

“They Look Huge – It won’t fit!”

Put simply, the vagina is made to stretch. They do look larger than a non-expanded tampon, but the Cup is folded to make it easier to insert, making it much smaller than it is when it is open.

Most brands of Cup offer 2 sizes (some brands offer more, some only one). They give recommendations on which sizes suit your situation (if you are a virgin or have delivered a baby vaginally for example). They need to be wide enough to completely fill the vagina, to stop any leaks.

Using a Menstrual Cup

When you buy a Cup it should come with detailed instructions, including diagrams. However the basics are that fold the cup to make it more compact for insertion, insert the larger end into the vagina (like you would insert a non-applicator tampon), so that the base is just inside the vaginal opening. Then gently release the pressure on the cup to allow it to unfold and open. Once in place it can remain there for several hours. While the Cups have a stem, this is not designed to pull the Cup out with, as the Cup creates suction and you need to break this first.

When you are ready to empty the Cup, slide your finger to the top of the rim, pressing the rim in until the suction breaks, then you can grasp the base of the cup and gently pull it down. Bring the rim down to the vaginal opening, and tilt the cup so that one part of the rim comes out first, then the other side. Tip the contents out, rinse or wipe out the Cup and put it back in. At the end of your period, give the Cup a good wash with non-perfumed soap, or sterilise it.

Folding

There are several ways to fold a Cup, the main one “The C Fold” is usually included in the instructions from the manufacturer. Cup information websites usually give diagrams and information on different folds. Some women have more success with some folds more than others.



Where can I find more information?

<http://menstrualcups.wordpress.com>
<http://menstrual-cups.wikidot.com>

More information on reusable menstrual products, including menstrual cups, sponges, cloth pads and more, can be found at

www.ecomenses.com

Alternative menstrual products Groups

There are a couple of groups that discuss Menstrual Cups and Cloth pads

http://www.livejournal.com/community/menstrual_cups
http://www.livejournal.com/community/aussie_cup
http://www.livejournal.com/community/diy_pads
http://www.livejournal.com/community/cloth_pads

Where to buy Menstrual Cups

There are several brands of Menstrual Cup around the world. Each company has it's own website where you can purchase direct, as well as distributors who sell through their own websites.

Some of the Cup brands are available in actual stores, such as pharmacies and health food stores

Money Back Guarantee?

Some brands offer a money back guarantee, the timeframe of this, and if they will accept returns on used products or not depends on the particular manufacturer. Their website should have this information.

This pamphlet on Menstrual Cups has been created by Obsidian at www.obsidianstar.com.au

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Menstrual Cups



Soft and flexible, Hygienic, Comfortable, Eco Friendly & Economical.

Menstrual cups are a discreet product that replaces tampons. Made from medical grade silicone or natural gum rubber, the Menstrual Cup is a reusable product that collects the menstrual flow inside the vagina.

When inserted into the vagina, it creates a seal against the vaginal walls and can be left in place for up to 12 hours. When full, the cup is removed and the contents tipped into the toilet. The cup is rinsed and reinserted.

Menstrual cups may sound daunting at first, but they have many benefits over tampons.

Do you hate buying disposables?
Do you hate pads that never seem to fit right?
Do you hate tampons that leak and dry out your vagina?
Do you worry about TSS from tampon use?
Do you hate forking out money for something you wear for a few hours then throw away?

Then it might be time to switch!

Why use a Menstrual Cup?

One of the main responses to a Menstrual Cup is something like “Eww why?”

Money saving.

While a Cup is more expensive to buy initially than a tampon, just add up how much you spend on disposable menstrual products a month. Then work out how much that adds up to over about 10 years. Then think about all the other things you could spend your money on. One Menstrual cup should last you around 10 years!

Environmentally friendly.

Think about all those disposable pads and tampons. Plastic packaging...the transport of them from factory to warehouse to store to you... bleaching and chemicals. Instead of years worth of disposable products, you could buy one Menstrual Cup.

Nicer for you.

The hard, dry tampon can damage the delicate skin of the vagina as they are inserted. They can also leave behind fibres, which can encourage bacterial growth. TSS (Toxic Shock Syndrome) is a bacterial infection that can be fatal for some women. The bacteria can grow on the tampon and enter the bloodstream through any damage to the vaginal walls. The absorbent nature of a tampon can cause the vagina to become too dry when flow is light, which can affect the natural balance of the vagina, leading to thrush.

Menstrual Cups are smooth, flexible and non-absorbent and are less likely to damage the vaginal walls during insertion, do not dry out the vagina or leave behind fibres. There have been no reported cases of TSS with the use of Menstrual Cups, making them a safer choice.

With a Menstrual Cup you even have the choice of different colours! Purple, Blue, Green, Black, Red, Pink, Orange, Yellow, or perhaps you'd prefer glitter?

Affective.

Menstrual Cups will hold between about 20ml and 30mls, which is much more than a tampon can hold. Many women who find tampons leak, find that Menstrual Cups do not. A Cup can be left in place for longer than a tampon can be left in, even being used overnight.

‘I’ve never heard of them’

Menstrual Cups have been around for a very long time, however it is only in recent times, with our technology, materials, promotion and a society that is more accepting of something a little different, have they become something quite successful.

The first Menstrual Cup (as we know them) seems to be the “Daintette”, brought out in 1932. Unfortunately the early pioneers of those early Menstrual Cups were fighting a battle that was almost impossible to win.

Our society has for many years had taboos over discussing menstruation. This is shown in the fact that many publications refused to advertise early tampons and menstrual cups - and those that did, disallowed mention of specific words such as “vagina” or “menstruation”, some even refusing to print images of the devices themselves. Imagine trying to sell a product when you can't show it or mention what it is used for!?

As well as those issues, while Cup manufacturers were trying to convince women to try this new product, disposable tampon manufacturers were starting up and also encouraging women to try their new product. Many tampons have been brought out with “applicators” to allow women to avoid touching themselves as much as possible. Menstrual Cup use does require a woman to be more intouch with her body. There was even one tampon advertising campaign that allowed women to hand a slip of paper to a pharmacist, who would then give her a discreet box of tampons – so she didn't even have to go through the embarrassment of asking! In a society where that is the way a women purchases a tampon, it's not surprising Menstrual Cups weren't embraced as much as they are now. And of course the one downside of a reusable product is the satisfied customer doesn't need to buy any more.

These days we have the Internet! Many women find out about alternative menstrual products from the Internet and talking to friends. Early Menstrual Cups did not have the benefit of this form of advertising.

The first successful (still available today), Menstrual Cup was the Keeper, in 1987, made (as the other cups), from rubber. Which lead the way for the UK Mooncup in 2000, the first cup to be made of silicone.

Are they Safe?

The main triggers for TSS are the rayon fibres that a tampon is made of (Cotton tampons have a much lower TSS risk), and the fact that particles of the tampon can be left inside the vagina after the tampon is removed. Which is why tampons are not recommended to be worn continuously, as the vagina should be allowed to ‘flush out’ any stray fibres from time to time. Menstrual Cups have not been known to cause TSS.

Tampons are not sterile, just because they are wrapped in plastic and are white and look sterile, does not make them so. However vibrators, a partner's penis and other such things that may be inserted into the vagina are not sterile either. You can of course sterilise a Menstrual Cup if you want to. The manufacturer should include instructions on what to use with their product.

Menstrual Cups are not known to cause or worsen conditions such as thrust, and may even help eliminate it, by providing an alternative to pads or tampons.

Menstrual Cups go through testing to ensure that the compounds they are made of are safe to use.

The majority of the Menstrual Cups available today are made from medical grade silicone. This is not the silicone we heard horror stories about with breast implants (which was a liquid). This silicone is the same type of silicone as is used in baby bottle teats, dummies/pacifiers and medical equipment designed to be worn inside the body (in replacement limbs etc.).

The Keeper is made from natural gum rubber – latex. Some people have an allergy to latex, which would make this brand of cup unsuitable for them.

The MeLuna is made from FDA approved thermoplastic elastomer, which is also used in products such as dummies/pacifiers

How Many Will I need?

One! A Cup will last around 10 years with proper care. You can rinse it to reuse it, and boil or sterilise it at the end of your period.