

# MENSTRUAL HYGIENE & You

Did you know that access to safe and dignified means for ensuring menstrual hygiene is a fundamental need of women and girls everywhere? As a society, we have very little conversation on this topic and many aspects relating to the menstruating women are shrouded in myths. Even in prison, you should be able to manage your menstruation hygienically, safely, in privacy and with dignity. So, let's start the conversation about menstrual hygiene and you!

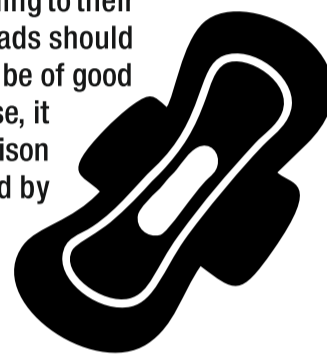
## What facilities are prison authorities required to provide you to ensure menstrual hygiene?

To facilitate menstrual hygiene, the prison administration is to ensure adequate supply of water, clean toilets and waste disposal mechanisms inside women's enclosures. They should also conduct awareness programmes and provide information regarding good menstrual hygiene practices.



## Who will provide you sanitary pads?

The Model Prison Manual 2016 requires prison administration to provide sterilised sanitary pads to women inmates according to their requirements. Sanitary pads should be provided regularly and be of good quality products. Otherwise, it may be available in the prison canteens, or be provided by family members during visits.



## How can you maintain personal hygiene during your periods when in prison?

Although the menstrual fluid is not impure, once it collects on a pad/cloth it becomes a fertile ground for bacterial infection. Therefore, it is a good practice to change the pad/cloth every 4-6 hours. It is a good practice to clean the cloth and undergarments used during period thoroughly and dry them under the sun. You should take regular baths during the duration of your menstrual cycle.



## How should you dispose the used sanitary pads?

One should wrap the used sanitary pad in paper and keep it separate than other garbage. These should be disposed of separately. You may ask prison authorities to allocate a separate bin for disposal of pads. Where available, pads can be disposed in an incinerator/ machine installed for the purpose.



## If there are issues with maintaining menstrual hygiene, where can you complain?

Complaints can be made to the officer-in-charge of prisons or the secretary, district legal services authorities or the members of the Board of Visitors which include the District & Sessions Judge, District Magistrate and other official and non-official visitors.



## If there are issues during menstruation, who can you consult?

If you experience issues such as

- periods accompanied by really painful cramps
- irregular periods
- sudden weight gain,
- skin changes,
- excessive bleeding,
- intolerance to heat/cold

during menstruation, or before or after your menstrual cycle please consult the medical officer immediately.



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