

LUNCH & LEARN: REUSABLE PERIOD PRODUCTS

myperiod.org.uk

MY PERIOD PADS TACKLE PERIOD POVERTY IN THE UK

Time Required:

1 hour

Equipment:

Samples of menstrual cups, cup cups, reusable pads, period pants; print outs of period adverts; (optional) period adverts on youtube.

Learning Outcomes:

- Stimulating discussion to reduce stigma in the workplace
- Raising awareness of reusable period products
- Exploring how advertising influences opinions about menstruation and period product

Notes for Facilitators:

Before you begin the session, take a moment to reflect on your own experiences of and attitudes towards menstruation. It's important to think through your opinions (positive or negative) and how they were shaped by the education you did or didn't receive.

Many people are very negative about periods and view them as an unnecessary inconvenience – especially if they do not want children. Other people see periods as a natural part of the human experience and a way to connect meaningfully with their bodies. Both approaches are valid.

My Period supports the following key messages when teaching about periods:

- Being positive about menstruation
- Acknowledging a range of experiences
- Encouraging body confidence and body positivity
- Including everyone in the conversation (those who have periods and those who don't)
- Interrogating our attitudes towards periods
- Dismantling stigma and taboo
- Making period education fun!

Activity Outline:

TIME	ACTIVITY
5-10 MINUTES	<p>Introduce the aims of the session; set this session in the context of what else your organisation is doing about Period Dignity at work.</p> <p>Ask participants to introduce themselves. Try and create a safe space for people to ask questions and share experiences – for some people this may be a difficult or sensitive topic.</p>
5 MINUTES	<p>Hand out a selection of period adverts through time. Ask people to look at the adverts, either in pairs or alone and discuss.</p>
15 MINUTES	<p>Bring this together into a group discussion. Consider the messaging – is it positive or negative? Discuss the intention of the brand when making this advert – how do they want you to feel, and why does that make you want to buy their product?</p> <p>Key points to talk about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of shame to sell products • Emphasis on secrecy and the need for an “invisible” product • Messaging around dirtiness, sanitation, hygiene, and smells • “You can do anything” messaging (playing tennis, white swimwear etc.) <p>(Optional – watch historic period TV adverts – see list below)</p>
5 MINUTES	<p>Give a potted history of period products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically around the world women have used cloth or plant-based materials since the beginning of time. Reusables were the norm. • Then, the first commercial pads were invented in 1880s. Initially they weren't a big success. During WWI nurses used soldiers' bandages for their periods – someone discovered this and realised that there might be a market for excess cellulose bandages after the war. • Kotex and other brands start up in the 1920s. The language of shame and the need to buy clean, white, disposable products starts here. • Disposable period products are now an enormous industry. It's a very clever business plan because the products need to be bought every month and only last a few hours. • But more and more people are turning back towards reusable products. Suddenly it's no longer “lower class” to use cloth, but quite chic.

20 MINUTES	<p>Hand out a selection of reusable period products for people to look at. Try and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reusable Pads • Period Pants • Menstrual Cups • Menstrual Cup Steriliser <p>Take time to explain how each product works and answer questions (see tips below). Some people in the group may be familiar with these products – if so, draw on their expertise.</p> <p>If no one in the group has used a menstrual cup or is confident demonstrating, then you can watch the ‘Give a cup a go’ video.</p>
5-10 MINUTES	<p>Collect feedback and allow time for final questions – about menstrual health, or about Period Dignity activity in your organisation.</p> <p>You may wish to use this session to gather feedback on initiatives already implemented.</p>

Sample Youtube Period Adverts:

- [Always](#)
- [Bodyform](#)
- [Tampax](#)
- [Tampax](#)

Please look to the end of this document for period advert print outs.

Information About Reusable Products:

1. **Menstrual cups** are bell-shaped devices that sit inside the vagina (like a tampon) and collect period flow. Until recently, they have been relatively unknown, despite being invented in 1937. Cups are made from silicon, and are folded to insert into the vagina. They form a light suction with the vaginal walls holding them in place, before being emptied and reinserted. Many people find them more comfortable than tampons, and they are suitable for a range of activities (including swimming).

Cups can be worn for up to 12 hours – they hold more blood than a tampon, and cause less vaginal dryness than tampons. There is also less risk of TSS. Cups should be rinsed or wiped between each use, and sterilised at the end of each period. This can be done by using sterilising tablets (the same as for a baby's bottle), by boiling them on the hob, or by using a sterilising pot (2).

The upfront cost of cups is higher than other products, but they can be used for up to ten years, presenting large environmental benefits. There is lots of information and support online about using menstrual cups, including choosing the right one for you and guidance on cleaning and usage.

For further information and a useful demonstration video look [here](#).

3. Reusable pads are available in different sizes, styles and absorbencies. Most have wings, with poppers that fasten around the gusset of underwear. They are slightly thicker than most disposable pads as they don't have the gel inside but instead rely on absorbing the blood in their material layers. People often find them more comfortable than disposable pads as they are softer, more like the material of underwear.

They can be made of cotton, fleece or bamboo, and it is possible to make your own! Change them as often as you'd change a disposable pad and soak or rinse them in cold water before putting them in your normal wash. It's preferable to air dry them rather than putting them in the tumble drier – but they will survive. If you want to use them out and about, they often come with a small waterproof bag that will keep them safe till you get home and can rinse or soak them.

4. Period pants are like normal underwear but are made of special absorbent fabric. Period pants come in a range of shapes and styles, including boxer shorts. Depending on the type, they can last up to 8 hours. After use, soak them in cold water before popping in with your normal wash. Pants can be very helpful for people with disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs.



The Safe Solution of Women's Greatest Hygienic Problem

Which 8 in 10 Better-Class Women Have Adopted



Positive Protection Under ALL Conditions and An End Forever to the Embarrassing Difficulty of Disposal, This NEW Way

By ELLEN J. BUCKLAND, Registered Nurse

WITH this new way the hazards and uncertainties of the old-time methods are ended.

You wear sheerest frocks and gayest gowns without a moment's fear or doubt. You go about for hours; motor, dance, walk; meet all situations without a second thought.

The name is Kotex. Doctors urge it. Nurses employ it. Women find in it the scientific solution of their greatest hygienic problem. Its use will make a great difference in your life.

The difference between Kotex and ordinary pads

Kotex is the *only* sanitary pad filled with *Cellucotton* wadding, the extraordinary hospital absorbent recently discovered.

Thus Kotex provides the amazing absorbency of 16 times its own weight in moisture! It is 5 times as absorbent as ordinary cotton.

That means protection unknown before—safety under all circumstances, regardless of frock or occasion.

Kotex, a scientifically developed product; the creation of a world-respected maker of hospital absorbents; completely, thoroughly deodorizes.

A process applied under a secret and exclusive method, which ends an annoying problem.

Kotex eliminates utterly the problem of disposal—one discards Kotex almost as easily as tissue. No laundry.

Kotex is scientifically designed for safety in wear. That means a special quality gauze. It means ample gauze covering and strong gauze attachment ends, to eliminate absolutely all chance—all hazard.

Thus, from personal experience and from what other women told them, *80% or more better-class women* have discarded ordinary ways for Kotex. Once a woman tries Kotex, she rarely again invites the hazards of less scientific ways.

Only Kotex is "like" Kotex

Look for the name "Kotex" on the box of any sanitary pad you are asked to buy. If that name isn't there, you are not being given genuine Kotex. No other product is "like" Kotex. No product not plainly marked "Kotex" is Kotex.

Obtain Kotex at any drug, dry goods, or department store. 12 pads to the box. Two sizes of pads: Kotex Regular and Kotex-Super.

Kotex Company, 180 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Easy Disposal and 2 other important factors



① Disposed of as easily as tissue. No laundry.



② True protection—5 times as absorbent as cotton.



③ Obtain without embarrassment, at any drug or dry goods store,* simply by saying "Kotex."



*Supplied also through vending cabinets in rest-rooms by West Disinfecting Co.

"Ask for them by name"
KOTEX
PROTECTS—DEODORIZES

No laundry—discards as easily as a piece of tissue

The Safe Solution of Women's Greatest Hygienic Problem

1928; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad* Access, Duke University:
<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4dj59295>

3 delicate situations saved!

The life of the modern girl is carefree, successful . . . where it once was difficult and humiliating. How Wondersoft Kotex is changing women's lives!



She wins at tennis!

● Vigorous, active, yet not the slightest discomfort. Pads don't pull or twist as they used to, because Wondersoft conforms to the body, re-adjusts itself to fit, no matter how active you are.



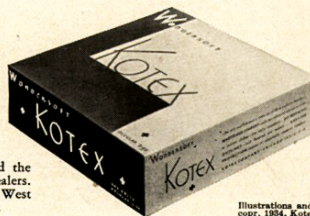
Business hours aren't hard...

● On those days, she used to suffer all during business hours. But Wondersoft pads stay dry at the edges—and wonderfully comfortable, too. No chafing or rubbing, because of that exclusive Kotex patent, softest cotton sides where pad touches, but top and bottom left free to take up moisture.

A stunning, close-fitting silhouette

● Smooth fitting, snug—but no tell-tale lines showing. That's because of those flat, specially shaped ends on the Wondersoft pad. And no fear of soiling lingerie or frock. The center is different from any other pad, gives greater safety.

What a glorious day—yet many lose such freedom, because they think all sanitary pads are alike.



Why, even the package of Wondersoft is different. Not like a sanitary napkin box, at all. Try it and see why it is changing women's lives. And

Super Kotex is now priced the same as regular size, at all dealers. In emergency, find Kotex in West cabinets in ladies' rest rooms.

Illustrations and text
copr. 1934, Kotex Co.

3 delicate situations saved!

1934; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad* Access, Duke University:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4736mn5x>

Which Tampon

can you trust — *and when?*



YOU CAN TRUST FIBS, the *Kotex* Tampon.... With Fibs you can change to shorts, play suit or even a bathing suit with nobody the wiser! Worn internally, Fibs provide *invisible* sanitary protection... no pins, pads or belts... no chafing, no disposal problem.



A DOZEN FIBS ONLY 20¢. Not 8—not 10—but 12 for 20c. And only FIBS are *quilted* for greater comfort and safety... easy to insert without artificial means. (When you buy Fibs, you pay for no mechanical gadget to aid insertion... for none is needed.) You can trust Fibs... the *Kotex* Tampon... and Fibs save you money, too. Get a package today!

FIBS*—the *Kotex** Tampon



NOT 8—NOT 10—BUT
12 FOR 20¢

(★Trade Marks Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.)

Which Tampon can you trust - and when?

1942; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad* Access, Duke University:

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4d21s462>

Why was I born a Woman?



EVER get mad at the world... at the unfairness of your lot? Ever hear a voice inside you whisper: "Better not go out... you won't have any fun"?

And do you ever wonder why some girls *always* seem to keep smiling, no matter what time of the month it is? *If only you could learn their secret!*

Well, you're not too old to learn! What you need is a lesson on how to grow a crop of confidence! How to be gay! How to be carefree!

Stop feeling sorry for yourself

Remember... an ounce of confidence is worth a pound of make-up. And to be sure of yourself on "difficult days," you need the kind of confidence Kotex sanitary napkins give.

First of all, Kotex ends are flat and tapered. They never give away your secret... *never* make you self-conscious. And you know better than anyone, how important *comfort* is. So do as most girls do and choose Kotex. You see, Kotex is made in *soft folds*... so naturally it's *less bulky*... *less apt* to rub and chafe!

Remember this too... there's a world of confidence in knowing that the new "safety shield" in every Kotex pad provides added absorption... gives you an *extra margin* of safety.

All in all, Kotex helps give a girl the comfort and the confidence she needs to put a smile on her lips... and a song in her heart!

**Be confident... comfortable... carefree
with Kotex!**



How's a girl to learn what to do, what not to do, on "difficult days"? The new book: "As One Girl To Another" tells all... gives answers to intimate questions. To get a copy *FREE*... Write Post Office Box 5434, Dept. FW-9, 919 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.



*Trade Mark Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Why was I born a Woman?

1941; KOTEX COMPANY

Ad* Access, Duke University:
<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r48s4k832>



Not a shadow
of a doubt
— with Kotex

Not a shadow of a revealing outline
because only Kotex of all leading napkins gives you
ends that are flat and pressed.

Not a doubt — for confidence and peace-of-mind
go hand in hand with the extra absorbency and safety
of Kotex . . . proved superior by actual use!

Best of all, this pad is made to stay soft while
wearing . . . to retain its fit and comfort for hours
and hours. No wonder Kotex is America's first
choice in napkins . . . always, very personally yours.

More women choose Kotex[®]
than all other sanitary napkins

MADE IN U.S.A.

MADE BY
KOTEX COMPANY

Not a shadow of a doubt with Kotex

1950S; KOTEX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

THE WAY YOU FEEL IS FREE

The way you feel is free

Today and every day, you feel free, confident, unhampered. Tampax tampons, worn internally, make this possible. Keep you feeling cool and comfortably confident, in or out of the water. They let you wear what you wish, do what you want, any day. They're the better, easier protection. Aren't you glad you discovered them?

for total freedom, total comfort...

TAMPAX
tampons

TAMPAX TAMPONS ARE MADE ONLY BY TAMPAX INCORPORATED, PALMER, MASS.
DRESS BY MAGNANI FOR DEZAR

The way you feel is free

1960; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives



Sail on—the day is yours

There's a gentle breeze rippling the blue water and there you are, playing tag with the wind. You'll not let anything interfere with the fun even if it is one of "those days."

That's why you use Tampax tampons—so you can be as active and free as you please. They're worn internally, so there is

nothing to show or embarrass you. No chafing, no irritation, no odor to make you uncomfortable or self-conscious. Because you can be sure of the protection Tampax tampons give you, you can wear that sure-of-yourself smile.

Tampax tampons are for you—you, the sailor who doesn't let anything anchor her down.



The internal protection more women trust.

TAMPAX
tampons

Sail on the day is yours

1970S;TAMPAZ

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives



"Are you sure I'll still be a virgin?"

"I really wanted to use tampons, but I'd heard you had to be, you know, 'experienced.' So I asked my friend Lisa. Her mom is a nurse so I figured she'd know. Lisa told me she'd been using Petal Soft® Plastic Applicator Tampax® tampons since her very first period and she's a virgin. In fact, you can use them at any age and still be a virgin.

I was totally psyched to try Petal Soft Tampax 'cause I really hated pads. And now I can't believe I waited so long. The first thing you notice is the rounded tip on the plastic applicator. That's what makes them so easy to put in! And they're made to be slender so they're really comfortable to wear and easy to take out too.

Petal Soft tampons protect really well because they absorb like crazy and expand to fit the way you're made, so they never plug you up. They're so much better than pads. I love them!"

Tampax tampons. The feminine protection more women choose over any other tampon or pad.

FOR A FREE SAMPLE of Petal Soft Tampax, or for more information, send your name and address to: Mrs. Carol Platenik, Registered Nurse, Tambrands, Inc., Box 210, Palmer, MA 01069.



Tampax. tampons.
The better way
to deal with
your period.

Are you sure I'll still be a virgin?

1988; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

© P&G 1999

when you
needed
protection
TAMPAX
WAS THERE
and when
you wanted a
rounded
applicator
we came up with
**tampax
satin**
(we're good like that)
you get the
sumo great
protection that
with an applicator that
sits smooth
(hence the name)
yet still flushable
(discretion, discretion, discretion)
and has a
closed
tip that's
shaped
you like this
KNOW

The Advertising Archives



www.tampax.com

Tampax Satin

1991; TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

An advertisement for Tampax Pearl tampons. The background is a photograph of two women in a shower. The woman in the foreground is wearing a black strapless top and has her mouth open in a playful, shouting expression. The woman behind her is also smiling and has her hands framing her face. The scene is filled with water droplets, creating a sense of freshness and vitality. Overlaid on the image is the text 'DON'T LET YOUR TIME OF THE MONTH KEEP YOU FROM HAVING THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE'. In the bottom left corner, there is a short paragraph about the product's benefits. In the bottom right corner, there is a box of Tampax Pearl tampons.

The Advertising Archives

**DON'T LET
YOUR TIME OF THE MONTH
KEEP YOU FROM HAVING
THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE**

You take on the world. Tampax will take on your period. With our best protection and smoothest applicator, you will never have to slow down.

**TAMPAX
PEARL**



Don't let your time of the month
keep you from having the time of
your life

2015;TAMPAX

Credit: Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives