



THE FLOW'S

Menstrual Cup Toolkit

A GUIDE TO YOUR NEW FAVORITE PERIOD PRODUCT

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What Are Menstrual Cups And Why Are They Better?

Menstrual cups are small, medical-grade silicone devices that are inserted into the vagina to collect menstrual fluid. One cup can be reused for **10 years**, and can safely stay in for **up to 12 hours** at a time.

AFFORDABLE

By switching to cups and not having to buy single-use period products, cup users **can save about \$6,000 over their lifetime.**¹

SUSTAINABLE

Cups last **10 years**, keep **14,000 disposable products**² out of landfills over a lifetime and have **1.5% of the environmental impact**³ of other products.

CONVENIENT

Safe for **12 hours** of continuous wear and **can hold up to 6 tampons** worths of fluid. You can swim, sleep, exercise, and go about daily life and always have an **option on-hand**.

CHEMICAL AND TOXIN FREE

Cups **contain no harmful chemicals** reducing exposure of high absorptive vulvar/vaginal tissue to toxins, decrease transmission of STIs, and decrease incidence of bacterial vaginosis, creating a potential ripple effect of improved health.⁴

INCREASED EMPOWERMENT

Cups encourage users to get familiar with their flow, anatomy, and how their cycle changes over time. **The more you understand your body, the more power you have to protect it.**

Menstrual Cup Size Guide

Menstrual cups are available in different sizes, and size labels vary by brand. To help you choose the right fit, we've created this size guide. If you ever need to try a different size, just let us know and we will send you a replacement!

Size 0 Or Teen

Capacity: 18ml or 2-4 tampons⁵

Ideal for those with a lighter flow, teens under 18, first-time cup users, or those with a low cervix.

Size 1 Or Small

Capacity: 25ml or 3-5 tampons⁶

Ideal for those with a medium to heavy flow, first-time cup users or those with a low cervix.

Size 2, Regular, Or Large

Capacity: 30ml or 4-6 tampons⁷

Ideal for those with a heavier flow. individuals who have given birth or those with a high cervix.

Types Of Menstrual Cup Folds

PUNCH DOWN



Push one side of the rim down into the base to create a narrow, pointed tip. This is ideal for those seeking the smallest insertion point, especially first-time users.

C-FOLD



Flatten the cup and fold it in half to create a "C" or "U" shape. This is simple and great for beginners, offering a moderately small insertion point.

7-FOLD



Press the sides of the cup flat, then fold one corner diagonally to form a "7." This method gives better control and creates a smaller insertion point than the C-Fold.

How To Use A Menstrual Cup how to video

BEFORE YOUR FIRST USE: SANITIZING YOUR CUP

Before using your cup for the first time, it's important to sanitize it. You can either:

- Boil it for 4–5 minutes *Tip: place it in a whisk or tongs to keep it from touching the bottom of the pot.*
- Wipe it with 70% isopropyl alcohol and let it dry completely so the alcohol can fully evaporate.

TO INSERT

1. Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. Fold the Cup: Choose a folding method that works for you, such as the C-fold, punch-down fold, or 7-fold.
3. Find a comfortable position (sitting, squatting, or standing).
4. Gently insert the folded cup into your vagina, angling it up and back towards your tailbone until the body of cup is completely inside. *Tip: Inserting your cup is easier when using water as a natural lubricant.*
5. Make sure the cup is placed correctly:
 - The cup should open fully to create a seal once.
 - Rotate or run a finger around the base of the cup to make sure it has fully unfolded and created the seal. *Tip: You can check the seal by tugging lightly on the stem. If you feel resistance as you softly pull down, you have a good seal!*
6. Wear It Comfortably: Menstrual cups can be worn for up to 12 hours, depending on your flow. You shouldn't feel it when it's correctly positioned.

TO EMPTY + REMOVE

1. Wash your hands thoroughly and find a comfortable position.
2. Gently pinch the base of the cup to release the seal, then pull it out. You can bear down to make this easier.
3. Empty the contents into the toilet.
4. Rinse with cold water (to prevent staining) and then wash the cup with hot water and a mild, PH-balanced, fragrance/oil-free soap, and reinsert.

During your period, you will want to clean your cup at least once every 12 hours.

TO STORE

After your period, wash the cup as instructed above and store it in its breathable pouch. If you'd like, you can sanitize the cup using the method(s) above between cycles or every few.

Tips & Tricks

Trim the stem if it feels too long. If the stem sticks out or feels uncomfortable, you can carefully trim it. Remove the cup first, and cut a little at a time using clean scissors.

Use your pelvic muscles. Gently bearing down - like you're having a bowel movement - can help when inserting or removing the cup. It brings the cup lower and gives you better control.

Fold it your way. There's no one "right" fold. Try the C-fold, punch-down fold, or 7-fold to see what works best for you.

Angle it back, not up. When inserting, aim the cup toward your tailbone, not straight up. It should sit low in the vaginal canal.

Give it a twist. Once inserted, gently rotate the cup to help it open fully and form a seal.

You shouldn't feel it. If the cup is inserted properly, it should be comfortable. If it feels off, try removing and reinserting.

Break the seal before removing. Pinch the base or press the side of the cup to release the suction before pulling it out.

Give yourself time. It's normal for it to take a few cycles to get the hang of it. You're doing great!

How To Change A Cup In A Public Restroom

PREPARE

1. Carry essentials like [unscented wipes](#), a small bottle of water or a [collapsible shaker cup](#).
2. If there's a sink available, wash your hands before entering the stall. If not, use hand sanitizer.
3. If utilizing a shaker cup or water bottle to rinse the cup, be sure to fill it up prior to entering the stall.

CHANGE THE CUP

1. Gently pinch the base of the cup to release the seal, then pull it out. You can bear down to make this easier.
2. Empty the contents into the toilet.
3. Clean The Cup:
 - Option 1: Use a bottle of water to rinse the cup over the toilet.
 - Option 2: Wipe the cup with unscented, alcohol-free wipes.
 - Option 3: Fill a shaker cup with water before entering the stall. Place your cup inside and shake a few times to rinse.
 - If none of these options are available, simply reinsert the cup and clean it thoroughly at your next opportunity.
4. Reinsert The Cup:
 - Once clean, reinsert the cup as usual and ensure it's properly positioned.
5. Use hand sanitizer or wash your hands.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Choose restrooms with private sinks if possible.
- Practice handling your cup before to build confidence.

How-To Links

- [Menstrual Cup Instructions](#)
- [How To Use A Cup Videos](#)
- [How To Use A Menstrual Cup](#)
- [How To Clean A Menstrual Cup](#)
- [How To Clean Your Menstrual Cup In A Public Bathroom](#)
- [FAQs On Menstrual Cups](#)

Want To Learn More About Cups? Check Out These Articles

- [Menstrual Cups: How to Use, Benefits, and More](#)
- [Menstrual Cycle \(Normal Menstruation\): Overview & Phases](#)
- [How Much Blood Do You Lose on Your Period?](#)
- [How tampons and pads became unsustainable and filled with plastic](#)
- [The lifecycle of a tampon: Used for only a few hours, it takes hundreds of years to disintegrate](#)
- [What Period Products Are Best for the Environment?](#)

Have A Question?

What People Are Saying:

"Having access to options is something I appreciate. I had wanted to try using a menstrual cup before but just could not get myself to put down the upfront cost."

"I don't have to worry about leakage, more comfortable and free. It benefited me by rarely having to change it and no leaks."

"It allowed me to not rely on schools having period products available."

"It helped me to not worry if I had pads or tampons because I know I have my cups and there's no shortage of something that's reusable! I just need to worry about cleaning them good."

"My menstrual cup helps me be able to be more active and more comfortable."

"Cotton tampons would cause me to bleed through. I can easily move around without having any accidents."

"Using a menstrual cup has benefited me by helping me save money on menstrual products and has helped my cramps be less painful"

"I no longer suffer from allergies because I used to use other products that caused them."

"I know I have a non toxic, affordable, and environmentally friendly option."

TEXT US YOUR QUESTIONS

Text with a Flow Educator one-on-one! Whether you're just getting started or have run into a few bumps along the way, our educators are here to support you. Ask anything, from fit and insertion tips to cleaning and troubleshooting, and get judgment-free, personalized advice.

Text "Question" To (323) 694-7060

ONE-ON-ONE Q&A SESSION

Menstrual cups can take some getting used to — and we're here to help! Book a Zoom call with one of our educators to get your questions answered!

Schedule A Call

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM

We offer Q&As on Instagram Live alongside educational resources in our posts and stories. DM us your questions — we are here to help!

Follow Us

Additional Ways To Flow



Reusable Menstrual Disc

A flexible, eco-friendly period product designed to sit at the base of the cervix and collect menstrual flow. Discs can hold up to 75ml of fluid, making them great for heavy flows and up to 12 hours of wear. Many users love that discs can be worn during sex and don't create suction. Made of medical-grade silicone, they're washable and reusable for years.



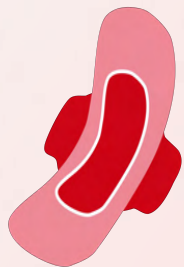
Reusable Menstrual Pad

An eco-friendly, washable alternative to disposable menstrual pads. Made from soft, absorbent fabric layers, they provide comfortable protection during your period and can be used for years with proper care. Reusable pads come in different sizes and absorbency levels to fit your flow.



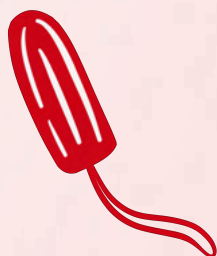
Reusable Period Underwear

A sustainable and comfortable alternative to traditional menstrual products. Designed with multiple absorbent layers, period underwear can be worn alone or as backup protection with other products. They're washable, reusable, and available in a variety of styles and absorbency levels to support light spotting or heavy flows.



Disposable Pad

An external period product that adheres to underwear to absorb menstrual flow. Pads come in various sizes and absorbencies, from liners to overnight protection. Made with cotton or synthetic materials, they're a popular non-invasive option. While easy to use, they can feel bulky and need to be changed every 4–6 hours.



Disposable Tampon

A compact, internal period product inserted into the vaginal canal to absorb menstrual flow. Tampons come in a range of absorbencies and are typically made of cotton or rayon. While convenient and discreet, they must be changed every 4–8 hours to reduce the risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS).

Did You Know?

01

Over a lifetime, the average person menstruates for over **2,500 days** - that's nearly **7 years!**⁸

02

On average, you lose between **20-90 ml** (about 1-5 tablespoons) worth of blood or fluid during your menstrual cycle. That's equivalent to **4-18 fully saturated regular tampons.**⁹

03

5 billion tampons and pads are used globally per year, resulting in 7 million pounds of plastic waste per year.¹⁰

04

1 in 4 teens (1 in 3 for adults) struggle to afford period products.¹¹

05

25% of teens are unable to do schoolwork because of a lack of access to period products, and **60%** due to symptoms.¹¹

06

Toxic metals like **lead and arsenic** were found in tampons, raising concerns about long-term exposure to chemicals in mainstream period products.¹²

07

5 billion pads and tampons are used globally per year, resulting in 7 million pounds of plastic waste per year.¹³

08

One menstrual cup lasts **10 years**, stays in for up to **12 hours**, holds up to **6 tampons** worth of fluid, is **toxin & chemical free**, and costs as little as \$30!

Frequently Asked Questions

USING THE CUP: BASICS & EVERYDAY USE

HOW MUCH BLOOD DOES ONE CUP HOLD?

Menstrual cup capacities vary depending on brand and size.

- Size 0 / Teen: 18ml or 2-4 tampons
- Size 1 / Small: 25ml or 3-5 tampons
- Size 2 / Large / Regular: 30ml or 4-6 tampons.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO EMPTY MY CUP?

Everyone's flow is different. Some people may need to empty their cup every few hours, while others can go much longer. You must empty and clean it at least every 12 hours. We recommend checking it periodically on your first couple of uses to see how full it gets and figure out what works best for you.

CAN I WEAR A MENSTRUAL CUP WHILE I SLEEP?

Yes! Menstrual cups are safe to wear overnight and can stay in for up to 12 hours. If you have a heavy flow, you might want to wear period underwear as a backup—just in case. Most people find cups reliable and mess-free while sleeping.

DO YOU NEED TO TAKE IT OUT WHEN USING THE BATHROOM?

Nope! You can pee or poop without removing your cup. It sits in the vaginal canal, which is separate from where urine and stool leave the body. If it feels like it shifted a bit, you can adjust it or check the seal after. Some people find it helpful to do a quick check after using the bathroom, just to make sure it's still in place.

CAN I PUT MY CUP IN BEFORE I GET MY PERIOD IN CASE MY PERIOD COMES?

Yes! You can insert your cup ahead of time to avoid any surprise leaks. If you're feeling dry, try using clean water or a little water-based lube (without glycerin, parabens, or propylene glycol) to make insertion easier and more comfortable.

Frequently Asked Questions

COMFORT, FIT & FIRST-TIME USE

WILL A MENSTRUAL CUP CAUSE ME ANY PAIN OR DISCOMFORT?

A menstrual cup shouldn't hurt. If you have the right size and it's inserted properly, you shouldn't feel it at all. If you're feeling any discomfort, it might be a sizing or placement issue, and a quick adjustment usually helps. With a little practice, most people find cups very comfortable to use.

IS IT MESSY TO USE A MENSTRUAL CUP?

It can be a little messy at first, especially while you're learning how to insert, remove, and clean it. Like anything new, it takes a bit of practice! To make things easier, try using a water-based lubricant when practicing insertion (even when you're not on your period), and consider removing the cup in the shower until you get the hang of it. Most users find that with time, it becomes quick, clean, and easy.

CAN A MENSTRUAL CUP GET STUCK INSIDE OF ME?

A menstrual cup cannot get stuck inside you. Your vaginal muscles naturally expand and contract, and your cervix moves up and down. If you're having trouble reaching the cup for removal, try bearing down with your pelvic muscles to help bring it closer.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY MENSTRUAL CUP ISN'T WORKING PROPERLY?

If your cup is leaking or slipping out, make sure it's inserted correctly and has fully opened to create a seal. You can also check for any damage or wear on the cup. If problems continue, it might be the wrong size for you—reach out to The Flow or the cup manufacturer for additional support. Don't worry if it takes some time to get used to; using a cup can have a bit of a learning curve, so give yourself time to adjust!

CAN A VIRGIN USE A MENSTRUAL CUP?

Yes! You can use a menstrual cup even if you've never had sex. It might stretch the hymen—a thin piece of tissue near the vaginal opening—but that doesn't mean you're no longer a virgin. Hymens can stretch from everyday activities like sports or using tampons, too. Virginity is about whether someone has had sexual intercourse, not about using period products. Choosing a menstrual cup is just about finding what works best for your body.

CAN THE CUP INTERFERE WITH AN IUD?

An IUD sits inside the uterus, while a menstrual cup sits in the vagina—so they're in two separate places and generally don't interfere with each other. However, to be safe, it's important to break the cup's seal before removing it to avoid any tugging on the IUD strings. If you're concerned, talk to your healthcare provider before using a cup with an IUD.

Frequently Asked Questions

CLEANING, ODOR, AND MAINTENANCE

WHAT DO I DO IF MY MENSTRUAL CUP DEVELOPS AN ODOR?

To keep your cup free from odor, don't wear it for more than 12 hours at a time. When you remove it, rinse with cold water first, then wash with a mild, oil- and fragrance-free cleanser. If your cup develops an odor, try placing it on a sunny windowsill for a day or two. Still noticing a smell? You can soak it in 3% hydrogen peroxide for up to 8 hours. Just keep in mind that soaking your cup too often can cause wear over time, so we recommend doing this only when needed—no more than every 3–4 months. After soaking, leave it in the sun again to fully air out.

DO MENSTRUAL CUPS REDUCE PERIOD ODOR?

Yes! Period odor happens when menstrual blood mixes with air and natural bacteria. This is common with pads, since the blood is exposed outside the body. Menstrual cups sit inside the vaginal canal, so the blood isn't exposed to air—leading to much less odor. That said, no matter what period product you use, try to avoid scented products—they often contain harmful chemicals. And remember: any odor during your period is completely normal. It's just part of a healthy, natural biological process.

DO THEY CHANGE COLOR AS THEY ARE USED AND WHEN?

Yes, it's totally normal for a menstrual cup to change color over time. Staining happens from the iron in your flow and regular use, especially with lighter-colored cups. It's purely cosmetic and doesn't affect how the cup works. To help prevent staining, rinse your cup with cold water first, then wash with hot water and a fragrance- and oil-free soap.

HOW DO I KNOW WHEN TO REPLACE MY CUP?

Menstrual cups can last up to 10 years, but it's time to replace yours if you notice any of the following: strong or lingering odor, heavy staining that won't come out, white powder, flaking, or a grainy texture, cracks, tears, or damage to the rim or stem, or sudden leaking that didn't happen before.

HOW DO I DISPOSE OF MY OLD CUP?

Cups can last up to 10 years, but when it's time to replace yours, there are a couple of options:

- **Burn it:** You can safely burn a silicone cup down to ash. Since medical-grade silicone comes from silica (like sand), the ash isn't harmful to the environment.
- **Cut and toss:** You can also cut the cup into smaller pieces and throw it away. While silicone isn't easily recyclable, it does break down over time—unlike tampon applicators and wrappers, which can pollute the environment.
- **Recycle (if available):** Some cup brands offer recycling programs – look on their website to see what they might have available!

Frequently Asked Questions

SAFETY AND REGULATIONS

CAN I USE THE CUP DURING SEX?

You shouldn't use a standard menstrual cup during penetrative vaginal sex. Cups sit in the vaginal canal and take up space, which can make sex uncomfortable or even painful. While the cup won't get lost inside you, it's best to remove it before any kind of penetration. (Some people use soft menstrual discs designed for mess-free period sex—but that's a different product!)

ARE CUPS FDA APPROVED?

Yes! Menstrual cups are considered Class II medical devices by the FDA, meaning they meet safety and effectiveness standards. When a brand says their cup is “FDA approved,” it means the cup has been cleared by the FDA to be sold in the U.S. Always look for this when choosing a cup!

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