

Ground Rules

2 minutes

- Listen to and respect each other
- One person speaking at a time
- Openness but no personal stories
- No such thing as a silly question
- During discussions we have the right to pass
- We won't laugh at, judge, or make assumptions about anyone else in the group

Learning Objective

We are learning about:

- What periods are and about the factors that affect menstrual wellbeing product choices.

Intended Learning Outcomes

We will be able to:

- Explain what a period is.
- Evaluate a range of factors that affect choices about which menstrual wellbeing products a person might choose to use.

Resources Required

- Box for anonymous questions.

Optional:

- Up until July 2022 there is government funding available to all state-maintained schools, to provide free period products (menstrual cups, environmentally friendly period pads, reusable period pads, non-applicator tampons and applicator tampons), to learners who need them in their place of study.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/period-products-in-schools-and-colleges/period-product-scheme-for-schools-and-colleges-in-england#period-pads>.

Keywords

Periods	Menstrual Cycle
Pregnancy Risk	Environmenstrual
Menstrual Cups	Period Pants
Period Ownership	

Baseline Assessment

10 minutes

Introduce learning objectives and learning outcomes.

Ask students to draw a line with “agree” on the left and “disagree” on the right. Ask them to use a square to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with the following statements, drawing a new line for each statement:

Menstrual blood is dirty.

A person can still get pregnant on their period.

All menstrual products are equally harmful to the environment.

Core Activities

15 minutes

Play the [‘Period Dramas’](#) video.

Ask students to answer the following quiz questions.

What is a period?

A period is the part of the menstrual cycle when a woman (or trans man or non-binary person) bleeds from their vagina for a few days. The blood that comes down is the uterine lining that has built up throughout the menstrual cycle. The average cycle length is 28 days, but it can range from 21 to 40 days. Day 1 is the first day of bleeding. The average blood loss in a period is 30 to 72mls (5 to 12 teaspoons), although some women bleed more heavily than this.

What is the usual age to have a first period?

The average age is 12, but some girls will start earlier or later. A delay in starting periods isn’t usually a concern and most girls will have started their period by the age 16-18.

And how long does the average period last?

Periods can last between 3 and 8 days, but it will usually last for about 5 days. The bleeding tends to be heaviest in the first two days.

Can someone get pregnant on their period?

Yes. It is low risk compared to having sex mid-cycle, but it is still possible. It is not advised to have unprotected sex at any point in the menstrual cycle. All sex, at any time requires contraception unless planning a pregnancy.

How can some menstrual products harm the environment?

Menstrual products, especially those thrown down the toilets cause harm to the environment by ending up on our beaches and waterways. 50% of people throw menstrual products down the toilet (4.6 million menstrual products every day in the UK). These products must be thrown in the bin. The average woman can get through 11 000 sanitary products in her ‘period lifetime.’ Most menstrual products are composed of up to 90% plastic that can take 500 years to biodegrade. (Statistics taken from organicup.com)

What can someone do to minimise the impact of menstrual products on the environment?

Be environmenstrual! They can consider using alternatives to tampons and sanitary towels. Discuss alternatives: menstrual cups, reusable/washable sanitary towels or period pants.

What does it mean for someone to ‘own their period?’

Understanding their own cycles and what their normal bleeding patterns are is really important so a person can be aware of any changes or missed periods that they might need to discuss with a doctor or nurse. Everyone’s experience of their period will be unique. If someone knows how their period affects their body and thier mood, it can be really empowering as most problems can be resolved when identified and discussed with a professional.

How can someone challenge stigma about periods?

Using positive language around periods is also important. Encourage proper terminology around periods and menstruating rather than slang phrases like ‘being on the blob,’ which can cause shyness, stigma and shame. If the topic of gender and periods comes up we advise you look at the work of Chella Quint at [period positive](http://periodpositive.com) (<https://periodpositive.com>). Taken from Chella’s pledge: ‘It’s period positive to include all genders, because whether you menstruate or not, everybody had a room that was a womb’.

Core Activities Continued...

35 minutes

- 1 Prioritisation of product choice activity: **10 mins**
- 2 2 Ask students to rank the factors into a diamond nine. This is where students show how important they think each factor is as shown below where 1 is the most important and 5 is the least.
- 3 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 If students require further support, consider reducing the number of cards and asking students to simply sort from most to least important.

Students should rank the following factors:

- Initial cost (this is the first cost for a more expensive item).
- Cost over two years (the total cost of using a product over this time).
- Comfort
- Reliability
- Sustainability
- Whether the product purchase donates to charity (for example, buy one give one campaigns).
- Design of the product (how the packaging, product or container looks).
- How long it can be used (whether a product has to be purchased each time it's needed or if it's "on hand" whenever it's needed without having to go to the shop).
- Feeling the product is safe (is the product externally used or internally used, does this influence how safe a person feels while using this).

Discussing the rare, but real dangers of toxic shock syndrome might be worthwhile here;
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/toxic-shock-syndrome/>

Accessing period products circles of support: **15 mins**

Ask students to imagine a student about their age is struggling to access menstrual products. They should think about who could help them and how. Ask them to draw three concentric circles on a sheet and suggest what could be done at each level to help the student.

From inner most circle to outermost:

- The student and their friends
- The school
- Local/National government, charities or communities

For students who require further support, give them ideas as to what could be done to support and ask them to identify which circle would be best placed to take each action. These could include:

- Lending the student some products
- Having products available at reception
- Teaching about a range of period products so the student knows what their options are
- Subsidising reusable products to make them more affordable
- Giving products for free in schools or youth centres

Endpoint Assessment: **10 mins**

Ask students to revisit their attitude continuum and indicate how they feel about each statement now using a triangle.

Sources of support:

NHS support: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods>

LESSON PLAN **PERIOD DRAMAS**

For teacher use only. Year 9– 10.



Extension Activities

Imagine that younger students joining the school have been confused about periods and some of them have said they think they're "gross". Your job is to make an informative poster for the school notice board at school, or develop a talk for an assembly to educate the younger students on periods and menstrual product options.

DO NOT FORGET TO GIVE EACH STUDENT THE FACTSHEET THAT ACCOMPANIES THIS LESSON (these are with the lesson plan downloads).