

# Going with the flow:

Menstruation and  
rainbow-inclusive practices  
in the outdoors



## **Publisher details**

Going with the flow:  
Menstruation and rainbow-inclusive practices in the outdoors

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## Acknowledgements

This resource has been a long time in the making. Born from a Master's research project that explored the experiences of young women in the outdoors, it has grown into something far greater than expected. Many outdoor participants and practitioners have been calling for outdoor practices to reflect the increasing diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand. This resource responds to this call and offers a challenge to all those who read it: join us in creating change.

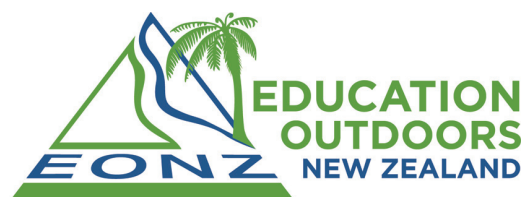
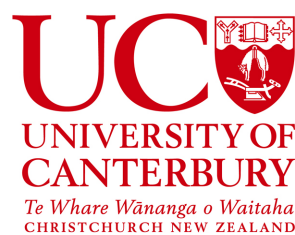
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Finally, we'd like to acknowledge all of the incredible people who shared their experiences with us, contributed in some way towards content or provided supporting material that sits alongside the resource.

This resource is proudly funded by:





## E tio te tūi, e ketekete te kākā, e korihi te kōkako

*It takes many instruments to make a symphony*

This whakataukī speaks to the value and strength in diversity. There is no single way of 'being' in the outdoors. The experiences, strengths, and knowledge that each of us have add interest, richness, and depth to who we are and what we can achieve together.



### The project artwork

The artworks in this resource were created by Sara Wolman. Sara is an Alaska-based artist, environmental educator, and media specialist whose work focuses on the natural environment and people's relationships with it. She uses her artwork to advocate for the protection of our natural places.

Sara has been involved in the project from the beginning, generously volunteering to create the first project image. As the resource evolved, so have the project images. What you see now reflects the beauty of both nature and menstruation intertwined. The colours represent the natural environment, as well as the natural and beautiful process of menstruation. Sara focuses on thematic elements and colours that are inclusive of all people who menstruate. This design brings native Aotearoa New Zealand plants, outdoor recreation, and the menstrual experience together in one beautiful educational resource.





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# Introduction

Mensies, ikura, your monthly, code red, ma'i masina, time of the month, Mother Nature, periods.... This resource is here to talk about menstruation—or whatever you and your whānau call it.

Everyone should be able to enjoy the great outdoors. However, there are aspects of the outdoors, and stereotypes of gender, that can make outdoor experiences difficult for some people. Historically, Western culture has often portrayed the outdoors as being the domain of men. This has meant that many girls, women, gender diverse and intersex people have been made to feel like they don't belong in the outdoors. The lack of information about how people can manage their periods in the outdoors is a big part of the problem.

Educators and outdoor practitioners must play a key role in changing outdoor culture and practices. To make outdoor practices inclusive, we need to understand the different ways people view, experience, and manage menstruation. By accepting, providing for, and celebrating diversity, the outdoors can become a much more supportive place.

*'Menstruation isn't something to be sorry or ashamed about.'*

(Young Samoan woman)

*'I wish someone had told me that having your period in the outdoors is ok and normal. And that you'll be able to manage it... I literally thought a tap of blood was going to explode and go everywhere... I wish that my school had taught us how to actually use tampons, and knowing about the other options... I had no idea about the period undies or togs. If we had learnt about that earlier on, it would have made it a lot easier.'*

(Young Pākehā woman)

*'We need to talk openly about menstruation. In the military it is seldom discussed and rarely considered in advance. This means that when there are issues there are few pre-planned solutions. As an Officer, I always made sure that activity briefs included comments on menstruation so that men became used to hearing about it and could consider it for when they were in charge. I noticed a distinct change in attitude the more the men were exposed to conversations about menstruation. It is important for men to role model mature behaviour about menstruation.'* (Adult Pākehā woman)





This resource is for EVERYONE, regardless of whether you menstruate or not. Why? Because the more we understand the different ways people experience periods, and the difficulties people face when having them in the outdoors, the sooner we can build a more positive and supportive environment for everyone. So, if you are someone who doesn't menstruate, be an ally for your menstruating friends, colleagues and students. Together we can create an outdoors that is safe and inclusive for everyone.



*'I got my first period on camp and we were on an island... there was a lot of swimming, and there were no toilets and I was just in the bush. I didn't know what to do, or have any supplies, and I didn't feel comfortable talking to anyone about it... All the boys were like "why aren't you swimming?"; and I was like "oh, I've got my period", and they were like "what's that?" – it was just very awkward.'* (Young Pākehā woman)

*'Growing up I used to play basketball and we would always have male coaches. I would be on the first day of my period and dying, and I wouldn't say anything. I would just play the game and not tell the coach. Never... it was never a topic of conversation. That was completely different when we had our first female coach – it completely changed, I could be open. They would ask "why are you playing like you've never held the ball before in your life?"; and I would explain that it was the first day of my period. And they would understand, knowing it made complete sense.'*

(Adult Egyptian woman)

*'Especially at Intermediate, I feel that boys used "the periods" as an insult, or they would use it against boys as well by saying to other boys "oh, are you on your period?" when they weren't acting masculine enough.'*

(Young Samoan woman)

This resource is designed to inform, challenge and motivate. We hope that after reading it you will have a better understanding about the needs of those who menstruate and the things we can all do to create a more inclusive outdoors.

## Menstruation is not just for girls and women

In this resource, we use the phrase 'people who menstruate'. While many people who menstruate identify as a girl, woman or female, not everyone does. Some people who menstruate are trans men, non-binary or intersex. We also use non-gendered terms throughout the resource, such as folk or people.







# How to use this resource

## Part A: 'Knowledge is power'

There is a lot of misinformation, and missing information, about periods, and about people who menstruate. This section aims to challenge this by providing in-depth information on four key topics:

- ▶ Menstruation myths, perceptions and stories
- ▶ Beliefs and practices of menstruation
- ▶ Supporting gender diversity and variations of sex characteristics
- ▶ Period management: tools and strategies.

This section has been written so that it is accessible for everyone, including young people, parents, and sports coaches. It shares the experiences of a range of people, including those from different ages and ethnicities and folk who are gender diverse, intersex and transgender. However, this resource isn't designed to be your 'one-stop-shop' for advice on inclusion in the outdoors. The information shared in this section comes from first-hand experiences and experts, and is supported by research and current best practice. It isn't representative of ALL people's experiences or views. Instead, it offers a supportive and well-informed springboard for you continue your learning journey.

If you're an educator or outdoor practitioner, the information shared in this section will prepare you to deliver the lessons provided in Part B: 'A toolkit for change'.

## Part B: 'A toolkit for change'

The toolkit includes five lessons plans appropriate for ten- to fifteen-year-olds (students in Years 6-10). The lesson plans can also be adapted to suit different age groups and used by anyone working with young people in the outdoors, such as Scout and GirlGuiding leaders, outdoor instructors and sport coaches.

### Inclusive terminology in this resource

A diverse range of people contributed to this resource. However, the main writers and editors are Pākehā and cisgender women (a cisgender person is someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth). Great care has been taken to ensure that this resource empowers and includes everyone. It is important to us that this resource doesn't reinforce cisnormativity (the privileging of cisgender people, by considering them the 'norm', while marginalising people who aren't cisgender). We also don't want to spread harmful views of sex, gender and menstruation. But what we know about gender, sex and sexuality is constantly evolving. This resource uses language that is best practice at the time of publishing. As the terminology evolves alongside the Rainbow community, some of the language used in this resource may no longer be accurate. If you spot something that isn't right, please get in touch and we'll revise it.



A large, stylized pink fern leaf illustration that curves from the top left towards the center of the page.

Each lesson includes:

- ▶ interactive activities
- ▶ discussion starters
- ▶ links to engaging video content and additional resources.

These lessons will support you and your young people to:

- ▶ establish more inclusive practices
- ▶ show greater empathy for one another
- ▶ reduce barriers to outdoor participation.

The views and experiences of the youth you work with are vital to this learning journey. There is no single 'right way' to being inclusive.

The toolkit also provides specific advice and guidance about inclusive outdoor practices. Topics addressed include:

- ▶ holistic health and safety
- ▶ language and cultural considerations.

### **Video series**

There is also a four-part video series to support Part A and Part B of this resource. The videos address some of the key topics covered in the resource, including information on period products, being a trans, intersex or gender-diverse person in the outdoors, ethnic perspectives of menstruation and ways to create change together. It is delivered in a youth-friendly and engaging way, so it's perfect to couple with the 'toolkit' lesson plans or to share with others to generate conversation.

Consider your own experiences and biases as you read and use this resource. Reflecting on your own history and influences is essential to recognising the ways you support or create barriers to inclusivity. This resource isn't just about getting vital information to young people, it's designed to shift outdoor practice. Young people need to participate in the rewriting of outdoor culture and practice, but the responsibility lies with adults to lead this change.



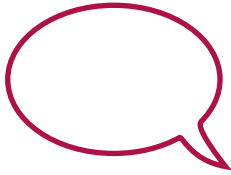
**Part A:**  
**Knowledge is  
power**





# Menstruation myths, perceptions and stories

## Menstruation in Aotearoa New Zealand



*'I remember hearing stories when I was growing up about people who got their periods – it made me scared to get my own. There were lots of stories about leaking through pads and pool party disasters... getting your period was seen as a bad thing.'* (Young Māori woman)

*'Growing up, I never heard periods talked about in a positive way.'* (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

In some cultures, menstruation is celebrated. For pre-colonial Māori, bleeding was an important monthly event, and its connections with whakapapa, history, creation stories and spirituality were openly discussed. Wāhine who were menstruating were considered precious and powerful because the menstrual blood represented the continuation of whānau whakapapa (genealogy). Menstruation was seen as a sacred process of purification and renewal and a time to rest and retreat from the demands of communal living.

A word cloud illustrating the different responses people have to menstruation.





These views were quite different to those held by colonial Pākehā. Young women living in Aotearoa New Zealand during the 1930s and 40s learned that having your period meant you were unwell or limited in some way. During the early twentieth century mothers were the main source of information about menstruation and were expected to pass their 'female knowledge' to their daughters. However, as many women didn't know much beyond their own experiences, young women often received messages that were vague or inaccurate. When period products became mass-produced rather than made at home, there was a shift in perception. Having your period was not as limiting, because disposable period products offered greater freedom. Even so, the messaging from companies often sent limiting and harmful ideas. In fact, in an advertisement, a company described their menstrual products as being the remedy for 'nature's handicap'<sup>1</sup>! Imagine what message that sent to people who menstruate.

**KOTEX**

At stores and shops that cater to women

NEW but tried and proved, Kotex means universal service from a woman's background. For, although a woman's article, it started as Cellucotton—a wonderful sanitary absorbent which science perfected for use of our men and allied soldiers wounded in France.

With peace came an idea suggested in letters from nurses in France, regarding a new use for this wonderful absorbent, and early in 1919 our laboratory made the first sanitary pads of Cellucotton, enclosed in gauze and placed them on sale in various cities. Requests for more followed every sale, and we devoted two years to perfecting the new article—named KOTEX from "woman-like absorbent"—and to the building of machinery which makes and packs it hygienically without contact of human hands. Kotex are now ready for every woman's use.

The basic prototype is 22 inches long, thus leaving generous tabs for pinning. The filter, diaphragm layers of finest Cellucotton, is 3½ inches wide by 9 inches long. Kotex are cool, more absorbent, and of lasting softness. Kotex are cheap in price and easy to throw away.

**CELLUCOTTON PRODUCTS CO.**  
208 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois

**5c Each 12 for 60c**

**INEXPENSIVE, COMFORTABLE, HYGIENIC and SAFE — KOTEX**

Copy No. 1.

Tray by Juliaa Meyer  
Illustration by John Van der  
Weghe, box and label design by  
Albert H. Ross

'Nature's handicap': This 1920s Kotex advertisement shows a nurse tending to a wounded soldier sitting in a wheelchair. The advertisement reads, '...although a woman's article, it started as Cellucotton – a wonderful sanitary absorbent which science perfected for use of our men and allied soldiers wounded in France'.<sup>2</sup>

- .....
- 2 Eschner, K. (2017). The Surprising Origins of Kotex Pads. *Smithsonian Magazine*, August, 11. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/surprising-origins-kotex-pads-180964466/>

1 Brookes, B. & Tennant, M. (1998). Making girls modern: Pakeha women and menstruation in New Zealand, 1930–70[1], *Women's History Review*, 7(4), 565–581, DOI: 10.1080/09612029800200183







### What's wrong with the term 'sanitary products'? Periods aren't dirty!

You won't find the phrase 'sanitary products' in this resource. The word sanitary relates to hygiene, and so needing 'sanitary products' to manage your period implies that periods are unclean in some way. We use the phrases 'menstrual products' or 'period products' instead.

For people who menstruate, finding safe and appropriate ways to manage your period is one part of the equation – dealing with other people's ideas and reactions to it is another. Often, people who menstruate feel like they have to hide their monthly bleed from others. This can mean they don't feel safe doing outdoor activities, which makes it harder for them to participate and enjoy the outdoors.

### Periods in the outdoors

Being in nature can be a powerful and enjoyable experience, but it often means staying in remote places and away from the usual comforts of home, like toilets, running water and soap. This can make being on your period while in the outdoors tricky to manage, especially if you're new to having a period or recreating outdoors.

Some people experience other symptoms with their period, such as having low mood or energy, painful cramps or heavy bleeding. Recent research has shown that people's bodies respond differently to exercise according to what phase of their menstrual cycle they are in (and the amount and type of hormones involved). One person might feel fantastic doing energetic movement while they're bleeding, while for others, being active might be really challenging. These differences can make it difficult to know how best to support others in the outdoors.

Common practical barriers include:

- having no or limited access to private toilets, which makes changing period products and maintaining personal hygiene challenging
- not knowing how to safely use or dispose of period products in the outdoors
- fears about pain or heavy periods and how to manage them
- having low energy/mood and not knowing how to deal with this during physical activities.

Being inclusive doesn't just mean considering practical things like toilets, the physicality of an activity or pain management. It is also about creating a safe and supportive group culture.





Common cultural barriers include:

- ▶ feeling alone and not having the support or understanding of their group
- ▶ misconceptions of periods, including views that it's dirty or limiting
- ▶ having their ethnic or religious practices about physical activity or menstruation not understood or accommodated for by their group.

Let's start by exploring what menstruation means to people of different ethnicities.





# Menstruation beliefs and practices



## Use of cultural language

In this section you may notice that we tend to refer to people who menstruate as 'girls' and 'women'. Using 'people who menstruate' is not always appropriate when describing ideas and experiences in different cultural and historical contexts. This goes against our earlier advice about using inclusive language. We encourage people of all cultures to work towards using inclusive language such as 'people who menstruate'.

Aotearoa New Zealand is home to people from all over the world, and we can see this in the increasing diversity of our schools, workplaces and outdoor recreation facilities.

Language can get in the way of communicating the values, stories and culture of different groups. Many words don't translate easily (or accurately) between languages, so people sometimes misinterpret, or disengage when new ideas are hard to understand.

As we learn about the menstruation norms that exist here in Aotearoa New Zealand, and where these come from, it's important to look at our indigenous history and knowledge, as well as consider how other cultures view menstruation. These perspectives can help to expand our thinking and can show us ways to be more inclusive.

Re: has produced a video series called First Blood, which explores how three women of different cultures feel about, celebrate, and manage their period. The series offers valuable insight into different views and practices of menstruation and is suitable for younger people.

This section offers insight into how different ethnic groups see and respond to menstruation. It is designed to get you thinking about a range of menstruation practices and to encourage safe and respectful conversations with folk who might have backgrounds and experiences different to your own.

## Māori

### Origins of menstruation

As indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori have a deep and intricate relationship with the earth (Papatūānuku). You can see this in Māori language and cultural practices. In many ways, pre-colonial Māori society was much more equal than what we experience today. Community was at the heart of life: whānau (family) and hapū (tribe/subtribe) took care of one another, and men, women and children were acknowledged and valued alongside each other as having equal mana and tapu.







Māori use several words to describe menstruation, with the most common being:

- ▀ ikura
- ▀ awa atua
- ▀ waiwhero
- ▀ rerenga atua.

The word 'ikura' comes from 'mai-i-Kurawaka', which means from the 'red earth' at Kurawaka, the pubic area of Papatūānuku – Mother Earth<sup>3</sup>. 'Te awa atua' is another term used, which can be translated as 'the divine river'. Rerenga atua and te awa atua are traditional names that describe menstrual blood as a sacred medium that regenerates life and connects wāhine Māori to the gods and goddesses and their creation stories. All of these terms are positive and empowering and are being reclaimed by Māori whānau today.

This story, as told by the late Dr Rangimarie Pere (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Ruapani, Ngāi Tūhoe) to Dr Ngahuia Murphy in her book *Te Awa Atua: Menstruation in the pre-colonial Māori world*, is a Ngā Potiki Ngā Uri a Maui tribal version that shows how menstrual blood connects wāhine back to traditional deities:

*Māui went to Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao and climbed up her thighs. The Tiwaiwaka (fantail) flitted right up to Māui and asked him what he was up to. Māui told the Tiwaiwaka that he wanted to go back into the womb where he was sure he could receive immortality. The Tiwaiwaka warned Māui about cutting across the natural laws, but Māui continued on his journey. The Tiwaiwaka woke the sleeping Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao up. Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao asked Māui what he was doing heading up to her groin and Māui told her about wanting to be like the Moon. Hine-nui-te-po-te-ao said she could grant Māui his wish but he was not to return to the womb; she then crushed him and made him the first menstruation to come into the world. As long as woman menstruates, Māui will live on.<sup>4</sup>*

There are other versions of the origins of menstrual blood for Māori. All of them illustrate the strong connection that ikura has with whenua (land) and whakapapa (ancestry).

Watch: *Super Special* and *Hinekura* are two outstanding short films that celebrate Māori knowledge and experience of ikura.

3 Murphy, N. (2013). *Te Awa Atua: Menstruation in the Pre-Colonial Māori World*. He Puna Manawa Ltd.

4 Murphy. *Te Awa Atua*. p. 58





### The sacred state of menstruation

Bleeding wāhine in Māori society are considered tapu. That means they are in a sacred state that requires thoughtfulness and care. For Māori, the blood represents life, death and the power of regeneration and renewal. Māori traditionally viewed ikura as a time to honour the ceremony of the regenerating womb by supporting wāhine to rest. Wāhine avoided certain activities or places while they were menstruating to ensure their (and others') tapu was maintained<sup>5</sup>.

*... During mate mārāma was that on the first day the woman would apply a tohi whakatapu (the principle of restriction) to herself, meaning she would abstain from working in the food gardens or gathering seafood at the beach. She would instead use the time to have a rest from what was a physically demanding lifestyle and go off to quiet spaces or only do light duties around the home. The key point was the restrictions were self-imposed in order to claim space for themselves and provide a welcome reprieve from the daily demands of community living.<sup>6</sup>*

During ikura many whānau encouraged their wāhine to rest and collected special foods and plants that helped to increase vitality and reduce pain<sup>7, 8</sup>. Instead of the period products we are more familiar with today, natural material, like moss, was used. Ngahuaia Murphy recommends that wāhine today consider how they can recreate ikura practices that empower them and reduce the impact on Papatūānuku, for example by using reusable period products such as cups or cloth pads.

### Tohi whakatapu: Rituals and restrictions

People tend to have mixed reactions to getting their period for the first time. For some it's a special time, marking a significant life transition, while others dread its arrival. In traditional Māori society the first ikura was celebrated with gift-giving, karakia (prayer), ceremonial hair cutting, ear piercing, hākari (community feasts) and the taking of kauae moko (chin tattoos)<sup>9</sup>. Whānau members would pass their wisdom on to the young wāhine to prepare her for her life journey ahead and support her to step into her power. Michele Wilson (Tainui, Ngāti Pāoa) says,

*She [the young wāhine] would be introduced to new arts, learn karakia and waiata. There would be a hākari, the community would get together*

5 Hayden, L. (2019, April 17). Decolonise your body! The fascinating history of Māori and periods. In *The Spinoff*. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/17-04-2019/decolonising-your-body-maori-attitudes-to-periods/>

6 Harker-Smith, M. (2016, February 29). Potent not pollutant: Exploring menstruation in the Māori world. *Native Daughter*. <https://n8vdaughter.wordpress.com/2016/02/29/potent-not-pollutant-exploring-menstruation-in-the-maori-world/>

7 Hayden, L. (2019, April 17). Decolonise your body! The fascinating history of Māori and periods. In *The Spinoff*. <https://thespinoff.co.nz/atea/17-04-2019/decolonising-your-body-maori-attitudes-to-periods/>

8 Murphy, N. (2013). *Te Awa Atua: Menstruation in the Pre-Colonial Māori World*. He Puna Manawa Ltd.

9 Murphy. *Te Awa Atua*.





*to share kai. And there would be a ceremonial bleeding onto the whenua as a gift to Papatūānuku.... Our tūpuna believed our waiwhero, our menstrual blood, carried our ancestors. Bleeding straight onto the land is our gift to the mother, to Papatūānuku. I know some wāhine that still do that today.<sup>10</sup>*

A moss pad used to catch menstrual blood was buried and so given back to the earth. This was similar to the burying of the placenta (called the whenua, also meaning land). The ritual was done to reaffirm the connection between people and the land. In te ao Māori (the Māori world), women and the land are one, and together are the most important source of sustenance, as captured in the saying 'he wahine, he whenua'. Burying upheld the tapu of the blood and was a safe and respectful way to dispose of the pad. All of these ikura rituals celebrate new life and life yet to come.

Ngahuia Murphy<sup>11</sup> offers some ideas of how the arrival of ikura might be celebrated today:

- ▶ Put on a whānau hākari (feast).
- ▶ Gift pounamu or special jewellery or taonga.
- ▶ Prepare a special bath with essential oils and a red candle.
- ▶ Bury the first blood back to Papatūānuku and plant a tree on top – sing a waiata, perform an appropriate karakia, or compose your own karakia.

Tikanga can vary between iwi and hapū. While the values that underpin tikanga stay the same, tikanga itself is fluid – it can change over time in different situations and contexts. We've given you some basic insight into Māori knowledge of menstruation, but you shouldn't assume these stories and practices will be relevant without having a conversation with the Māori you interact with. It is also important to remember that ideas about menstruation have been hugely impacted by colonisation and Christianity. This means that some Māori whānau may be unfamiliar with traditional menstruation customs.

While traditionally, ikura was talked about openly as a celebratory symbol of life, many Māori today feel whakamā (shame and embarrassment) about their periods. This is often because from the time Aotearoa New Zealand was colonised, Māori femininity and menstruation practices have been seen as inferior to Pākehā norms. There are people trying to revive Māori menstruation beliefs and rituals as a way to reclaim Māori culture, but it can't be assumed that all Māori will be familiar with customary tikanga. Use sensitivity and care when talking with Māori about ikura, not only because of the sensitivity of the subject but because blood is tapu.

<sup>10</sup> Hayden, (2019). Decolonise your body! In *The Spinoff*.

<sup>11</sup> Murphy, N. (2014). *Waiwhero: The Red Waters. A Celebration of Womanhood*. He Puna Manawa Ltd.





### So how do you say 'menstruation' or 'period' in...?

Samoaan – ma'i masina

Tokelauan – ma'i masina  
(pronounced 'mahina')

Tongan – puke fakamāhina

Fijian – mate ni vula

Cook Islands Māori (Rarotongan)  
– maro toto vaine

Tuvaluan – masaki fakafafine

Niuean – gagao manavafifine

## Pacific peoples

In this resource we use the term 'Pacific peoples', 'people' and 'cultures' instead of other commonly used phrases such as Pasifika or Pacific Islanders. While 'Pasifika' has been used extensively in the past, it has often led to Pacific peoples being grouped as one and the same, when there are many differences between them. Here we use Pacific peoples to refer to communities from Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.

Over 65% of Pacific people that live in Aotearoa were born here. The most common countries-of-origin of Pacific people living in Aotearoa New Zealand are<sup>12</sup>:

- ▶ Samoa
- ▶ the Cook Islands
- ▶ Tonga
- ▶ Niue
- ▶ Fiji
- ▶ Tokelau
- ▶ Tuvalu
- ▶ Kiribati

While Pacific peoples come from the same global region, their cultures are diverse. It's important to remember this when working with Pacific people. Don't assume that someone from Fiji will have the same views, practices and experiences of menstruation as a person from Niue! Take the time to get to know the practices and values of the individuals you are working with.

Family and religion are significant for many Pacific peoples and, like the Māori concept of whakapapa, Pacific cultures have strong connections with ancestry. This means that a person's behaviours not only reflect their own identity and values, but their family's as well.<sup>13</sup> This has a big impact on how sexuality is taught and practiced in each community. Sexuality and gender in most Pacific Island countries are private and sacred topics. Conversations about sexuality must happen with a high level of respect.

*Because there are cultural restrictions on what is acceptable and polite, and because of other aligned Pacific values such as respecting vā (relational space), some may think that sexual health and sexuality are forbidden subjects.... discussing such issues in an open and frank manner may be very difficult... [and] can place considerable strain on young people, who may have issues that they want to talk about but are unsure of how to approach this subject or are uncomfortable talking about it.<sup>14</sup>*

These views can mean that Pacific youth may not have easy access to information

12 New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. (2019, September 23). Stats NZ. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-zealands-population-reflects-growing-diversity>

13 Ministry of Education. (2020). *Relationship and sexuality education: A guide for teachers, leaders, and boards of trustees, Years 9–13*. Lift Education, p. 42.

14 Ministry of Education. *Relationship and sexuality education, Years 9–13*.





about menstruation or how to manage having a period in the outdoors. It is important to keep offering them opportunities to discuss any concerns they have about getting their period while in the outdoors. Support them to learn about a range of management strategies so they can find out which strategies feel best for them.

*'I think it would be really beneficial for more Pasifika families to open up the conversation about menstruation with their children, so they're not going through it alone. Having someone talk to Pasifika parents, or coming together as a bigger family to talk about it might help to reduce the stigma and privacy of menstruation.'* (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)



Many Pacific people believe that when a girl first gets her period, she becomes a woman, and with that comes more family responsibilities.<sup>15</sup> Some Pacific Island nations celebrate the arrival of the first period. In pre-contact Tonga, a feast would be held to recognise this important life transition.<sup>16</sup> This was common practice until the mid-1990s. Some Fijian communities still have specific ceremonies to mark a girl's first bleed.<sup>17</sup>

Although menstruation is generally considered to be a normal bodily function, it tends to be hidden within the community. Menstrual blood is often viewed as dirty or unclean, particularly within Fijian culture. This can make it difficult for people who menstruate to get the support and products they need. Many menstruating girls comment that it's really important to them to maintain high levels of hygiene.<sup>18</sup> Keep this in mind when working with Pacific youth in the outdoors, particularly in remote locations where keeping clean is more challenging. Of course, it's not just Pacific people who share these concerns.

Practices for menstruating people vary between each Pacific nation. It is not uncommon to rest more during menstruation. Some communities also limit those menstruating from entering sacred spaces (such as temples or Churches for Indo-Fijians).<sup>19</sup>

## Eastern and Asian peoples

In the past decade, there has been significantly more people from Asia and Eastern countries settling in Aotearoa New Zealand, including people from China, India, The Philippines and Iraq. There are many cultural differences between these countries. Take the time to understand the specific needs and perspectives of the people you are

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15 Huggett, et al. (2017). The Last Taboo: Formative Research to Inform Menstrual Hygiene Management Interventions in the Pacific. In *Water and Health Conference*.

16 Visitor Facts for visiting in Vava'u Islands, Tonga. (n.d.) [Vavau.to](http://www.vavau.to/culture.html). <http://www.vavau.to/culture.html>

17 Ministry of Education. (2020). *Relationship and sexuality education: A guide for teachers, leaders, and boards of trustees, Years 9-13*. Lift Education, p. 42.

18 Huggett, et al. (2017). The Last Taboo: Formative Research to Inform Menstrual Hygiene Management Interventions in the Pacific. In *Water and Health Conference*.

19 Huggett, et al. The Last Taboo.





working with.

*'In Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, most of my female employees (at the United Nations Mine Action Service) were severely affected during their period. Often, they would take sick days and refuse to travel when they were expecting their period. Most of them used homemade pads made of cotton. While the unmarried women were under cultural restrictions regarding tampons and menstrual cups the older women were not. Knowing they could not afford tampons I purchased menstrual cups and had a female only session where we discussed their use, benefits and downsides. The majority of the married women tried them, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Some struggled with leakage, so they were given different brands and eventually found ones that worked for them. There was a major change in the women. Sick leave reduced and they were willing to go into the field when required.'*

(Adult Pākehā woman)

In communities that practise Hinduism, the first period is a positive event in a girl's life. In Southern India many young women receive gifts and celebrate the occasion with a feast or gathering of friends and family. From this point forward, there are restrictions placed on girls and women while they have their period. Menstruation is considered a time of purification, and this must be protected by avoiding certain activities, such as cooking, entering a temple and praying.<sup>20</sup>

Like Hinduism, Islam restricts menstruating girls and women from praying with others, going to mosques and fasting. This means that if it is Ramadan, many will continue to eat (in private, so few people will know they are on their period). There are mixed views about this, and some people will continue to fast while on their period.<sup>21</sup>

In some Muslim-majority countries, people believe that during menstruation a person should stay at home and rest. Swimming, particularly in a pool, and washing while menstruating are generally no-gos in Muslim culture. Where this practice comes from is not clear but it appears to be based on perceptions passed down through generations rather than religious rules or teaching. However, this practice is more common for those who grew up in Eastern countries, and some people still choose to shower on their period.<sup>22</sup>

In many Eastern cultures, girls and woman will discuss menstruation with each other although conversations tend to focus on practical things, like how to manage pain and

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20 Dunnavant, N. & Roberts, T.A. (2012). Restriction and Renewal, Pollution and Power, Constraint and Community: The Paradoxes of Religious Women's Experiences of Menstruation. *Sex Roles*, 68(1), 121–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0132-8>

21 Selby, D. (2018, May 30). *Muslim Women Are Over Period Shaming During Ramadan*. Global Citizen. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/period-shame-ramadan-twitter-menstruation/>

22 Anonymous. (2021, January 21). Personal communication







maintain good iron levels, or how frequently pads might need to be changed.<sup>23</sup> Menstruation is still generally hidden from public life and conversation.

Although information about periods and period products is available on the internet, the depth and quality of education on this topic is varied. Homemade cloth pads or single-use pads are the most used period product, particularly by unmarried girls and women. This is partially because many people are concerned that using a tampon will break their hymen, signifying a loss of virginity.

Tampons are uncommon and, in some countries, very difficult to purchase. This means many girls and woman may not want to participate in certain physical activities, especially those involving water, during their period. Consider this when planning water-based activities.

While younger generations are more accepting, most Muslims, particularly those who have grown up in Eastern countries, tend to have conservative views regarding intersex, trans and gender-diverse identities and people. It is less common for Asian and Middle Eastern families to discuss gender and sexuality differences, as it is a very sensitive topic.<sup>24</sup> When talking about sensitive topics, get to know the beliefs and attitudes of the young people you're working with so you can offer more informed support

### Can a tampon 'take' your virginity?

While it's possible for your hymen to stretch and tear due to a tampon, it can't cause you to lose your virginity. However, people from some cultures still use 'virginity tests' that examine the hymen to see if its intact.



23 Ren, Y. (2016, August 27). *Why Chinese women don't use tampons*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/womens-blog/2016/aug/27/why-chinese-women-dont-use-tampons>

24 Dunnavant, N. & Roberts, T-A. (2012). Restriction and Renewal, Pollution and Power, Constraint and Community: The Paradoxes of Religious Women's Experiences of Menstruation. *Sex Roles*, 68, 121-131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0132-8>





## Supporting gender diversity and variation of sex characteristics

All people, no matter their sex characteristics or how they express gender, should be welcomed and supported in the outdoors. In this section, we address what these terms mean, discuss the common barriers facing gender diverse, trans and intersex people, and look at things we can do to create considerate and effective inclusive outdoor spaces and practices.

Although we've come a long way in gender equity, it's important to continue to challenge harmful assumptions about who can enjoy the outdoors and how.

Celebrating gender diversity means including people who don't identify as being a man or woman, who may be non-binary or have culturally specific genders, or who don't identify with their biological sex or assigned gender.



Rainbow Pride Flag

So why are we talking about trans, gender diverse and intersex people in a resource about menstruation? Well, if you're thinking that girls and women are the only ones who menstruate, you'd be wrong! Just because a person may look like a woman, does not mean they menstruate. Likewise, people who present as male may also get their period. You cannot tell if a person menstruates by the way they look.

Although we've come a long way in gender equity, it's important to continue to challenge harmful assumptions about who can enjoy the outdoors and how. Celebrating gender diversity means including people who don't identify as being a man or woman, who may be non-binary or have culturally specific genders, or who don't identify with their biological sex or assigned gender.



Trans Pride Flag

*'I eventually lied and told my friends at high school that I got my period because I was the only one left that hadn't and I felt very confused and left out. Sex education at my school was extremely binary and limited so when it became clear in my second to last year in high school that there was something different about my body, it was easier for the doctors to convince me that it needed changing. The invasive surgeries I experienced in an attempt to make my body seem normal left me incontinent while still at high school. I had to quit all my sports teams after accidentally urinating in front of a large group of my school members during a fun tug of war game in physical education class.... The last year of school meant I couldn't engage in many things I used to, and I became withdrawn.'*

(Pākehā intersex adult)







## Respectful conversations

We use the terms **transgender**, **intersex** and **gender diverse** in this resource. That's because these three terms are most commonly recognised and used by people who identify with them. However, folk may use different words to describe their own identity. It's best to ask people if you're unsure. For example, you can start the conversation by respectfully sharing your own pronouns and asking the group you are with to do the same.

[MyPronouns.org](https://www.mypronouns.org) is an online resource that provides information about the use of personal pronouns in the English language.

Two other terms that are commonly used to describe this community are Rainbow and LGBTQIA+. '**Rainbow**' is an umbrella term that describes the wider spectrums of genders, sexualities and sex characteristics. The acronym '**LGBTQIA+**' which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other genders and sexualities, is also a common umbrella term.

LGBT, takatāpui, fa'a fafine, gender-fluid and non-binary are some more of the words that describe people who have sexual orientations, gender identities or sex characteristics that are non-typical in **heteronormative culture**. (Heteronormative means the dominant view is that heterosexuality is the 'default' or preferred sexual orientation – people often think heteronormatively without even being aware of it.) Our knowledge of sex, sexuality and gender is ever-evolving, and while it might take time to get your head around, it's important to understand what's shared and what's unique for each of these groups of people.

As with our previous section, which looked at different ethnic practices and perceptions of menstruation, the same recommendations apply here:

- ▶ Don't assume anything.
- ▶ The best people to learn from are those who can speak from personal experience.

That last point comes with an important BUT... People in the Rainbow community are all different and will have experienced varying levels of support and/or discrimination. Some people might be happy to talk to you about their experiences, while some might not. Be respectful in your interactions with trans, gender diverse and intersex people. While learning about their experience is valuable, doing so is a privilege, not an expectation.





## Transgender, gender diverse and intersex

The terms transgender (trans for short), gender diverse and intersex are often confused. Let's start by breaking down what they mean.

What do 'sex' and 'gender' mean?

- ▶ **Sex** is an overarching concept that may refer to the sex recorded at a person's birth, as well as other aspects such as a person's sex characteristics.
- ▶ **Sex at birth** is the sex recorded at a person's birth (i.e., what was written on their birth certificate). This might also be called sex assigned at birth.
- ▶ **Sex characteristics** describes a person's physical features relating to sex, including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive anatomy, chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging from puberty.
- ▶ **Variations in sex characteristics (VSC)** refers to people with innate genetic, hormonal, or physical sex characteristics that don't always fit medical norms or social stereotypes of female or male bodies. It can include a wide spectrum of variations in genitals, hormones, chromosomes, and/or reproductive organs. People with VSC can also be described as intersex, having an intersex variation or having Differences of Sex Development (DSD). Intersexuality is explored in more depth below.
- ▶ **Gender** refers to a person's identity as male, female or otherwise. This may include the gender that a person internally feels ('gender identity') and/or the gender a person publicly expresses ('gender expression') in their daily life. A person's current gender may be different from the sex recorded at their birth and from what is written on their current legal documents. Gender can change over time. Some people may not identify with any gender. Many indigenous concepts of gender are not as limited as Western cultural norms.

### Intersex/ngā rerekētanga āhuatanga a-ira

**Intersex/ngā rerekētanga āhuatanga a-ira** is an umbrella term used to describe people who are born with variations of sex characteristics (see above). Currently, there are over forty variations! Around 1.7% of people in Aotearoa New Zealand are intersex – that's roughly the same number of people who have red hair.<sup>25</sup> Intersex people are and can be female, male, trans or non-binary (see below for an explanation of the term 'non-binary').

These sex characteristic variations can challenge assumptions of who and how people menstruate. For example:

.....  
 25 Sidoti, C. & Byrne, A. (2016). Promoting and protecting human rights in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics: A manual for national human rights institutions. *Asia Pacific Forum*. p.65.





- ▶ Some intersex variations may mean that person menstruates internally, or not at all.
- ▶ Some variations are revealed during puberty when people don't appear to 'develop' as expected and their bodies may go through changes at this time that are different to their peers.
- ▶ Only people with a functioning uterus can menstruate. Some intersex variations mean that you can be born without a uterus. People may have ovaries but not get their period.
- ▶ Some intersex young people may have/will receive medical interventions (surgery or hormone replacement therapy).

**Endosex** is the term for someone who is not intersex.

Basically, this means you can't guess who does and doesn't menstruate based on the way they look. The experience of having a period can vary a lot from person to person. Remember there is no 'normal', only what is normal for your own body.

### **Transgender/irawhiti**

Some people feel the sex they were assigned at birth is correct. This is called being '**cisgender**'. However, other people feel their assigned sex is incorrect. This is called being '**transgender**'.

**Irawhiti/transgender** is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves as 'transgender', or they may prefer other terms. Some people who fit this definition may not consider themselves to be transgender. Make sure you use the descriptive term that each person prefers.

Some transgender people choose to have medical procedures or take prescribed hormones to align their physical sex characteristics with their gender identity. However, others choose to represent their gender identity in other ways, such as through their clothing and behaviour. There are multiple ways to be transgender – celebrating diversity is fundamental to the trans community. The term transgender doesn't indicate a person's sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy or how they are perceived by others.

### **Gender-diverse/irahuhua and non-binary**

**Gender diversity (irahuhua)** is about acknowledging a range of genders in addition to male and female. A term often used to describe people who are neither male nor female is **non-binary (ira weherua-kore)**.





*It can be helpful to think of an alphabet when describing different genders. Male and female represent only two letters in the alphabet. Defining non-binary genders is like defining all the other letters of the alphabet, in every language. Genders are so many and varied across different cultures and throughout history.*

*Some people have a consistent gender throughout their life, and for other people their gender changes. Some of the words that people might use to define or describe their gender, include aikāne, akava'ine, fa'afafine, faa'atama, fakafifine, fakaleiti, genderqueer, intersex, mähū, non-binary, palopa, takatāpui, tangata ira tāne, trans, transgender, transsexual, and whakawahine.<sup>26</sup>*

People who are gender diverse often express their identity differently to what society has taught us to be 'typical' behaviour for men and women. In fact, some people don't identify with any gender (**agender**) – the way they see it, they're just a person who can behave and express themselves in a range of ways. Being different from what is socially acceptable can be tough and people who challenge these norms, like folk from the Rainbow (LGBTQIA+) community, can often face discrimination.

### Takatāpui

Traditional Māori concepts of gender and sexuality are much more inclusive and fluid. Although colonisation was incredibly damaging to this inclusive sexual culture, many Māori continue to respect and celebrate those who are Takatāpui.

**Takatāpui** is a traditional Māori word that literally translated means 'intimate friend of the same sex'. It has since been embraced to encompass all Maori who identify with diverse genders, sexes and sexualities. Takatāpui denotes a spiritual and cultural connection to the past. This term is best understood within its cultural context and may mean something different to each individual.<sup>27</sup>

### Third gender

Samoan, Tongan and Cook Island cultures recognise that gender may be expressed in alternate or fluid ways. For example,

**Fa'afafine** (Sāmoa), **fakaleiti** (Tonga), and **'akava'ine** (Cook Islands) are

.....  
<sup>26</sup> Understanding gender diversity. (2019, November 6). *Health Navigator New Zealand*. <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/g/gender-diversity/>

<sup>27</sup> Terminology handout: Sex, gender, sexuality & other key terms. (n.d). *InsideOUT*





*all terms used to describe the traditional gender identities of males who identify themselves as having the spirit of a woman or as behaving like a female. It is important to recognise that these terms describe gender roles unique to the Pacific and do not fit neatly into western categories.<sup>28</sup>*

Rainbow Youth and the Tīwhanawhana Trust have produced *Takatāpui Resource Hub*, which offers information and support for Takatāpui and their whānau.

For more information about the terms we've introduced in this section (and many others, including in te reo Māori), we recommend checking out *Glossary: Trans 101* by Gender Minorities Aotearoa. Another excellent resource on this topic is *Making Schools Safer: A practical resource for schools on supporting transgender, gender diverse, and intersex students in Aotearoa*, produced by InsideOUT.

CORE Education has published a research report called *Ko tātou tēnei | This is us*, which highlights the experiences of rangatahi takatāpui (transgender Māori youth). The report includes the stories of five rangatahi, as well as reflective questions for teachers, whānau and rainbow allies.

## Key Terms

- ▶ **Transgender (trans):** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the gender/sex they were assigned at birth. E.g., a person born with male genitalia may identify as a woman.<sup>29</sup>
- ▶ **Intersex:** An umbrella term that describes people who have or are born with variations in sex characteristics such as chromosomes, gonads, reproductive organs and hormones, resulting in bodies that don't always fit within normative medical/social understandings of male or female.<sup>30</sup>
- ▶ **Gender diverse:** A term for a diverse range of gender identities, including culturally specific ones. This term especially relates to those whose gender identities are outside of the binary of men and women, but who may or may not use the term 'transgender' or 'trans' to describe themselves.<sup>31</sup>
- ▶ **Non-binary:** Describes all genders other than woman/girl or man/boy, or the rejection of gender entirely.<sup>32</sup>

.....  
28 New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. (2019, September 23). *Stats NZ*. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-zealands-population-reflects-growing-diversity>

29 New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. *Stats NZ*.

30 New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. *Stats NZ*.

31 New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. *Stats NZ*.

32 New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity. *Stats NZ*.





## Inclusive practices

We know that teachers and outdoor leaders are passionate about making education and the outdoors accessible and safe for everyone. However, for some young people the topics discussed in this resource carry risk and trauma. Addressing inequities must be done in ways that are sensitive to the wellbeing of these young people and avoid singling them out.

## Celebrating bodily diversity

People's relationships with their bodies are complex and changeable. Some folk in the Rainbow community may experience positive or normative relationships with their bodies, and some might feel disconnected from their bodies. This disconnection or discomfort is often called body dysmorphia, which is when a person experiences conflict between their assigned gender or their body, and their sense of self. This can make talking about their bodies or doing physical activities difficult. Often people experience body dysmorphia because they feel at odds with how society expects their body to be. But for some people, body dysmorphia comes from their own sense of self. Remember that it is OK to feel this way.

Just as people have different relationships with their bodies, we also have different responses to menstruation. This is particularly true for trans and intersex people. For some, it can cause dysphoria or distress, as it's a reminder of having a body they may feel uneasy in. Language is important when talking about menstruation as it can often be gendered, so try to talk about it as neutrally as possible. Statements that assume only cisgender women (women who were assigned 'female' at birth and more or less identify that way) menstruate can exclude trans people.

Using the words 'menstruation' or 'period' can make trans people feel uncomfortable or disconnected with their own body, so some trans and intersex folk prefer to make up names like 'shark week' to make it easier to talk about. Be open to the different ways people describe menstruation.

Safe outdoor learning environments start with educators and outdoor practitioners. Think about what messages you send to people about their bodies when giving activity briefings or instructions. Do these messages encourage participants to develop positive and realistic relationships with their bodies? Not all bodies are the same, and that is a positive thing. Normalising variations in gender and sex characteristics before their bodies start to change sets the stage for young people to feel empowered and included when those changes do happen.







For examples of Rainbow outdoor athletes and participants, check out the article published by REI titled, *LGBTQ+ Adventurers, In Their Own Words*.






The more we all know and understand about bodily diversity the better.


How to support and celebrate bodily diversity:

- ▶ Encourage less body policing and more body celebration. **Body policing** is enforcing limiting norms about the ways people look or how they use their body. For example, it might look like 'fat shaming' or expressing narrow views about the types of people who participate in certain activities (such as rock climbing or dancing) based on the way they look.
- ▶ Support participants and colleagues to adopt a culture of self-awareness and acceptance. Recognise and celebrate when people show self-compassion and respect.
- ▶ Think about how you discuss difference and the idea of 'norms'.
- ▶ Recognise that physical activity can create real barriers for intersex and trans people. This is especially true for people who feel excluded by the activity being talked about in a gendered way.
- ▶ Listen to what your participants' needs are and adapt your practice accordingly.
- ▶ Consider the language you use when referring to participants and activities. Does that language reflect all participants? See the image below for some fantastic alternatives to use when addressing groups of people.





Instead of		Try
<b>HIS</b> or <b>HERS</b>	→ 	<b>THEIRS</b>
<b>LADIES</b> and <b>GENTLMAN</b>	→ 	<b>DISTINGUISHED GUESTS</b>
<b>MEN</b> or <b>WOMEN</b>	→ 	<b>EVERYONE</b>
<b>LADY/MAN</b> in the red shirt	→ 	<b>PERSON</b> in the red shirt
<b>GUYS</b>	→ 	<b>FOLKS</b>



**INTERNATIONAL  
NON-BINARY PEOPLE'S DAY**

Image: Edith Cowan  
University (2020)

If you are working with an **identified** transgender or intersex student, here are some suggested good practices from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS):

- ▀ Ask their pronouns. In some situations, after first talking with the trans or intersex individual, you might want to start with a group introduction circle. Have the leader/teacher go first, so they can set the tone and demonstrate ways to do this appropriately (i.e., 'My name is Kory, I am from Rotorua. Today I'll use the pronouns she and her. I got this scar on my arm when a seagull stole a sandwich from my hand while I was eating it'). Ideally, offer participants the option to include their pronouns, rather than make it mandatory.
- ▀ Use their pronouns correctly. Like saying a person's name correctly, using pronouns properly is a sign of respect. If you make a mistake (it's likely to happen at some point), offer a short but genuine apology and work hard to get it right next time. It's far better to do this than ignore your mistake or over-apologise.







- ▶ Confirm the student's level of privacy (i.e., who knows, and who are they comfortable knowing). Support the participant and don't misgender or 'out' them if they want to keep it private.
- ▶ If you haven't met the participant before the experience, ask if they want to connect with you/their educator/leader beforehand. This can help to make them feel more comfortable and prevent any awkward introductions.
- ▶ If students are comfortable talking with you about their needs, ask them if there are any activities that may be uncomfortable for them or require a sensitive approach. Decide on how to manage these together. For example, wetsuits may be able to be worn a size larger than normal. When working with groups in general, whether there are trans, gender diverse or intersex people present, it can be helpful to let the group know if there are going to be activities that may make it harder for them to maintain their privacy, like activities with specialist equipment (rock climbing harnesses, or wetsuits). Work with the group to find ways to manage these situations so everyone can feel safe and supported.
- ▶ Menstruation is a personal matter. Be respectful and don't ask people if they menstruate. Instead focus on creating a safe group culture, where everyone feels comfortable to disclose this publicly or privately if they want to.

### **Inclusive language**

We know that girls and women can be resilient and strong and show leadership. We also know that boys and men can be nurturing, compassionate and flexible. But even more importantly, we know that anyone can be these things if they want to be – these traits and behaviours are not reliant on your biological sex or gender identity. It's time we threw away these limiting stereotypes and embraced inclusive language.

Start by becoming aware of the language you use. Who does it refer to, include or exclude, and in what ways? What messages does this language send? Use visual images and stories that include gender and sex-characteristic diverse people. For example, pictures of people not fitting gender norms, or signs showing 'All Genders Welcome' in classrooms. InsideOUT have a range of great range of inclusive posters on their website (see Appendix A). Using inclusive language can help to change what and who is 'normal', seen and valued.

### **Practical considerations**

Understandably, intersex youth often have fears of being 'outed' during sports and physical activity and may want to avoid changing rooms. Because of this, it's really important to provide safe, inclusive and private spaces for ALL young people to use. This might mean:

- ▶ Providing gender neutral toilets and changing areas.
- ▶ Supplying menstrual products in male toilets. Trans masculine people (folk who were assigned female at birth but whose gender identity and/or expression is masculine)





might feel most comfortable using male spaces but still need somewhere to dispose of period products.

- ▶ Explaining to ALL students (in a simple and casual way, if possible) why these facilities are important.
- ▶ Making it clear that students are responsible for maintaining respectful attitudes within these spaces.

When in the outdoors, it's even more important that people have the ability to maintain their privacy when toileting or changing. Before an experience, talk about what toileting facilities are available and where to find them. If facilities are limited (for example, if you're on a remote tramp), explain how people can find privacy during a trip, and share a range of toileting and menstrual management techniques that can help participants have more control over their experience. It's important to support people's desire for personal space during toileting/changing situations. For example, you could arrange for them to discreetly shower at a different time to the rest of the group. If it is unsafe for someone to leave a group to go to the toilet, explain this and identify when the next opportunity will be for them to have some privacy.

Discuss toileting, hygiene and menstruation care and management with the entire group as you may have people who are menstruating that you are unaware of. Talking about it openly helps to develop an inclusive group culture, where privacy, care and respect for difference becomes the norm. For example, leaders at a USA outdoor programme for intersex youth<sup>33</sup> use language that includes all genders, for example 'squat when you pee, or if you happen to bleed during a trip'. They suggest focusing on the bodily function itself, rather than the person experiencing it, so use the phrase 'if you experience [this bodily function], here's what to do'.

However, it is also important to provide space for menstruating people to talk together about their period, away from the rest of the group. This may feel safer and more comfortable for some people. Also remember that in some cultures, talking about menstruation with men is uncommon and can be inappropriate. Where possible, have a mixed-gender staffing team so people can speak to whomever they feel most comfortable with. To understand how best to support your students, you may also want to ask them to complete an anonymous survey before speaking to the group about menstruation or delivering the unit provided in Part B: 'A toolkit for change'

Here is a great example from National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) of a gender-inclusive hygiene talk for outdoor participants: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec7nabLq1VI&feature=youtu.be>

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 33 Walker, R. (2018, November 24). How outdoor programs are empowering transgender youth. *Outside*. <https://www.outsideonline.com/2366971/how-outdoor-programs-are-empowering-transgender-youth>





It's very common for camp facilities and outdoor centres to have shared bunkrooms. Many schools and youth groups struggle to decide how best to respond to bunkroom set-ups when they have a known intersex, trans or gender diverse student in the group. Often, concerns about how the other students (and their parents) will respond is at front of mind for schools, rather than focussing on the wellbeing and safety of the student in question.

When including gender-diverse or intersex students in bunk-room set-ups:

- ▶ Your decision should be led by the transgender/intersex person's comfort levels with the proposed sleeping arrangements.
- ▶ If participants are separated based on gender, the transgender/intersex student should be able to choose to share a room/tent with people who match their gender identity. Make sure they are paired with a friend or person they feel comfortable with.
- ▶ In some cases, a transgender or intersex student may want a room with fewer people or to have alternative arrangements suggested by their family. Make adjustments wherever possible but be aware of how these may be perceived by others, and be proactive in addressing concerns.
- ▶ In some cases, parents of cis-gender participants may have concerns about a transgender/intersex student sharing a room with their child. It is important to remember that the transgender/intersex person is much more likely to experience harassment and exclusion than any risk they pose to their peers. The school and/or outdoor organisation has an obligation to maintain the student's privacy and cannot disclose their transgender/intersex status to other students or parents or require them to disclose it if the student has not already done so.

Check out the fantastic resource, *Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport*, published by LEAP Sport (Scotland). It includes case studies of non-binary people's experiences in sport and offers tips on how to be a non-binary ally.

<https://leapsports.org/files/4225-Non-Binary%20Inclusion%20in%20sport%20Booklet.pdf>



# Period management: Tools and strategies

In this section of the resource, we'll tell you about a range of menstrual care strategies and products that can be used in the outdoors.

If you work with young people, please share this information with them and their whānau, regardless of the student's gender. Doing so will help to create greater awareness of menstruation and grow a 'wrap around' support network for people who menstruate. Remember that some people will feel more comfortable using some strategies and products than others for cultural, bodily or environmental reasons. When sharing menstrual health information, make sure to take a non-judgemental approach. While people might prefer to use products that are more environmentally friendly, they might also be limited in what they can use for anatomical, religious or cultural reasons. Share what options are available and trust that each person will make the decision that's best for them.

*'I remember when we went on camp, and I got my period as soon as we arrived. We had to go kayaking for the whole day and I just had one tampon and I had to leak everywhere because there were no bathrooms around. It wasn't really manageable for me. There wasn't anywhere I could access to change... We had male instructors and it was quite hard to communicate what was going on.'* (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

*'I've found that managing my period well is about finding solutions that work for me – sometimes by discussing strategies with others, but mostly trying different approaches depending on what I was doing. Taking my time also helps, especially when I did the Appalachian Trail (a long-distance hike in America). I wouldn't hurry to the next location, or I would get up earlier to give myself more time, or have a rest day.'* (Adult Pākehā woman)

If you're an educator or outdoor practitioner, check out the 'Information for Educators' section on page 81, as well as Part B (the toolkit) of this resource for ideas and suggestions on how to speak with your participants about these strategies.

## Hygiene, environmental impact and pain management

Knowing you're prepared to manage your period, even if you're not expecting it, can help to reduce common 'outdoor period fears'.





Some people have not had many opportunities to learn about menstruation and are anxious about getting their period in the outdoors. That's why it's critical for educators and outdoor practitioners to speak with their participants about period management. Don't assume people already have this information; some will, but most won't, and it may be one of the only opportunities they have to receive well-informed advice.

*'We were rock climbing and I was on my period. I was thinking "I'm going to be wearing leggings, I don't want to wear a pad", so I decided to use a tampon for the first time. I had no idea of how tampons work, and whether it would be ok when rock climbing, because there is a lot of tensing your abs and stuff. I was thinking will it just be pushed out?! Literally the night before I was on my laptop frantically Googling in the early hours trying to find out what I was going to do.... I was so nervous and uncomfortable the whole day. I just wish someone would tell us about that before outdoor activities – just recommendations from people who have experience – because that was so intense, and it didn't need to be.'*  
(Young Fijian woman)

*'In 2014 I did the Te Araroa Trail, 3,000km tramp from Cape Reinga to Bluff. I was researching lightweight gear and started to hear discussions about menstrual cups. I had never heard of them before. I purchased one a few months before the walk and tried it out and was amazed at how good it was. I now didn't need to worry about carrying and disposing of tampons and was able to go longer between needing to empty it than between changing tampons. I wish I had been told about this as a young woman when I first got my period. The money I would have saved would have been a fantastic bonus to the ease and convenience of using the menstrual cup. I did get a little leakage occasionally, maybe once per period but when I changed brands this stopped.'* (Adult Pākeha woman)



During long expeditions, or in new environments, a person's menstrual cycle may change. For example, they may get their period when they're not expecting it, or the length or volume/flow of their bleed may change. If you are working with people on longer trips in the outdoors, it's best to talk about these possible changes with everyone early on, so if it happens, they know it's reasonably common. Encourage open communication so if a person does notice a change that is concerning them, they can safely talk to someone about it.

### Ways to maintain hygiene

*'During my officer training in the Army I was approached by a male instructor and asked to have a word with one of the females in the other platoon, as there had been several complaints that she was smelling. I felt*





*really bad that people had been discussing her and no one was mature enough to speak with her. I talked with her and was brutally honest with her about what I was told. She was incredibly embarrassed. She had gotten her period unexpectedly and had no menstrual products. She had been trying to make pads with toilet paper, but this was in short supply and she had run out. She was now using her spare pair of socks. She had already changed and was wearing her one spare pair of undies and had not had any opportunity to wash herself, her undies or her temporary pad. I gave her a tampon for immediate control and went back to the instructor and said she needed to be taken out of the field so she had a chance to shower, wash her clothes and get some menstrual products. Once the exercise was over, I spoke to the one female instructor and made some suggestions. This resulted in a session with all the females where the female instructor gave a talk about how to manage your period and what to do if you were having issues. This became a standard session in the following courses.'*

(Adult Pākehā woman)

During their period, people are often much more aware of their personal hygiene. Some people prefer to shower several times a day. Obviously, this is much more challenging when you're in the outdoors as access to showering facilities are often limited. However, don't assume that someone who has their period will want to wash in a river or lake.

In certain cultures, including for many Māori people, swimming while menstruating is not commonly practiced. Sometimes it is not culturally appropriate for Māori who are menstruating to get in the water, while other times it is appropriate. This decision depends on factors like the person's whakapapa, as well as the swimming location, context and whether it is sea water or fresh water. It is important that Māori trust their own intuition regarding what they do and don't do when menstruating, to ensure they maintain their own tapu. Uphold and respect their decision.

The most common technique used in the outdoors by people wanting to 'freshen up', including folk who are menstruating, is to have a 'splash wash' (splashing water on your body to clean it) or to use personal hygiene wipes, especially when water is scarce. Be aware that not all wipes are suitable to use on genitals and some can cause irritation or increase the chances of developing an infection, especially if used for long periods of time. Wipes, even if they say they are biodegradable, cannot be flushed down the toilet or put in long drop or pit toilets. They can block septic tank systems and interfere with the bacteria that breaks down human waste. Make sure that people who use wipes bring a separate plastic bag to carry used wipes in before disposing of them at home in the general rubbish.







Another option is to use a bandana or antibacterial cloth. Some people use a similar cloth as a 'pee rag' to wipe after urinating in the wilderness. Wet it with water (or snow) before and after use and allow it to dry between uses. Some people feel comfortable drying their period or pee cloth on the outside of their pack, but not everyone will feel this way. Darker coloured, lightweight cotton cloths are best as they dry quickly.

Changing period products more regularly in hot, wet weather or during high intensity activity can also help to maintain hygiene. Remember to dispose of non-reusable period products properly. Most of the time this means carrying them out with you.

For many people, going to the toilet or changing period products in the outdoors can be nerve-wracking, particularly when there are no facilities. When natural cover is limited, or people want more privacy, a sarong can be useful (especially compared to a towel as they are light and pack down small). Hanging it between trees, wrapping it around yourself or getting a friend to hold one up are all techniques that can help to make people feel more comfortable in managing their hygiene or menstruation outdoors. This is particularly important for some ethnic groups where modesty is paramount.

### **Leave no trace**

We are all responsible for protecting and caring for our environment. There are many ways we can reduce or manage our impact on the environment while we are out enjoying it. Managing menstruation is no different. Period products or waste that is disposed of incorrectly can negatively affect the flora and fauna, and can block toilets and make huts, campsites and reserves unpleasant for future visitors. Encourage people to think about how they can reduce their carbon footprint and waste. The best way to do this is by giving them all the options and discussing their pros and cons.

These days there are a range of period products and management strategies that make it easier to reduce our environmental impact. However, it's important to respect a person's choices. If someone is using a high impact product (such as single use tampons or pads), it doesn't necessarily mean they don't care about the environment. Cost, bodily differences and cultural or religious practices can influence the decisions people make.

Ways to reduce menstrual waste impact:

- ▶ Use reusable/cloth pads, period undies or menstrual cups.
- ▶ If using tampons, choose organic options or ones that have biodegradable wrapping.





If using applicator tampons, find a brand that has a cardboard rather than a plastic applicator (outer).

- ▶ Carry out all menstrual waste products. After use, put them in a separate plastic bag and dispose of them properly at home (in the general waste). Don't bury or put menstrual products down the toilet or long-drop.
- ▶ Dispose of menstrual blood in the toilet, or in soil at least 50 metres (about 70 steps) away from a water source. Don't wash menstrual products or dispose of blood in waterways, especially if people are using them for other activities (such as swimming or collecting water).

### Pain management

Some people experience significant pain during their period and need medication to manage it (either over-the-counter or prescribed). For some people, this pain can be debilitating, can cause headaches, vomiting and emotional sensitivity, and may mean they are unable to fully participate in activities. While there is a common belief that physical activity during your period can help ease period pain, this strategy is not effective for everyone. Telling participants who have cramps to move through the pain is not helpful or supportive. Instead, encourage those who menstruate to speak with their teacher or outdoor leader prior to a trip if they often experience cramps so this can be taken into consideration during activities. Pain medication, hot water bottles (or instant/reusable hand warmers) and gentle stretching, yoga or movement are some common ways people manage or reduce their period pain. Most menstruating people will know how to best manage their pain, so respect their experience and intuition. Make sure people bring the pain medication they might need with them.

*'My period can affect my participation in sport... usually when I'm on my period I quite often feel hot, faint and sick.'* (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

*'Sometimes having my period is an unintended blessing. When I hike with my period, I generally take it easier on myself - I slow down a bit more and spend more time "still". Doing this can help me to enjoy my surroundings even more.'* (Adult Pākehā woman)

*'I think it's important to keep a balanced diet when you're menstruating. I've found that can have a big effect on how you can deal with it. When you're bleeding it can be draining, so it's important to keep eating healthy foods. Sometimes I feel like eating nothing all day, but I've realised that I really need food to keep me going.'* (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)

Life doesn't, or shouldn't, stop when you have your period, but that doesn't mean it's always easy to manage and doesn't affect your mood or physical ability. Some people







have less energy during and/or in the three to four days leading up to their period. This is important to keep in mind, especially if you notice someone is having a rough time or appears less physically able than usual. This is where developing a positive and supportive group culture is important. The rest of the group can respond respectfully by slowing the pace or showing empathy when people are emotionally sensitive.

## Outdoor period kits

It's a good idea to create a 'period kit' that includes everything people might need to manage their periods. You can name this kit whatever you like. Some people choose fun or unrelated names (like 'happy castles'), as this can be more discreet. Some transgender folk prefer to use alternative words to 'period' so it is less gendered. Others like to call it what it is, as they feel that using correct terminology will help to normalise menstruation.

Groups who use shared period kits, like those at Outward Bound, encourage all participants to take turns in carrying the kit. This can reduce the stigma of menstruation and challenge people's perceptions of who menstruates. Treat a period kit as a group item, similar to a first aid kit. This can help diverse groups of people to be more aware of and empathetic towards menstruation. Before using the kit, it's important to talk to the group about it. This talk could be included as part of a general outdoor hygiene or toileting talk (see an earlier reference to a gender-inclusive hygiene talk by NOLS on page 34). Explain the purpose of the group kit, go through the kit and discuss what each item is used for, address any questions or concerns people may have and outline group culture expectations. These kits can also be created for individual use. In some instances, this might be more appropriate than having a shared period kit, particularly for trans or intersex folk who want to maintain privacy.

Here are some items commonly included in 'period kits':

- ▶ The kit itself – people use a variety of bags or reusable containers. Coloured or opaque bags or containers can help to keep things discreet. Dry bags or coloured drink bottles are also good containers, although soft bags are easier to fit into a pack. Any old plastic bag will also do the trick. Some people also wrap duct tape on the outside of their bag/container, which helps to hide the items inside, but also provides an emergency supply of duct tape! Win-win!
- ▶ Period products (enough products of your choice for your typical period length, and some spares).
- ▶ A couple of plastic/biodegradable bags to put used period products in. A bread bag or zip-lock bag also works well for this.
- ▶ To help manage odour, put a black tea bag, crushed aspirin tablet or some baking soda in the plastic bag with the used period products.







## How to change period products when in the outdoors

When you're in the outdoors or in places where facilities are limited, or there is limited natural cover, finding a private place to change period products can be difficult. Here are some strategies that some people find useful.

- ▶ Find a natural feature (patch of vegetation/fallen log/rock) that provides some cover. Send some group members or friends further away from your spot to keep a lookout for other people coming into the area. They can stop people from coming towards your spot.
- ▶ Set up a fly sheet or tent that people can use to get changed behind/in. During experiences where carrying weight isn't an issue and there is no toilet, a shower tent is an excellent replacement. This is a great option when you are going to be based in one location for a few days.
- ▶ When there is limited natural cover (vegetation), a small, lightweight towel or sarong is an excellent alternative. This can be wrapped around someone's waist while they change, or some friends/group members can hold the towel up (while they face in the opposite direction).
- ▶ Brainstorm with your group before heading out for other strategies that could be used. This will also help to develop a more inclusive and empathetic group environment.



## Menstrual products 101

### Period underwear

Period underwear has become more common in the past few years and there are now a range of brands that offer undies and swimwear that are specifically for people to use when they have their period.

Period undies look like regular underwear except they have two or three layers of fabric that catch the period blood (or other discharge) much like a pad does. The type of fabric means that period undies won't leak, unless your flow is more than the recommended amount for the undies. Some period undies use special fabric technology, while others use natural fibres such as merino wool. Almost all have antimicrobial properties, which means that they don't hold smell as much as other period products and there's less chance of an infection if you wear them for longer periods of time. Period undies are an excellent option for people who are keen to reduce the waste associated with typical period products, as they are reusable. They are also less likely to cause chafing than disposable pads and are often less bulky.





Most brands recommend rinsing the undies straight after use and then hand washing them later on. This means they can easily be taken on outdoor trips. Some people who use period underwear during outdoor adventures recommend not rinsing them (unless you are going to properly wash them straight away), as this can sometimes increase their smell as they dry. They instead say to put them in a separate 'undie bag' and wash them back at home. However, on longer trips they can be washed 'in the field' using natural or biodegradable soap and then dried on the outside of a pack (or elsewhere) during the day. Always remember to follow 'Leave No Trace' principles when washing your clothes in the outdoors by washing them at least 50 meters (about 70 steps) from a water source.

### **Pads (reusable and single use)**

Period pads come in many shapes and absorbency types. Some people who don't want to or can't use 'insertable' period products (like tampons or menstrual cups) prefer to use pads. When in the outdoors pads can sometimes be uncomfortable if they get wet, and because they can be bulky they can cause chafing, especially when walking or cycling on longer adventures. 'Winged' pads (ones with 'wings' that stick onto the side of underwear) are less likely to move around or leak. However, 'non-winged' pads are less likely to cause chafing but are more likely to shift during movement. Non-reusable pads often have a lot of packaging, so make sure to carry all the waste out with you. Period pads cannot be placed in any toilet (including pit toilets or long drops). Make sure to change your pads regularly as they can start to smell.

If you're likely to be in the outdoors for more than a day, place the used pads in a designated sealable bag. Putting a crushed aspirin tablet or a sprinkle of baking soda in the 'used' bag can help to reduce any smell. Another strategy people use is to wrap used period products in tin foil. This helps to contain smell, and the products can be squashed down to a very small size.

Reusable pads are like period underwear in that they are a multi-layered cloth liner or pad that sits inside the underwear. Care and washing instructions are similar to those of period undies. It's best to test which type of pad (reusable or disposable, winged or non-winged) is going to be the most comfortable, before your trip, by trying them out while doing a similar activity.

### **Menstrual cups**

While they were invented in the 1930s, menstrual cups have only become more common in the past five years. They are reusable funnel-shaped 'cups' that are inserted into the vagina and collect menstrual fluid. These cups are made of high-grade silicon or rubber. Menstrual cups are an excellent environmentally conscious option, as they don't create any waste. If looked after properly, a single menstrual cup can last up to ten years!



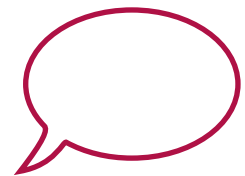


Depending on a person's flow, the cup only needs to be emptied every four to twelve hours, and because it is non-absorbent, there is less chance of developing TSS (Toxic Shock Syndrome). This means that wearing one for a full day trip or leaving it in overnight isn't an issue. The menstrual waste collected in the cup can be tipped into the toilet or down a sink or drain, or buried (so long as proper burying guidelines are followed). Once you have tipped out the fluid, rinse out the cup with clean water or wipe it with toilet paper. It's also a good idea to give your cup a thorough clean at the start and end of your period to fully sanitise it. You can do this by washing it with warm water and using a gentle soap or boiling it for three to five minutes (just be aware that boiling some menstrual cups can soften them over time).

When using a menstrual cup in public toilets or where facilities are limited you can:

- ▶ Rinse your cup with water using tap water, a drink bottle or small squirt bottle. Dispose of the washing water and menstrual fluid in the toilet or in soil 50 metres away from a water source, track or hut.
- ▶ Use toilet paper to wipe out your cup. You can also use a hygiene wipe, although wipes create more waste for you to carry. If you do use wipes, make sure to find ones that are suitable for use on genitals, so they don't cause irritation when you reinsert the cup. Also make sure to take the wipes out with you – they cannot be placed in the toilet or long drop.
- ▶ If you're in an alpine environment (or where there is snow), you can also use snow to clean your cup. Just be aware of where you throw the used snow – be discreet and respectful.
- ▶ DON'T use hand sanitiser to clean your menstrual cup, as these chemicals will cause skin irritation.
- ▶ If you decide to boil your cup while in the outdoors, it's best to use a separate pot or bowl. While the boiling process will make the menstrual cup and the bowl/pot clean and safe to use, for cultural or other reasons, people may want to use separate pots, especially when cooking equipment is shared.

*'When I go free-diving and spearfishing I usually use a menstrual cup because they don't leak as much and I can wear it for longer than a tampon. I got one because my older sister uses one and she said it was good. I don't find it too hard to use – it's obviously different to using a tampon but because I had been using tampons for a while, I felt pretty comfortable switching to a menstrual cup. Using a menstrual cup definitely helps me to function better during days where I don't have as much access to a bathroom.'* (Young Samoan/Pākehā woman)



Some people find that it takes a while to get used to a menstrual cup. There are different sized cups (for people who have had children or have larger/smaller vaginas), and they also come in different shapes and rigidity. Finding one that feels comfortable can take some time, so it's worth persevering.





### How to bury your menstrual cup waste when in the outdoors

Dig a 15-20cm deep hole that is 50m (70 adult paces) away from any water source, campsite or track. Tip in the contents and then cover with dirt. These guidelines are the same when burying any digestive/body waste.



Tips for using a menstrual cup:

- ▶ Most cups come with instructions on how to best fold or use them (folding techniques can vary between cups). If inserted correctly a seal is created between the cup and the vaginal wall. This means it is rare for the cup to leak, even when you're participating in physical activity.
- ▶ Removing the cup can also take a bit of practice, to ensure none of the menstrual fluid is spilt. It is best to practice inserting and removing a menstrual cup when you don't have your period. Using lubricant or practising in the shower can help. Gently pinching the sides of the cup to release the seal, rather than pulling straight down on the stem can make the removal process a lot more comfortable.
- ▶ It's important to stay relaxed when removing a cup, as the walls of your vagina can tense up if you become stressed. If you're really struggling, take a break, relax and try again later. Don't be afraid to ask other people for advice. Most menstrual cup users have shared similar 'getting used to' experiences to support new users.

### Tampons (applicator and standard)

Tampons come in many different absorbances and types. Regular tampons are inserted using a finger, whereas applicator tampons have an inner tube that is used to push the tampon into the vagina.

Like a menstrual cup, you need to ensure you can properly clean your hands prior to inserting a tampon to avoid infection or developing (the very rare) TSS or Toxic Shock Syndrome. TSS is caused by inserting a tampon with unclean hands, using a tampon that is no longer sterile (i.e., has touched other surfaces) or leaving it in for over eight hours.

If you use tampons regularly, then using them in the outdoors is no different. However, you do need to think about how you will carry used tampons with you, until you can dispose of them appropriately. Putting tampons in any toileting system (including long drops) can cause blockages and damage septic tank systems. Only organic tampons can be disposed of in composting or biodegradable toileting systems (not flushing toilets). This is because organic tampons are free of chemicals that can damage the environment or stop the good 'decomposing' bacteria from doing their work.







Carrying tampons out with you (the same advice applies for pads):

- ▶ Have a designated plastic sealable bag or container.
- ▶ Wrap your items in toilet/newspaper or tin foil before placing them in your bag/container. Tin foil is helpful when you're trying to manage pack space, as items can be squashed more easily than when wrapped in newspaper. Tin foil also helps to contain smell.
- ▶ To manage smell, you can crush an aspirin tablet or sprinkle some baking soda into the bag.

Even if you're not expecting to get your period during an outdoor experience, it's a good idea to bring spare items (or a period kit) just in case. Remember, being outdoors and doing activities that require you to be active in new or different ways, or for long periods of time, can alter the timing and flow of your period. Plus, if you don't end up needing them, you might be able to help someone out who does!



*An example of a personal period kit*





### Recap: period product pros and cons

The following table provides a description of all the period products described in this resource, and their pros and cons for use in the outdoors.

	Description	Positives for outdoor use	Negatives for outdoor use
Pads (all types)	<p>A single-use or reusable strip of material that is placed on the inside of underwear to catch period blood or other fluids.</p> <p>Pads are available in a range of absorbencies and designs. Some have 'wings', which are used to fasten the pad to underwear.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Easy to use.</li> <li>+ Often easier to find in different countries compared to tampons.</li> <li>+ Winged pads stay in place more easily.</li> <li>+ Non-winged pads are less likely to cause chaffing.</li> <li>+ Great for first-aid situations as well!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates a lot of waste and requires proper disposal.</li> <li>- Can create more mess.</li> <li>- Less suitable for water-based activities as they will absorb water.</li> <li>- May be less discreet as they are bulky.</li> <li>- Winged pads are likely to cause chaffing.</li> <li>- Non-winged pads may move around during movement.</li> <li>- If not changed regularly, they create odour.</li> </ul>
Tampons (non-applicator)	<p>A tampon is a small single-use plug of fabric (cotton) that is inserted internally into the vagina using a finger. The tampon will expand as it collects menstrual blood or vaginal fluid. The tampon is removed from the vagina by pulling on a string that is connected to the end of the tampon.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Reasonably easy to use and discreet.</li> <li>+ Small and light.</li> <li>+ Effective and rarely leak.</li> <li>+ Clean and cause less odour compared to pads.</li> <li>+ Able to be worn during water activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requires clean hands to insert.</li> <li>- Not everyone can use tampons.</li> <li>- Creates a lot of waste and requires proper disposal.</li> <li>- Used tampons can cause odour, although there are strategies to manage this.</li> <li>- Harder to find in some countries.</li> </ul>
Tampons (applicator)	<p>An applicator tampon is similar to a non-applicator tampon, except instead of inserting the tampon into the vagina using a finger, the tampon has an extender piece (applicator) which pushes the tampon into the vagina. The applicator is then removed and thrown away and the tampon remains in place, until removed by pulling on the string.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Very easy to use.</li> <li>+ Can be used in situations where having clean hands is challenging.</li> <li>+ Able to be worn during water activities.</li> <li>+ Effective and rarely leak.</li> <li>+ Clean and causes less odour compared to pads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates a lot of waste and requires appropriate disposal.</li> <li>- Not everyone can use tampons.</li> <li>- Used tampons can cause odour, although there are strategies to manage this.</li> <li>- Harder to find in some countries.</li> </ul>





<b>Menstrual cups</b>	<p>A menstrual cup is a small funnel-shaped reusable menstrual product made of soft, flexible silicon or rubber. The cup is folded to insert into the vagina. Once inserted it unfolds to create a 'cup' that collects the menstrual blood. To remove, the bottom of the cup is squeezed and pulled on to slide the cup out of the vagina. The collected blood is then disposed of, and the cup can be washed and reinserted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Reusable, so very cost- and waste-efficient.</li> <li>+ Able to be worn during water-based activities.</li> <li>+ Little waste/gear to carry when in the outdoors.</li> <li>+ Discreet.</li> <li>+ No odour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Not everyone can use menstrual cups.</li> <li>➔ Some people find they take a while to get used to inserting and removing.</li> <li>➔ Requires clean hands.</li> </ul>
<b>Period underwear</b>	<p>Period underwear are like regular underwear, except they are made of multi-layered leak and odour-proof fabric. That means any menstrual blood or vaginal fluid that is caught by the undies does not leak. Period undies can be worn and washed similar to regular underwear. People use them with or without other period products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Reusable, so very cost- and waste-efficient.</li> <li>+ Very easy to use.</li> <li>+ Can be worn with other period products.</li> <li>+ Discreet.</li> <li>+ Little waste/gear to carry when in the outdoors.</li> <li>+ Limited/no odour while being worn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Can create more mess.</li> <li>➔ Not suitable for water-based activities (although period togs are available).</li> <li>➔ Cleaning period undies while in the outdoors can require more effort.</li> <li>➔ Harder to find in some countries.</li> </ul>



