

Physical changes during Puberty — menstruation

Lesson 5

Grades
4th & 5th

Feminine Hygiene/Care

In this lesson we will look at feminine hygiene/care products.

Materials needed: journals, 3x5 cards, mailbox, tampons, sanitary pads and pantyliners in different sizes.

Today you will need your journals, question cards, and the Petite Amie Menstruation Pamphlet.

Side Note: Give them a bit of time to get out their things.

Lay out feminine hygiene/care products on a table for the girls to look at.

Does anyone know the names of the things on the table? What are they used for? Hold them up one at a time so they can get a good look at them.

Side Note: Allow all answers – slang included.

Today I am going to talk to you about what to do when you get your period. I want you to be prepared.

When you get your period, you will need to use what are called feminine hygiene/care products. These are sanitary napkins – also called pads, panty liners, and tampons. (Refer to the products on the table.) Which one should you use? How do you use them? This is what we will be talking about today.

You can use any of these products. There are many different brands and types available to you in any drug store or in the supermarket. Whatever you choose is up to you. It's all about your own personal preference. Most girls try out several brands before they decide what is most comfortable for them.

Pads are designed to fit securely into the crotch of your underwear to absorb period flow. They usually have sticky tape on the back to adhere to your underwear so they don't slide around. Pads are made of cotton or cottony feeling material. Some have extra material on the sides called "wings" that fold over the edges of your underwear to prevent leakage. Many girls wear pads on heavier period flow days and at night. Some pads come with deodorant or perfume scent, although we do not



recommend using these. Keeping yourself clean and changing your feminine hygiene products frequently is the only real way to prevent your pads and tampons from developing an odor. You also need to be careful about products that are perfumed because they may contribute to vaginal yeast infections.

If you do decide to use pads, you can buy pads in several different thicknesses for different types of flow.

Pads should be changed every 3-4 hours (sooner if it becomes saturated) because this helps keep you clean and prevents build up of bacteria, which can lead to an odor.

A panty liner is just a lighter, thinner pad. You can wear it on lighter days of your period, or combined with tampons if you are worried about leaking.

Do any of you have any questions about pads?

Tampons are also designed to absorb menstrual flow. They come in four different absorbencies including slender for lighter flow days all the way up to super plus for very heavy flow days. You should always use the lowest absorbency tampon that can manage your period flow that day. For example, do not use a super plus tampon when you are having very light flow. Tampons are made of soft cotton or rayon-cotton blend fibers pressed together to form a cylinder-like shape, so that they can fit into the opening of the vagina. A tampon absorbs the blood, before it has a chance to leave the body.

Tampons are easy to use, but you do need to learn how to put them in. Follow the directions that come with the tampons carefully, and be sure to relax. It's much easier to insert a tampon when you're relaxed. Some girls find that using tampons with applicators is much easier because the applicator tube gives them some thing to hold onto and helps them guide it properly into the vagina.

If there's blood on your tampon string, that means it's time to take it out. Never keep your tampon in longer than 6 hours. You may want to add a panty liner when wearing a tampon at the start of your period to handle any leakage. Use your pads at night.

Do any of you have any questions about tampons?

Side Note: You will probably get a lot of questions about tampons. Make sure you have samples of many different kinds to show them, ones with applicators and without. Here are some questions to be ready for. Answers to all these questions can be found at www.toynachin.com.

- ◆ Can a tampon get lost inside of you?
- ◆ Can a tampon get stuck?
- ◆ Can you show us how to put one in?
- ◆ Can I shower with one in?
- ◆ Can I swim with a pad or a tampon?
- ◆ If I get a bigger one, can I leave it in longer?
- ◆ Don't they hurt?
- ◆ What happens if I'm at school and I don't have one and I get my period?



Let them know that they can always come to you and that you will keep feminine hygiene/care products in the classroom as well as in the nurse's office in case they need them. Consider keeping a few products on hand.

Some girls worry about how to stay clean during their period. Staying clean is easy. All that is needed is to wash your genital area daily with soap and water.



You might be worried about having an odor during or after your period. Odor can be due to sweat or to bacteria. It is not recommended to use feminine sprays or products that have perfumes. To help prevent or reduce odor, what do you think you can do?

Besides daily washing, keeping your genital area dry is another important thing you can do. Keeping yourself dry by wearing cotton underwear, as opposed to synthetics, will help prevent moisture from sweating because cotton materials breathe. Also, remember to change your pads and tampons frequently to prevent any odor from bacteria build up on your feminine hygiene products.

If you notice a persistent, unpleasant smell, talk to your mom, school nurse, or another trusted adult because it may be a vaginal infection. Occasionally, girls can develop vaginal infections during their menses. While they are not serious, they do need to be treated by a doctor.

The last thing we are going to talk about today is Menstrual Toxic Shock Syndrome. Does anyone know what this is?

Menstrual Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) is a serious medical illness caused by bacteria and related to incorrect use of tampons. This bacteria is normally present in the vagina in small numbers but it can cause a problem if it overgrows and adheres to a tampon. The bacteria begin producing a toxin that causes your body to feel sick. Some of the symptoms of Menstrual TSS are fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, dizziness, and a sunburn like rash. Not all of these symptoms are present in every case.

These days, Menstrual TSS caused by tampon use is pretty rare. Medical studies resulted in many changes including safer tampons materials and better information about how to use them safely — such as changing tampons more frequently. The higher the tampon's absorbency (super plus vs. super or regular), the greater the risk of Menstrual TSS because they are often left in longer, which may encourage bacteria growth. To reduce your risk of Menstrual TSS, the FDA recommends using a tampon with the lowest absorbency possible for handling your flow. And change your tampon regularly. If you follow these instructions, tampon use is very safe.

I'm going to give you some time right now to write down any questions you might have about feminine hygiene/care products in your journals. I want to make sure you remember them so you can write them down on question cards at the end of the lesson. If you feel comfortable enough to ask out loud, go ahead and raise your hand, and I'll take some questions now.

I want you to take 3 minutes and write in your journal. Write about what you learned, how you felt, or if you want, finish up writing what you started this morning. I am also going to come around and pass out 3 x 5 cards to you. If you have a question you don't want to ask out loud, write it down, and put it in the box, if you don't, put a blank card in. And if you have any questions you wrote down in your journal yesterday, write that on a card and put it in the box.

Side Note: Make sure everyone puts a card in the mailbox. There will be peeking to see who put something in and who didn't. When it reaches the last student, ask her to bring you the box. Look through the questions and choose any that you think are relevant to today's discussion.

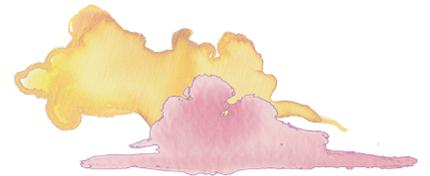
It's been 3 minutes. Finish up what you are writing. Does anyone want to share with the class what you wrote?

Side Note: Let 3 or 4 girls speak. Then move on to their questions.

Make sure you give basic answers to all of the questions. Let the girls know that you will be talking more in depth about these topics in the next few days. If you feel comfortable answering personal questions, do so. But if you don't, just shuffle them in with the 'no question' cards.

The girls may begin to raise their hands to get other questions answered that have been raised by those from the mailbox. Answer a few of them if you have time.

I see that some of you have more questions to ask. Write these questions down in your journal or on your question cards. You can put them in the mailbox on my desk after class today, or tomorrow when we discuss this subject again. I hope today made you think about growing up. Next time we'll talk about going to see the gynecologist.



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