Period Bag fact sheet

**Method**

•Facilitator asks the group how someone could manage period blood? Take some suggestions.

•Use the period products bag to cover different period management options, using Brook period handout sheets to debrief key points.

•Allow the young people to look at and handle the different options, asking any questions

•To extend the activity the facilitator can ask the class, in small groups, to list the pros and cons of each method, before feeding back to the wider group.

**Key Questions**

•What period products have you heard of?

•Are some options better than others?

•What factors might someone think about when choosing a period product?

•Do you only have to use one type of period product?

**Key Messages**

•People generally use a combination of products. Most come in different sizes and to suit different flows (heavy or light). Experiment to find what works best for you. No one type of product is better, it’s just the best option for that person.

**Tampons**   
  
Small tubes of material, inserted into the vagina with applicators or your finger to absorb blood. Shouldn’t be kept in for more than 8 hours. Don’t worry, they can’t get stuck or lost! They have a string attached to pull them out with. You should only use one at a time, only use on your period and use a size suitable for your flow (e.g. don’t use a super-size on your lighter days). They should be thrown in a bin, not flushed down the toilet.

**Pads**

Made of absorbent material to absorb blood. Have a sticky back - and sometimes wings – to keep them in place in your underwear. You can get them in different absorbencies depending on how heavy your period is and what time of day it is, as a longer absorbency pad can be used for night time.

**Reusable Pads**  
Reusable pads are made from cotton and/or bamboo and are put into your underwear to absorb the period blood. After use, rinse the pad under cold water and put it into the washing machine. It’s best not to use fabric conditioner as it can affect the absorbency. The breathable material means used pads will not smell. You may change them one to six times a day depending on how heavy your period is.

**Period Pants**  
Period pants are made with built in absorbency technology and look like ordinary pants/ knickers. Depending on how heavy your period is, you can use them as an alternative to other products or use them with other products. After use, you should rinse them in cold water until the water runs clear, put them in the washing machine on a cold cycle not using any fabric conditioner and hang them out to dry. Then you can reuse them.

**Menstrual Cup**

A soft silicone cup that is folded and inserted into the vagina and opens up inside. It catches the blood, rather than absorbs it. It can be left in for up to 8 hours, then you remove it and empty the blood. You can wipe or rinse it and reinsert. After each period you’ll need to clean it thoroughly with boiling water and keep it stored in a clean, dry place.

The NHS says “Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) is a very rare but life-threatening condition caused by bacteria getting into the body and releasing harmful toxins. It's often associated with tampon use…”Some symptoms are a high temperature, flu-like symptoms, feeling sick, widespread sunburnt like rash, dizziness or confusion. These symptoms could be due to other conditions but it’s important to seek medical help through contacting your GP or NHS 111. It is very rare, but you can protect yourself by not leaving a tampon in longer than 8 hours, washing your hands before inserting a tampon, never using more than one tampon at a time and making sure you use the correct absorbency for your flow. More information here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/toxic-shock-syndrome/>