

# YOUR PERIOD!

Everything  
you need to know



**CHIEDZA Products & Education**  
**Living Bright Begins Here**



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR PERIOD

## •What is a **period**?

Menstruation (pronounced mens-troo-A-shun) or a period is very natural process that physically mature females go through every month. During menstruation, a female will bleed through her vagina for about 3 to 7 days. It is important to note that every female is unique and different – that means that not all females will bleed for the same number of days or every month (especially during the first 2 years after your first period).

## •How do **periods** happen?

Every month a sexually mature female's ovary releases an egg cell that travels towards the uterus through the Fallopian tube. The uterus prepares for a possible pregnancy by developing a uterine lining made of tissue and blood vessels. This lining is called endometrium.

If the egg is not fertilized and pregnancy does not occur, the uterine lining is shed and it exits the body through the vagina as a mixture of blood and tissue over a course of 3 to 7 days. This cycle is called menstrual cycle and is generally 25 to 35 days long. The cycle starts over again with an egg that begins to mature in one of the ovaries.

## •Why do **periods** happen?

Starting your period means that your body is biologically ready to make a baby. A period is when a woman's body releases tissue it no longer needs. This tissue comes from the uterus, which is where a baby (fetus) can develop in the female body. Every month or so, the uterus lining gets thicker to prepare for a fertilized egg if the woman becomes pregnant. If the egg doesn't get fertilized, that lining is released from the body as blood through the vagina. This monthly process is called menstruation or a period.

So when a girl has her period, her body is just getting rid of a small amount of blood and some unneeded tissue. It is a natural, normal body process for all females as they become women and mature physically.

## CHIEDZA PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Period Products	<p>You can choose one of the following reusable products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Menstrual Cup</li><li>• Reusable Pads</li><li>• Period Pants</li><li>• Period Educational Pamphlet</li><li>• Pain management medication (Paracetamol and/or Ibuprofen)</li></ul>
Period Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Menstrual Hygiene Management education</li><li>• Pain management education</li></ul>



# PERIOD PANTS

## •What period pants are and how to use them

Period pants are washable menstrual underwear that are designed to absorb menstrual blood much like a sanitary pad. Period pants can be worn like regular underwear and, depending on your flow, the pants can absorb up to 2 tampons worth of blood before needing to be changed. Every young woman and every period is different and unique, which is why it is important to learn about your flow and how the period pants can work best for you.



The period pants are made from soft and absorbent materials so you should never feel moist or uncomfortable. You should aim to change your period pants 2-3 times a day. When you feel the need to change your period pants, remove them and rinse with cold water. After rinsing, wash them separately or with the rest of your laundry. If you are not at home when you change your underwear, fold the used period pants and place in a waterproof bag or plastic bag and wash when you get home. When washing your pants, it is very important that you use cold water and that you do not use bleach or fabric softener.

To dry the period pants, simply hang them to dry under the sun and then store away with the rest of your underwear.

Never wear your period pants when they are not completely dry.

You can use your period pants for up to years or until you feel they do not absorb enough anymore.

# REUSABLE SANITARY PAD

## •What a reusable sanitary pad is how to use one

Wash the pad before first use with cold water and soap. Avoid washing with hot water. Dry the pads in the sun. Sunlight is a natural bleach and bacteria killer. On top of that, pads dry fastest in the sun: 23 hours. The pads will only reach their most absorbent capacity after washing them with soap. This is because the fabric comes straight from the factory where it was made and has never been in touch with water. It is also hygienic to wash the pads first.



Fold the used pad following the 'easy fold & carry' instructions. The blood will be 'packed' inside the leakproof fabric and others will not be able to smell the pad. The plastic bag serves as extra protection. Remember that it is very important to change your pad in time.

Once used, rewash and reuse. Compare it to washing knickers and wearing them again.

You can use your pads until you feel they do not absorb enough anymore, and this depends on how you take care of them. You can at least use them for 12 months, but much longer if well taken care of.

The project will only replace the reusable pads every 12 months, unless damaged or lost you need to bring in the reusable pad to show that it is damaged.

## MENSTRUAL CUP

### •What a menstrual cup is and how to use one

The cup is a product that is inserted into the vaginal opening when you have a period. It holds the menstrual blood and you can remove it and throw out the blood, wash the cup and insert it again. It avoids the need for buying sanitary pads and you can use the cup again and again.

The project will only provide the cup once. It will only be replaced if it is lost or damaged. If you want the cup replaced because it is damaged, bring the damaged cup with you.



Fold the cup as you insert it into your vagina. When removing, remember to squeeze the bottom part of the cup until you feel or hear the suction release. Then, gently rock the cup from side to side while pulling down. Make sure that you do not pull the cup out by the stem alone! It is important to relax. The first few times using the cup you may feel that removing your cup is a complicated process. After a few tries you'll realize that it can actually be quick and simple!

When you have removed your cup, empty it into the toilet, and rinse it with water. If you do not have access to water, you can wipe it with some tissue or simply reinsert it directly after emptying it. But make sure to rinse it at your next available opportunity. While on your period, there is no need to disinfect your cup between uses.

## MANAGING YOUR MENSTRUAL HEALTH

### •Taking care of your body



### •Tracking your period

Tracking your period is an easy way to predict how long you will bleed for during your period and when you will next start your period.

This is helpful as it can help you prepare for your upcoming period every month and also alert you if you have missed your period (which may be a sign that you may be pregnant).

Here are some easy steps to follow so you can track your period using a simple calendar, diary, or piece of paper:

#### To measure the length of your period

**Step 1:** Mark down the first day that you bleed.

**Step 2:** Mark down the last day that you bleed.

**Step 3:** Repeat steps 1 and 2 for 3 months.

**Step 4:** Add the numbers days you bleed for month 1, 2, and 3 and divide by 3 to calculate the average length of your period.

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## To measure your period cycle

**Step 1:** Write down the first day that you bleed.

**Step 2:** Write down the first day of your NEXT period.

**Step 3:** Count the number of days in between the first days of your period for the two months.

**Step 5:** Estimate the first day of your next period (3rd month) by counting the same number of days between the first day of the 1st month and the first day of the 2nd month

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## •Pain Management

If you have menstrual cramps, take some pain medication such as ibuprofen or paracetamol. For the best results, try to take these medications the day before your period is due to start or just as soon as bleeding or cramping starts.

If you do not want to or cannot use medication, heat can also help. Place a hot towel or hot water bottle on your lower back or tummy. You can also do some light stretches or other forms of exercise to relieve the pain.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***What age do periods start?***

Every girl is different, but most (not all) girls start their periods between the ages of 8 – 18 years.

### ***How long does a period last?***

Every girl is different, but most (not all) girls bleed for 2 – 10 days every month. A female will continue to have periods roughly every month until she gets the menopause. This is when the body changes again so that an egg is no longer released every month and she can no longer have a baby. This usually occurs when she is more than 50 years of age although it varies from person to person.

### ***Why do I get pain during my period?***

Girls can experience stomach pain and back pain before or during their periods. This is because the muscles of the womb contract to be able to shed the lining.

### ***What should do when I get a period?***

You should use products to be able to hold the blood that comes out of your vagina  
You should also use painkillers or hot water bottle to help with the pain.  
You can otherwise do all the normal things you do during a period.

### ***Can I have sex when I have a period?***

It is best to avoid sex during a period because it is less hygienic and increases risk of infection. However, if you do decide to have sex, then use a condom.

### ***Can I get pregnant if I have sex during a period?***

This is rare but occasionally having sex during a period can result in a pregnancy.

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