

PAGE TEXT

NDIA PARENT CARER PROJECT



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|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Date | 02/11/20 | Audience | Parent and carers |
| Language | Plain english | Version | 3.0 |
| Section | The Body | | |
| Topic | Periods | | |
| Sub-topic | Period Product Options | | |
| Difficulty level | Intermediate | | |

Body text

It can sometimes be difficult to find a period product that meets your child's individual needs. Fortunately there are now a number of different period products available that your child can try until they find the product that is right for them.

This page provides information on the different products available for period management. For information on talking to your child about periods go to (insert link to Talking about Periods).

{insert video period product options}

Pads

Pads are made of cotton or other materials and are worn inside your underpants. They have a sticky strip on the back to help them stick to your underwear. Some pads also come with wings to keep them in place.

Pads come in various sizes and absorbencies to suit how much a person bleeds during their period. Someone who has a heavy period would use 'super' pads, whereas someone who has a moderate to light period might use 'regular' pads.

Some pad brands have specific 'junior' or 'tween' sized pads that smaller and made for a lighter period. These can be a good option if your child has just started their period. They are less bulky than a regular pad and can help your child get used to the feeling of having a pad in their underwear.

Pads are single use and cannot be reused. They need to be disposed of in a sanitary bin or wrapped in toilet paper and put in a garbage bin. They cannot be flushed down the toilet.

Pads are often a popular period product amongst people with disability as they are easy to use. However, some people find pads uncomfortable to wear or difficult to change on a regular basis. If your child does not like pads or finds them hard to use it can be good to try another option.

For social stories on how to change and dispose of pads see the resource list below. For more information on how to use a pad go to (insert link to Using a Pad)

Tampons

A tampon is a small cylinder of cotton put inside the vagina to absorb period blood. A piece of string hangs down outside your vagina so that you can pull the tampon out.

Tampons come in various sizes and absorbencies to suit how much person bleeds during their period. Someone who has a heavy period would use 'super' tampons, where as someone with a moderate to light period might use 'regular' or 'slim' tampons. A number of brands have 'beginner' or 'girl' branded tampons that are specifically designed for young people who are starting their period. If your child has recently started their period then a 'slim' or 'beginner' tampon may be the best type to use.

It is important that tampons are changed regularly, and that your child washes their hands before and after changing a tampon.

Tampons are single use and cannot be reused. They need to be disposed of in a sanitary bin or wrapped in toilet paper and put in a garbage bin. They cannot be flushed down the toilet.

For more information and social stories on how to use a tampon go to (insert link to Using a Tampon)

Period Underwear

An increasingly popular period product option, period underwear is made with fabrics that absorb period blood and prevent leaking. They can be worn like regular underwear and remove many of the sensory issues that some people experience with using tampons and pads.

They need to be rinsed at the end of each day and then can be washed, dried and worn again. This makes them more environmentally friendly than other disposable period product options.

There are many brands of period underwear, a few of which are based in Australia. Some of these companies also produce period proof swimwear and underwear for light incontinence.

See the list of resources for a social story and images on how to use period underwear.

Menstrual cups

Menstrual cups are small flexible funnel shaped cups that are inserted into the vagina where they sit and catch period blood. Depending on how heavy a person's period is, the cup can be left in place for up to 12 hours. The cup is reusable and needs to be washed and sterilised between uses.

The steps for using a menstrual cup are similar to using a tampon.

1. Wash your hands
2. Wet the rim of the cup with water or water-based lubricant
3. Fold the cup in half. Fold in half again so the rim of the cup looks like a 'C' shape
4. Push the folded rim of the cup into the vagina and push it gently in with your finger.
5. Once the cup is inside the vagina release it. The cup will form a seal against the sides of the vagina to stop leaks.

[insert process image]

To remove the cup:

1. Wash your hands
2. Place your index finger and thumb in your vagina and grab the stem of the cup. Pull the stem gently until you can reach the base of the cup.
3. Pinch the base of the cup to release its seal and pull the cup out of the vagina.
4. Empty the contents of the cup into the toilet.

[insert process image]

As menstrual cups only need to be changed every 12 hours it can be good option to wear to school or work. It can be put in place at the start of the day and changed at the end of the day at home.

To use a menstrual cup a person will need to have good hand mobility and feel comfortable with touching their body. For this reason it may not be suitable for people with limited mobility or people just starting their period.

Reusable cloth pads

Reusable cloth pads are similar to traditional sanitary pads except that they are made of absorbent material that can be washed and used again. The pads have wings that wrap around the gusset of the person's underwear and use a press stud to keep them in place.

[insert image here]

Once the pads are full they need to be rinsed in cold water and then placed in a bucket to soak for 6-12 hours. Once they have been soaked they can be placed in the washing machine and line dried.

Incontinence pads and underwear

If your child uses incontinence pads and/or underwear they may also use these as a way to manage their period. While blood does not absorb as quickly as urine into continence pads it does absorb well enough that it can be used for period management.

Conversation starters

- Look at how many different types of period products are on that super market shelf. Which ones do you use? Are there any you want to try?
- I know you really like swimming and sometimes you can't go because you have your period. There are some period products you can use and still go swimming. Do you want to look at some of those?
- You are getting really good at changing your pad. There are lots of different period products that women use. Would you like to try some different ones?

Strategies for you to try

- Your child may need to try a few different options before they find the period product that works the best for them. Depending on the needs of your child you may be able to give them the opportunity to try a few different period product options.
- Put together a period kit for your child. Ask them to choose a fun bag or case to hold their special period things. In the bag put spare pads or tampons, a spare pair of underwear, and a paper or small plastic bag for dirty underwear or when there is no sanitary bin available. It can also be a good idea to include pain relief (if appropriate) or a nice treat like lip gloss.
- Use resources and videos like the ones listed below to find the right words and demonstrations of how to use different period products.

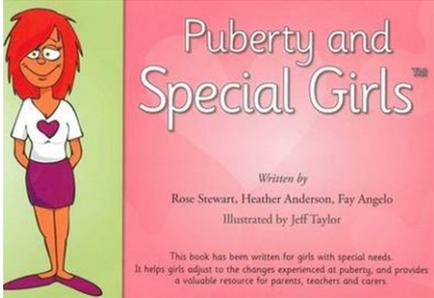
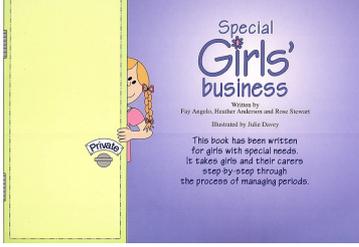
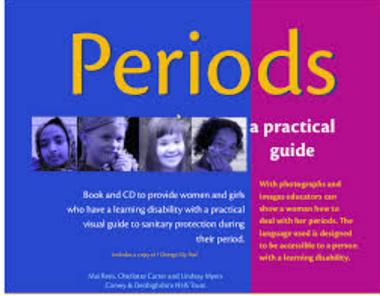
Resources for you to use

- **Internal (existing resources + worksheets to be developed)**

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| AAS period fact sheet | https://www.fpnsw.org.au/sites/default/files/assets/factsheet_07_periods.pdf |
| Period underwear social | To be created |

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| story | |
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- External (include image)

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| <p>Puberty and Special Girls Business – Heather Anderson, Fay Angelo and Rose Stewart</p> |  |
| <p>Special Girls Business – Fay Angelo, Heather Pritchard and Rose Stewart</p> |  |
| <p>Periods: a practical guide</p> |  |
| <p>Tara Grows Up (DVD)</p> |  |
| <p>How to wash a reusable pad – Hannah Pad</p> | <p>https://hannahpad.com.au/pages/washing</p> |
| <p>How to use a reusable pad – Precious Star</p> | <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6BT5Eecbtw</p> |

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| How to use a tampon – Becoming a Teen UK | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rADbqmSu37I |
| How to use a tampon with an applicator – Dr Kathy at Your Cervix | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISEzy9f-UKw |

Next:

- Using a tampon
- Using a pad