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## **MENSTRUAL CUP (PERIOD CUP)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Menstrual cups have been available for decades, but their use in India is remains limited because of lack of awareness and popularity of sanitary pads. Since they are reusable, they reduce solid waste and are environment friendly. Thus, this article discussed with the meaning of menstrual cup, available size, capacity, how to insert menstrual cup and how to remove menstrual cup and various benefits and drawbacks of menstrual cup.*

**Keywords:** Menstrual cup, sanitary pads, environment

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Menstruation is a normal and healthy part of life for the women. Roughly half of the female population around 26 per cent of the global population are of reproductive age. Most women menstruate each month for about two to seven days. Girls and women need effective, safe, and affordable menstrual products. Women and girls have their own menstruation management practices, based on personal preferences, available resources, economic status, customs and cultural beliefs, and knowledge.

Adolescent girls witness physical discomfort and psychological distress due to lack of effective and affordable menstruation management products. Access to appropriate, affordable hygiene menstrual products and their utilization are important to manage menstrual hygiene. The first commercially used menstrual cup (MC) was invented and patented in the United States in the 1930 and recently in 2021, the first novel MC was designed and launched in India. MC is a bell-shaped device made up of high-grade medical silicone. It is put inside the vagina during the period.

### **MENSTRUAL CUP**

A “menstrual cup” is a menstrual hygiene device which is inserted into the vagina during menstruation. Its purpose is to collect menstrual fluid. Menstrual cups are usually made of

flexible medical grade silicone, latex. They are shaped like a bell with a stem or a ring. The stem is used for insertion and removal, and the bell-shaped cup seals against the vaginal wall just below the cervix and collects menstrual fluid.



**SIZE:** Most menstrual cup brands sell a smaller and a larger size.

1. The smaller size is typically recommended for women under 30 or women who have not given birth vaginally. Cups with even smaller sizes are recommended for teenagers, as well as women and girls who are more physically fit, as those with stronger pelvic floor muscles may find a larger cup uncomfortable.
2. The larger sizes is typically recommended for women over 30 or has given birth vaginally, or have a heavy flow.

### **CAPACITY**

This is important for women who have a heavier flow. Menstrual cup capacity varies by size. Approximately, small size cups hold 15-25 ml, medium size cups hold 20-30 ml, and large cups hold 30-40 ml.

### **HOW TO INSERT A MENSTRUAL CUP**

1. **Clean menstrual cup:** Before first use, we need to sanitize menstrual cup by boiling it in a pot of water for 5 minutes, using tongs or a slotted spoon to make sure the cup doesn't touch the bottom of the pan. Let it dry and cool before using.
2. **Wash hands:** Once cup has been sanitized, wash our hands in warm water with a non-toxic hand soap.
3. **Fold menstrual cup:** There are three recommended menstrual cup folds for beginners. Here are the specific instructions for each fold.

#### C-Fold Menstrual Cup

Fold menstrual cup by flattening the cup and bending it in the middle, bringing the two ends together to create a C-shape.

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### Punch-Down Fold Menstrual Cup

Use index finger to press down on the rim and collapse the menstrual cup. Pinch to hold into place.

### 7-Fold Menstrual Cup

Fold the menstrual cup by squeezing the cup to flatten. Once flattened, fold the top right corner of the rim down and across the opposite side of the body of the cup, creating a 7-shape.

**4. Get into a comfortable position:** Try sitting or squatting on the toilet with one leg raised.

**5. Insert menstrual cup:** Once menstrual cup is folded and you're in a comfortable position, use one hand to gently separate labia and the other to insert cup slowly, rim-first, into vagina. Slide it up and back at a 45 degree angle, until the body of the cup is fully inside of vagina, with the stem of the cup within approximately 1/2 inch of vaginal opening.

**6. Secure menstrual cup:** Once cup inserted, give the stem a very gentle tug to ensure cup is properly in place and has formed a suction-like seal around the walls of vagina. You should feel some resistance as you softly pull down. We can also double check to make sure menstrual cup is fully opened by running a finger around the body of the cup. If you feel any folds, use the stem to gently rotate the cup until it opens completely, creating a seal.

### HOW TO REMOVE A MENSTRUAL CUP

Once the cup is worn for up to 12 hours, it is time for removal and reinsertion. Here's the easiest way to do so:

**1. Wash the hands**

**2. Resume comfortable position**

**3. Use the stem as a guide, do not pull:** This is the key part of removal for beginners, as we find it intuitive to want to pull on the menstrual cup stem for removal. Instead, use the stem as a guide to locate the ridging at the base of your cup. Pinch the base with your thumb and index finger, wiggling the cup from side to side as you gently pull it out. Keep it upright to avoid spilling. When the base of cup is past the vaginal opening, tilt cup forward to remove the front rim first, followed by the rest of the cup.

**4. Empty cup into the toilet**

**5. Wash the cup:** First rinse cup in cold water, then wash thoroughly with warm water and a mild, non-toxic soap, rinse it thoroughly.

### BENEFIT OF MENSTRUAL CUP

Cost effective

Odourless and leak-free

Are environmentally friendly

Long lasting

Chemical free

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No fear of staining the sheets  
Outdoor women's best friend  
Low risk of toxic shock syndrome  
Reusable and comfortable  
No vaginal micro lacerations  
Catch everything small or big  
A better way to understand our body through menstrual cup  
Supports smaller entrepreneurs

### **DRAWBACKS OF MENSTRUAL CUP**

They can be difficult to insert for beginners  
Possible fit problems  
Proper maintenance: After removal of the cup, it must be rinsed and cleaned before reinsertion.  
Risk of IUD displacement or expulsion.

### **CONCLUSION**

A menstrual cup is a cost-effective and eco-friendly alternative to using tampons and sanitary napkins during menstruation. Women can weigh in the **advantages and disadvantages of a menstrual cup** before making the switch.

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