

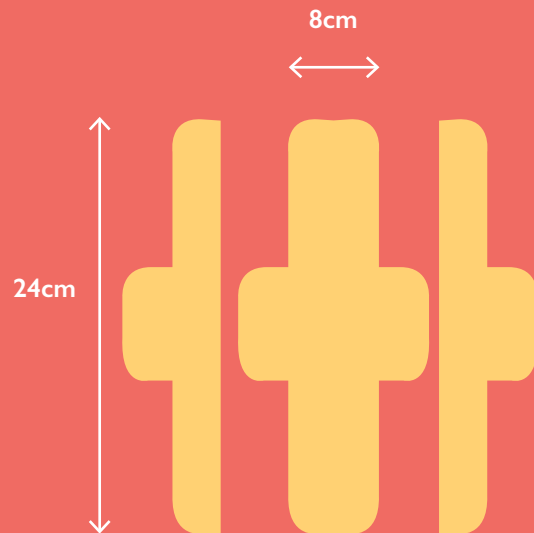
## How to make a basic cloth sanitary pad.

Cut out the 3 shapes (as per diagram) from a soft and breathable fabric such as cotton. The length should be about 24cm and the end with about 8cm.

Join the 3 pieces by sewing around the edges. Do not sew the overlapping straight edges together.

Taking some absorbent fabric, such as towel or sweatshirt material, cut a rectangle 22cm by 28cm.

Fold the absorbent fabric 4 times so that it measures 22cm by 7cm and place it inside the casing.



## For more information, contact any of these organisations:

1. Constituency councillor's office
2. Town council office
3. Clinics and community outreach workers
4. Community health extension workers
5. Ministry of Health and Social Services
6. Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform



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## Menstrual Hygiene Management

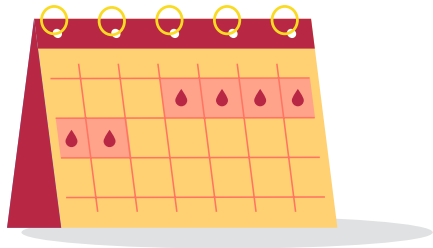


Together we can educate all girls in our community on menstrual hygiene.



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DEVELOPMENT  
WORKSHOP



## 1. What is menstruation?

- Menstruation is a natural process experienced by females of reproductive age.
- Menstruation is the monthly shedding of the uterus lining.
- Typically begins around age 12 and continues until ages 45-55.

## 2. What are the key facts?

- Periods occur roughly every 28 days and last 5-7 days.
- The average menstrual blood loss is 35 millilitres.
- Common symptoms include abdominal cramps, as well as energy and mood fluctuations
- There is community stigma due to cultural beliefs and misinformation.
- Absenteeism from school is common due to menstruation.
- Commercial sanitary pads can be expensive for some families.

## 3. Safe management of periods

- Girls can seek professional assistance from local clinics or community health workers for guidance and affordable solutions.
- Use hygiene products like pads or tampons.
- Use reusable materials to make your safe pad (see guidelines at the back).

## 4. Unsafe ways of managing periods

- Girls and women should not resort to using old cloth pieces, or newspaper can cause scratches, infections, and discomfort.
- Similarly, traditional methods like ash, sand, or leaves should be avoided due to the health risks.
- Disposable pads or tampons should not be reused, as this can lead to infection.
- Using unhygienic toilets or practicing open defecation can increase the risk of infections.

## 5. Why does this topic matter to all of us?

- Everyone needs to know about periods, whether they have them or not, to help keep our girls attending school.
- Menstruation is considered a private issue and many parents find it difficult to discuss, leaving many girls unaware of what is happening to them and unprepared to manage their periods.
- Learners need to understand the changes they are experiencing and be equipped with skills to cope with them.
- Keep woman and girls safe through access to appropriate materials, and protect them from stigma and community shame.
- Promote access to accurate information and education to households.
- Encourage understanding and community support for girls and women to practise proper hygiene during menstruation.



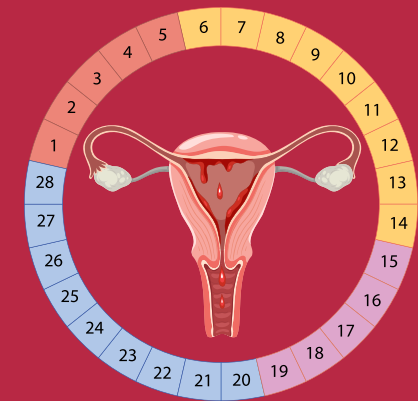
## The menstrual cycle

The menstrual cycle occurs in the reproductive systems of women over the course of 28 days on average, although a cycle may vary anywhere from 20 to 40 days and still be considered normal.

Each month, lining tissue in the uterus develops in preparation for ovulation, when an egg is released from one of the ovaries. The ovum travels to the uterus.

If fertilised, the uterus lining provides nourishment for the embryo and the cycle ceases until the woman is no longer pregnant. If the egg is not fertilised, it disintegrates along with the outer layers of the uterus lining and then is discharged through the vagina with blood. This discharge is called the menstruation phase, and on average lasts 5 - 7 days.

The menstrual cycle is affected by serious ill-health or disease, such that intervals between cycles may be extended and/or menstruation may only last a few days or continue for more than a week. Typically, malnutrition causes the menstruation phase to shorten.



**Menstrual Phase**  
The uterus lining breaks down and menstruation occurs

**Pre-Ovulatory Phase**  
The uterus lining begins to thicken

**Ovulation phase**  
Ovulation takes place, usually on day 14

**Premenstrual phase**  
The uterus lining continues to thicken. If the egg is not fertilised, reproductive hormones diminish and the lining prepares to break down.