

SUSTAINABLE CYCLES

The environmental impact of menstrual products



Period products across the lifespan

People who menstruate have on average **450 periods** across their lifespan, which amounts to **10,000 tampons or pads**. Our choice of menstrual products is an opportunity to **reduce our environmental impact** and pick the right option for our bodies.

Factors to consider

Water usage Carbon emissions Plastic pollution

Reusable products

Reusable products like menstrual cups and discs, period underwear, or fabric pads have a much smaller impact on the environment than disposable options. Menstrual cups, reusable pads, and period underwear require a small amount of water to wash between uses.

Menstrual cups and discs



Water use



Carbon emissions



Plastic pollution



Capacity: 30 - 60 ml

Period underwear and fabric pads



Water use



Carbon emissions



Plastic pollution



Capacity: 3 ml

Disposable products

Single use pads and tampons have the highest fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gas production, water use, and plastic production. Each year, Europe alone uses 49 billion disposable menstrual products.



Pads



Water use



Carbon emissions



Plastic pollution



Capacity: 30 - 50 ml

Tampons



Water use



Carbon emissions



Plastic pollution



Capacity: 20 - 35 ml

Health

Menstrual cups have a similar or lower risk of infection compared to disposable pads or tampons. Reusable pad users had less skin irritation compared to disposable pads.

Leakage



Menstrual cup users report similar or even less leakage compared to pads or tampons. Combining menstrual cups with reusable pads or period underwear can reduce leakage on heavy days.

Depending on product:

Menstrual cups/disks = 4-12 hrs between change

Tampons = 4-8 hours between changes

Organic cotton



Organic cotton tampons and pads require MORE water use and land to manufacture compared to non-organic alternatives and there is no good evidence to say they are safer for humans.

Tampon applicators

Cardboard applicators and applicator-less tampons help to reduce plastic waste.

Cost



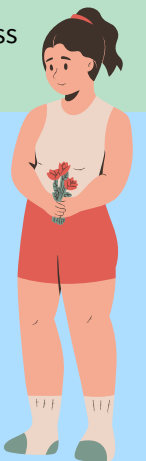
Although menstrual cups have a higher up-front cost, it makes up only 5% of the cost of disposable pads, and 7% of the cost of tampons over their 10-year lifespan.

Tampons - \$105 per year

Pads - \$92 per year

Menstrual cup/disc - one time purchase of \$42

*Based on 13 cycles/yer, 5 days/cycle, 4 products/day



Best option overall: Menstrual cup or disc