Let’s talk sustainable Menstruation

because it matters to our bodies and our environment

A pan-India campaign to promote sustainable, comfortable, new-age menstruation choices

e-mail cupspert@gmail.com
We attain menarche between 10 years - 15 years
And reach menopause by 45 years - 50 years
We thus bleed for approx 35 years
→ 420 periods in our lifetime!

Very few professionals have actively engaged with the issue of menstrual hygiene, although it has crossed many a mind in passing.

Bharadwaj 2004 Junction social- Menstrual hygiene and Management –taking stock
What do we use during our PERIODS?
Sanitary Napkins and Tampons ?
OUR PERCEPTION

• CONVENIENT
• THIN, WITH WINGS, DON’T MOVE
• LEAK PROOF
• HYGIENIC

REALITY

• MADE OF PLASTICS AND CHEMICALS
• CAUSE INFECTIONS AND RASHES
• ASSOCIATED WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS
• MAKE MENSTRUAL BLOOD SMELL
• NON BIODEGRADABLE
• CAN’T BE REUSED
• CAN’T BE RECYCLED
• BLOAT IN WATER, CLOG DRAINS
The evolution of a pad!
From this.....to this!
What’s Hiding in *always* Pads?
Testing shows chemicals linked to cancer, reproductive harm, and allergies.
None of these chemicals are listed on the label. We have a right to know.

- **Styrene**
  - also used in car tires
  
- **Acetone**
  - also used in nail polish remover

- **Chloromethane**
  - also used in petroleum refining

- **Chloroethane**
  - also used in styrofoam

Tell *always* to Detox the Box!
[bit.ly/detoxthebox]

Green the Red

Dr. Meenakshi Bharath
Centre For Assisted Reproductive Techniques
Problems faced using disposable products

PADS
• Chaffing of the thighs and the genitals
• Cystitis – e coli carried from the rectum to the urethra.
• Spreading of the TV infection
• Contact dermatitis
• The mal odour associated with periods.
• Bulge of the pad is visible under the clothes that we wear

TAMPONS?
• Leaks
• Dryness in the vaginal mucosa
• Infections of TV and Moniliasis

Liswood 1959 Obstetrics and Gynaecology Vol 13(5)
Impact on HEALTH
Studies show that up to a 1/3rd of women who complain of vaginal itching and rashes, soreness and/or discharge may be experiencing the symptoms of Vulval Dermatitis or intimate Irritation due to sanitary pads.

Pena 1962
Obstetrics and Gynaecology 19(5)
Chemicals in pads/tampons can lead to various health risks.

**DIOXIN**: by-product of bleaching process

**Effects**: once exposed to our bodies, it starts to accumulate in our fat stores. Research says, it can stay up to 20 years after exposure.

**Potential health risks:**
- Ovarian cancer
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Immune system dysfunction
- Impaired Thyroid
- Impaired fertility
- Hormone dysfunction
- Early menopause
- Diabetes
Impact on **ENVIRONMENT**
Sanitary waste
Picked up from your doorstep/ work place

By housekeeping staff, paurakarmikas, waste-pickers

Exposing them to health hazards.
Many pads get thrown in the sewage... 

...super absorbent gel makes them bloat and clog the drains...

...cleaners have to get into these drains to clean them for us.
Why is Sanitary Waste a problem?

- Cannot Recycle or Reuse
- Dumped in the landfill
- Serious Environmental & Health Effects
- Disposing Natural Resources
- If burnt – produces dioxins and furans
SOLUTIONS?

Pads/Tampons/Diapers

Chemicals/Plastics

Health & Environment Problems

Cloth Pads/Menstrual Cups/Cloth Diapers

Reusable/Bio-Degradable

Better for Health & the Environment
Reusable CLOTH PADS
Cloth Pads
HEALTHIER • GREENER

LEAK PROOF
FASTEN TO UNDERWEAR

Money Spent on Sanitary pads in 10 years
Rs. 12-45,000/-

Money Spent on Cloth pads in 10 years
Rs. 5-8,000/-
Reusable MENSTRUAL CUPS
Menstrual Cups
HEALTHIER • GREENER

- Collect menstrual flow, rather than absorbing it.
- Completely Safe
- Made of Soft, Medical Grade Materials Like Silicone or TPE
- They form a seal with vaginal walls, and don’t leak.

COLLECT  EMPTY  REINSERT
1 cup can be used for up to 8 years saving you money, and less dump in the landfill.

Money Spent on Sanitary pads in 10 years Rs. 12-45,000/-

Money Spent on Menstrual Cups in 10 years Rs. 700-3,000/-

Made of medical grade Silicone
How to wear?
FOLD and INSERT

Insertion needs lubrication—can be water / your own menstrual blood is the best.
Scared of inserting it? Why?
Squat to be able to insert it easily.
• Learning curve for insertion and removal is One to two cycles
  Once learnt then they will not get back to pads as they are so comfortable.

• May feel it is messy – initially during removal – but that needs getting used to. Quantity of water used to clean it is very minimal.

• No back flow is possible as the cervix contracts if any liquid is introduced.

• Less bacterial vaginosis

• Mobility is the biggest advantage

• Cleaning is very easy and takes only a few minutes – water required for this is very little- WASH and WEAR

• The vagina is not a sterile organ unlike the bladder.
• It is also a wet organ like the mouth.
• No need to sterilize the cup-just wash it with water and keep it dry and in a clean small cloth bag

How to Remove?
PINCHE, FOLD and PULL OUT
Wear while:

- swimming
- sports
- sleeping

- Comfortable
- Won’t feel it
- Holds more than pads/tampons
- Empty when full or every 8-10 hours

Travelling?

- Carry a bottle of water
- OR
- Wipe with tissue
- OR
- Just empty and reinsert
Use a **menstrual cup** or a **cloth pad**
and enjoy a happy Period

Trash free, Rash free, Cash free periods
Join the **Green the Red** campaign

And start a conversation about sustainable menstruation!

**Green the Red**

[Website: www.greenthered.in]

[Dr. Meenakshi Bharath]

[Logo: Centre For Assisted Reproductive Techniques (CART)]
QUESTIONS?

www.greenthered.in