



YEARS 7 AND 8

**Activity 6:
Making healthy choices
about sanitary products**

LEARNING INTENTIONS:

After completing the activities students will:

- Describe the ingredients in different pads and tampons
- Understand the environmental impact of sanitary products

CURRICULUM LINKS:

Australian/Victorian Curriculum	NSW Curriculum
<p>Achievement standard elements</p> <p>Students evaluate strategies and resources to manage changes and transitions and investigate their impact on their identities.</p>	<p>Stage 4 Outcomes</p> <p>PD4-1: Examines strategies to manage current and future challenges</p> <p>PD4-9: Demonstrates self-management skills to effectively manage complex situations</p>
<p>Content descriptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older (ACPPS071/VCHPEP124) ➤ Investigate and select strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS073/VCHPEP126) 	<p>Content</p> <p>Investigate the impact of transition and change on identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Examine the impact of physical, social and emotional changes during adolescence ➤ Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Introducing the concept



Show the Talk Revolution video:
Sanitary products (PER090506)

Lay out a selection of menstrual hygiene products on a table. You could include a range of different types of disposable pads and different sized tampons, a menstrual cup, period undies and panty liners. Ask students which ones they have seen or heard of on TV, the internet or from talking with friends or family. For each of the products, explain what they are made of and how they are commonly used.

(See information box below for descriptions)



Teacher note: *Some students may have never seen a tampon before so it might be interesting to demonstrate how it absorbs fluid using a glass of water. It may also be useful to demonstrate how the different types of pads fit into underwear.*

SANITARY PADS / NAPKINS: Are special cotton filled, plastic lined pads used to catch menstrual blood. They come in different sizes for the different flows. Also, some pads come with wings that wrap around the leg openings of the underwear. Most have a sticky strip that holds the pad to the underwear. Pads should be changed often. Also it is important to choose pads that are unscented.

PANTY LINER: Similar to pads. Panty liners are used to catch light menstrual flow or vaginal discharge.

REUSABLE CLOTH PADS: Washable organic cloth pads are made from certified organic cotton that is unbleached and non-dyed, healthier on the body, reduces landfill waste, and cost effective. They come in a range of sizes and last up to 2-3 years.

TAMPONS: Are another way to catch menstrual blood. Many young women like to use tampons as they can be worn for sports including swimming. They are made of soft cotton and have a string attached to the bottom. Tampons are inserted into the vagina with the string hanging down through the vaginal opening. The tampon is removed by pulling gently on the string. Tampons need to be changed often (every 4 – 6 hours).

APPLICATOR TAMPONS: Applicator tampons come with the tampon inside either a plastic or cardboard applicator. The applicator helps to guide the tampon into place within the vaginal opening more easily. Cardboard applicators are good for the environment, so once you've gotten the hang of plastic applicators you should try out cardboard ones.

MENSTRUAL CUPS: Made of silicone these small cups fit inside the vagina to catch the menstrual flow. They can be kept in for up to 12 hours at time and can be worn for sports including swimming. Some of the cups are reusable when cared for correctly.

PERIOD PANTS: Underwear with built-in liner that absorbs the blood so you don't need to wear a pad, tampon or cup.



Ask students whether anyone has seen a commercial on TV, in magazines or on the internet for any sanitary products. Ask students who have to share some of the images and messages they recall from those advertisements.

Divide the class into small groups and direct them to the following websites to explore a range of different advertisements for sanitary products.

Sanitary Product TV ad examples:

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Q1GVOYlcKc>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bpy75q2DDow>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNTUv6X-xFs>
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPcQjiNH2IU>



Teacher note: Depending on your students level of literacy you could also direct them to the following article that unpacks some of the messaging about periods reflected in advertising.
<https://helloclue.com/articles/culture/what-advertising-teaches-us-about-periods>



Ask groups to develop an idea for a TV advertisement that is more reflective of the accurate information that they have learnt about menstruation and sanitary products.

Expanding the concept



Show the Talk Revolution video:
Sanitary products and the environment (PER130708)

- Discuss with the class how to dispose of each of the items that you have displayed (i.e. wrap in toilet tissue and dispose in garbage; don't flush in toilets)
- Ask students to read the following article on the ABC website that explores the different sanitary products and how each impacts on the environment

- Discuss where they should dispose pads at home too. Emphasise again that pads and tampons should never be flushed down the toilet

Tampons, pads, menstrual cups, period pants. What's best for the environment?

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-10-27/which-period-product-is-best-for-the-environment/9090658>



- Ask students if anyone knows the ingredients that go into a tampon? Ask them to write down what they think and then get into groups, go online and find out.
- Discuss as a class the different chemicals that are used and how they could affect a woman's body.
- Introduce Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) and have a discussion around what it is and how and why it happens. TSS is a rare and potentially life-threatening illness that is thought to be caused by infection with certain types of bacteria, including *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus pyogenes*.
- Women who are menstruating are most likely to get TSS, as it is thought to be associated with tampon use.

Reinforcing the concept



Explain to students that the average Australian woman uses around 10,000-12,000 disposable menstrual products in their lifetime.

- Ask students to investigate what kind of impact menstrual products have on the environment and propose alternatives that could reduce the negative impact on the environment.