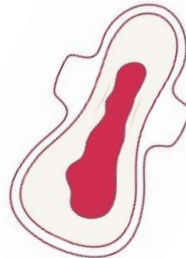


Choosing period products



Choosing period products



Period products soak up or collect the blood that comes from your vagina during your period.

Period pads



Period pads are strips of padding that have a sticky side you attach to your pants to hold them in place.

One side of the pad is made of a material that soaks up the blood.



Many people use pads when they first start their period because they are easy to use.

They come in many sizes and **absorbencies**, so you can change them depending on how heavy or light your period is.



Absorbency means how much blood it can soak up.

The packaging will tell you if the period product is for light, medium or heavy periods.



Pant liners are a smaller and thinner type of pad that can be used on days when your period is very light.

You should change pads or liners around every 4 to 6 hours, depending on your period.



Do not flush pads or liners down the toilet.

Wrap them up and put them in the bin.

There are also reusable period pads that you can wash and use again instead of throwing away.

Tampons



Tampons are small tubes of cotton wool that you put into your vagina to soak up the blood before it comes out of your body.

There is a string at one end that you pull to take the tampon out.

Tampons come with instructions that explain how to use them.

Some come with applicators to help you put the tampon in.

Other types of tampon you can put in using your fingers.



If the tampon is put in correctly, you should not be able to feel it.

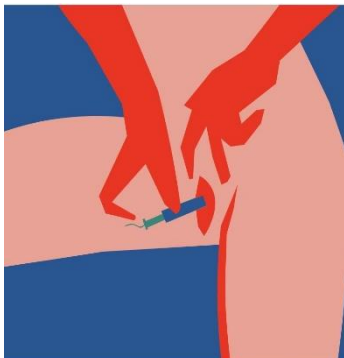
If it hurts you might not have put it in properly.

Your vagina holds the tampon firmly in place and it expands inside you as it soaks up the blood.



You can change to different tampons through your period, if your period is light, medium or heavy.

It is important to choose the right one for you.



You should change your tampon every 4 to 6 hours.

Always remember to change your tampon in the morning if you have had one in overnight.

Do not forget to remove your tampon when your period ends.



If you have an unusual or smelly liquid coming from your vagina, check if you have forgotten to take a tampon out.

Take the tampon out and speak to a doctor as soon as possible.

There is a small risk of a rare illness called toxic shock syndrome.

Period pants



Period pants are worn during your period like everyday pants.

They soak up the blood.

They can be washed and used again.

You will need to have a few pairs so that you have enough to get you through your period.

You will also need access to a washing machine so that you can wash them once you have used them.



There are different period pants to use depending on how heavy your bleeding is.

Some people use them as their only period product.

Others use them with other period products to help feel more confident, for example if they have heavy bleeding.



Like other period products, they can take a bit of getting used to.

They need to be changed after 5 hours.

Menstrual cups



Menstrual cups are made from rubber and are around 2 inches in size.

You put the cup inside your vagina and the cup collects the blood rather than soaking it up.



Menstrual cups can be washed and used again.

This makes it a cheaper period product and it is better for the environment.

A menstrual cup can also collect more blood than a tampon.



It is important to read the instructions so you know how to empty your menstrual cup.

You must wash your hands and wash your menstrual cup, before each time you use it.

This helps to protect you from the small risk of toxic shock syndrome.

Toxic shock syndrome – also known as TSS



Toxic shock syndrome is a very rare condition that is caused when germs get into the body.

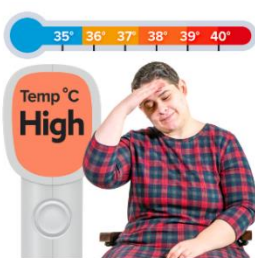
It can happen:

- if you do not change tampons or menstrual cups often enough
- when a menstrual cup is not cleaned before you use it



It is important to wash your hands before and after using a tampon or menstrual cup.

Toxic shock syndrome must be diagnosed and treated quickly.



Phone 111 if you are using tampons or a menstrual cup and you have:

- a high temperature
- symptoms that feel like flu
- sickness or feeling sick
- diarrhoea
- a skin rash





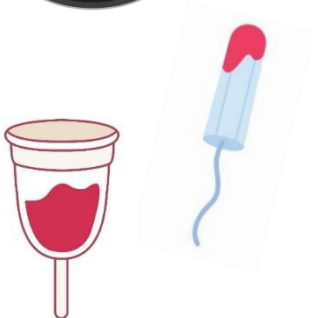
- dizziness or fainting
- difficulty breathing
- confusion

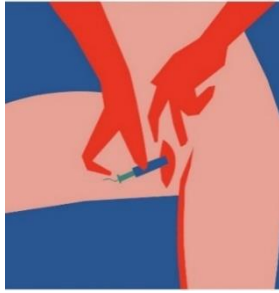
Stopping toxic shock syndrome from happening



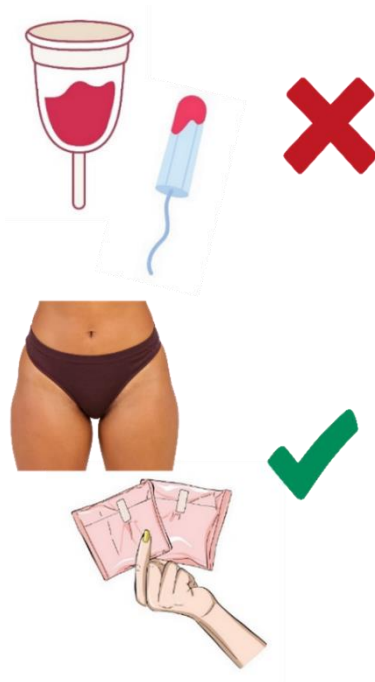
You can help to stop toxic shock syndrome from happening when using tampons or a menstrual cup by:

- using tampons with the right absorbency for your period
- washing your hands before and after changing your tampon or menstrual cup
- wash your menstrual cup before each time you use it
- changing your tampon or menstrual cup every 5 hours
- make sure you only have 1 tampon in your vagina at a time
- stop using tampons or your menstrual cup when your period has ended





- change your tampon or empty your menstrual cup when you wake up if you have used them overnight



If you have been diagnosed with toxic shock syndrome before, do not use a tampon or menstrual cup.



Use a different kind of period product like period pants or pads.

Getting period products



You can get period products for free in Scotland in different places.

Contact your local council to find out where you can get free products in your area or use the PickupMyPeriod app.



[Android - PickupMyPeriod](#)

[IOS/Apple - PickupMyPeriod](#)



From August 2022 the law says that councils and places like schools and colleges must have free period products for anyone who needs them.

[More information about free period products](#)

Sometimes it can feel embarrassing asking for period products – but remember, periods are normal.



You have the right to ask for the help that you need to have healthy periods and to feel, comfortable, healthy and happy.