

# Menstrual products: the choices



PLASTIC FREE  
PERIODS

Worn internally: tampons & cups

	Which materials is it made from?	What level of flow is it suitable for? How often do I need to change it?	What does it cost? (guidance only)	How long will the product last?	Where can I buy it?	What do I do with it after use?
 <b>Non-applicator tampons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cotton or rayon with a thin cover of polyester or polyethylene</li> <li>Plastic wrapper.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>Change every 4-8 hours</li> </ul>	11p per tampon	Single-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supermarkets</li> <li>Chemists</li> <li>Online</li> <li>Machines in public toilets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrap in toilet paper and dispose of in the bin</li> <li>NEVER flush</li> </ul>
 <b>Applicator tampons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cotton or rayon with a thin cover of polyester or polyethylene</li> <li>Cardboard or plastic applicator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>Change every 4-8 hours</li> </ul>	13p per tampon	Single-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supermarkets</li> <li>Chemists</li> <li>Online</li> <li>Machines in public toilets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrap in toilet paper and dispose of in the bin</li> <li>NEVER flush either part</li> </ul>
 <b>Organic tampons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organic, unbleached cotton</li> <li>Bioplastic or plastic wrapper</li> <li>Some have cardboard or bioplastic applicator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>Change every 4-8 hours</li> </ul>	19p per tampon	Single-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online</li> <li>Some supermarkets</li> <li>Health food shops</li> <li>Plastic-free shops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrap in toilet paper and dispose of in the bin or home compost</li> <li>NEVER flush</li> </ul>
 <b>Reusable applicator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicator – medical grade</li> <li>Antibacterial materials</li> <li>Used with tampons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tampons suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>Change every 4-8 hours</li> </ul>	£25 (20p per use, plus non-applicator tampons)	10 years (tampons single-use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some supermarkets</li> <li>Online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wash applicator and reuse</li> <li>Wrap tampon in toilet paper and dispose of in the bin or home compost</li> <li>NEVER flush</li> </ul>
 <b>Menstrual cups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical grade silicon, latex or TPE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>Change every 4-12 hours</li> </ul>	£9-£20 (This works out on average at 7p - 17p per period, assuming you have 12 a year)	Several years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online</li> <li>Some supermarkets</li> <li>Chemists</li> <li>Health food shops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rinse or wipe after emptying</li> <li>Sterilise with boiling water / sterilising solution after each cycle.</li> </ul>

This leaflet is for guidance only, please check individual products for costs, materials and usage instructions.



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The average menstruator will spend about 3,500 days having a period, which equates to 11,000-15,000 disposable products.



The majority of menstruators (59%) dispose of products in the bin, however those that are flushed down the loo cause issues down the chain.



When people flush tampons, applicators, pads and wipes down the loo, our sewers are at risk of flooding, damaging homes and polluting our beaches and waterways. Only flush the 3Ps - paper, poo and pee. Everything else goes in the bin!

Worn externally: pads & pants

	Which materials is it made from?	What level of flow is it suitable for? How often do I need to change it?	What does it cost? (guidance only)	How long will the product last?	Where can I buy it?	What do I do with it after use?
 <b>Disposable pad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthetic fibres, plastic</li> <li>• Organic cellulose</li> <li>• Synthetic fragrances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>• Change every 3-4 hours</li> </ul>	10p per pad	Single-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supermarkets</li> <li>• Chemists</li> <li>• Online</li> <li>• Machines in public toilets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fold and dispose of in the bin</li> <li>• NEVER flush</li> </ul>
 <b>Organic disposable pad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic cotton</li> <li>• Wood pulp</li> <li>• Bioplastic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>• Change every 3-4 hours</li> </ul>	25p per pad	Single-use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some supermarkets</li> <li>• Chemists</li> <li>• Online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fold and dispose of in the bin or home compost</li> <li>• NEVER flush</li> </ul>
 <b>Reusable pad</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cotton</li> <li>• Bamboo</li> <li>• Synthetic materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for a range of flows</li> <li>• Change every 3-4 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £4.50 per pad (18p per use over product lifetime)</li> <li>• 2 or 3 pads needed to allow for washing and drying</li> </ul>	Up to 5 years, if well cared for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online</li> <li>• Make your own (instructions online)</li> <li>• In some supermarkets</li> <li>• Health food shops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand or machine wash without fabric softener and hang dry.</li> <li>• Rinse with cold water and store in a wet bag if changed away from home.</li> </ul>
 <b>Pants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cotton</li> <li>• Synthetic materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for a range of flows (hold between 1-10 regular tampons worth of blood)</li> <li>• Change every 4-12 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £10 - £20 per pair (40p - 80p per use over product lifetime)</li> <li>• 2 or 3 pairs needed to allow for washing and drying</li> </ul>	Up to 3 years, if well cared for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online</li> <li>• Health food shops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand or machine wash without fabric softener and hang dry.</li> <li>• Store in a wet bag if changed away from home.</li> </ul>

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