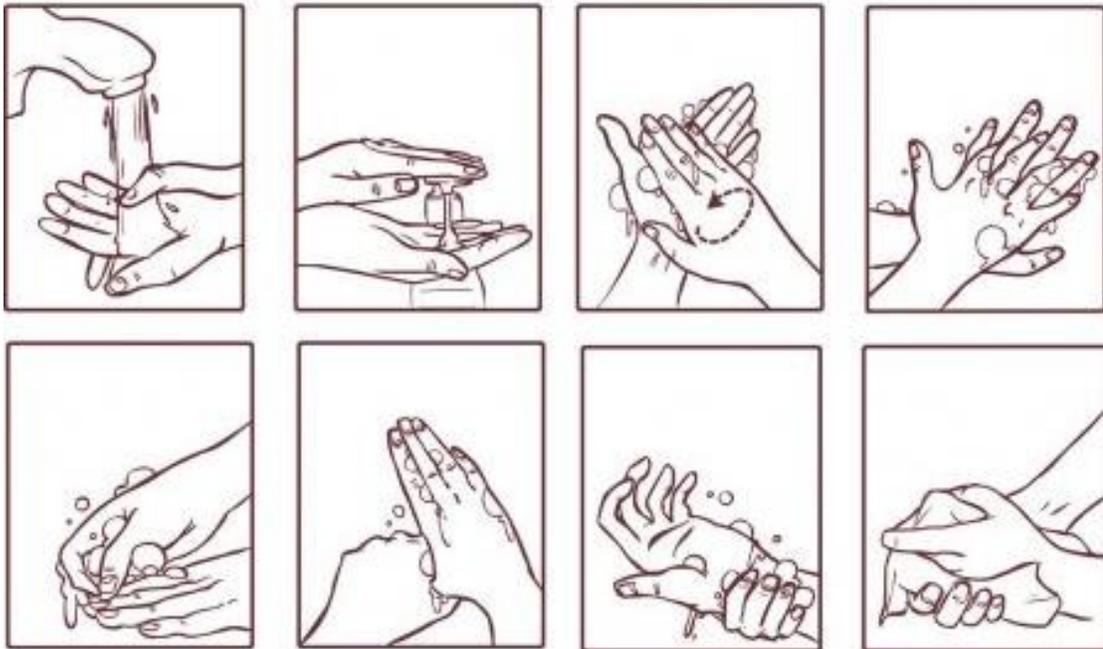
1. How do I wash my hands properly?

To eliminate all traces of the virus on your hands, a quick scrub and a rinse will not cut it. Below is a step-by-step process for effective handwashing:

Step 1: Wet hands with running water.

Step 2: Apply enough soap to cover wet hands.

Step 3: Rub your palms together, Rub the back of each hand, Rub both your hands while interlocking your fingers, Rub the back of your fingers, Rub the tips of your fingers, Rub your thumbs and the ends of your wrists for at least 40-60 seconds.



Step 4: Rinse thoroughly with running water

Step 5: Dry hands with a clean cloth or single-use towel

Note: Using chlorinated water or hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol are the best second options if you do not have soap and running water.

2. When should I wash my hands?

In the context of COVID-19 prevention, you should make sure to wash your hands at the following times:

- Before blowing your nose.
- After coughing or sneezing.
- After visiting a public space, including public transportation, markets, and places of worship.
- After touching surfaces that have been outside of the home, including money and groceries.
- Before, during and after caring for a sick person.
- Before cooking.
- Before and after eating.
- Before feeding children or others that you care for.
- After cleaning child's bottom.

SAFE SANITATION PRACTICES

As per Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the virus that causes COVID-19 has been detected in the faeces of some patients diagnosed with COVID-19. The amount of virus released from the body (shed) in stool, how long the virus is shed, and whether the virus in stool is infectious are not known. However, several case studies have reported gastrointestinal symptoms and/or evidence that some patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection have viral RNA or live infectious virus present in faeces, which suggests that another possible route might be faecal–oral transmission.⁵ However, there has been no confirmed faecal-oral transmission of COVID-19 to date. Hence, precautionary principles should be applied, and all faecal sludge generated must be properly disposed of. Following are some of the precautions to keep in mind to avoid faecal-oral transmission of COVID-19

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Huang, Y. W. C. G. L. T. Z. H. J. Z. X. D. H. Y. Q. X. Y. T. X. Q. L. K. X. F. N. M. J. L. H. S. G. J. X., 2020. Prolonged Presence of SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA in faecal samples. *The Lancet*, 5(5).

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- Always use a toilet and avoid open defecation. Open defecation increases the risk of many other diseases like diarrhoea, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis, polio, trachoma, and others.
 - Always practice hand washing with soap and water after using the toilet.
 - Always Cover the lid of dustbin containing bathroom/toilet waste.
 - Ensure cleaning of toilets once a day.
 - To avoid getting COVID-19 when using a public bathroom you should wash your hands, then flush (using gloves or paper towel to avoid contact with the handle) to minimize contamination period—and wait one to two minutes to use a public bathroom after someone has finished
 - The danger of faecal-oral transmission is higher for symptomatic people, so if you share a bathroom with a COVID-19 positive individual, disinfect the entire washroom with disinfectants.
 - Where patient care is taking place, hand hygiene facilities, including products (e.g. alcohol-based hand-rub if available, water, soap, sinks) should be in place, easily accessible, as close as possible (e.g. within arm's reach) to the point of care to fulfil the right times for hand hygiene in support of patient.

For Further Details Contact:

Vinod Kumar Mishra
India Coordinator, WSSCC
Email: vinod.mishra@wsscc.org

Trupti Ashtankar
WASH Support Officer, WSSCC
Email: trupti.ashtankar@wsscc.onmicrosoft.com

Developed and Designed By:

INDIA SUPPORT UNIT, WSSCC
55, Lodhi Estate,
Joseph Stein Lane,
New Delhi-110003

Contributed By:

Vinod Kumar Mishra, Trupti Ashtankar, Aishwarya Mishra