



Menstrual hygiene

The onset of **menstruation** marks the beginning of a new phase in the lives of adolescent girls, bringing with it new **challenges** and **vulnerabilities**.

Every month, about **1.8 billion** individuals, including girls, women, transgender men, and nonbinary people, experience menstruation. However, many of them face stigmatization, harassment and social exclusion related to it.

The many discriminatory social norms and cultural taboos, often rooted in **gender inequality**, **poverty** and **lack of access** to sanitation and health products, hinder millions of people from managing their menstrual cycle in a dignified and healthy way.

Proper menstrual hygiene is critical to the well-being and **empowerment** of women, adolescent girls, transgender men, and nonbinary people, as it plays a crucial role in enabling them to reach their full potential. The negative impacts of a lack of good menstrual hygiene involve various aspects:

- **Physical health:** Poor menstrual hygiene can pose serious health risks, such as reproductive and urinary tract infections, which can result in future infertility and birth complications. In addition, neglecting to wash hands after changing menstrual products can spread infections, such as hepatitis B and thrush.
- **Mental health:** Lack of means for hygienic management of menstruation can cause psychological distress and stress, contributing to the shame and sometimes to the depression that women and girls experience due to the taboos and stigma associated with menstruation.
- **Daily life:** good menstrual hygiene combined with ensuring access to affordable menstrual materials can help improve the access of girls and women to education, opening up more opportunities in terms of education, jobs, promotions and entrepreneurship, thus enabling women to contribute to the overall economy instead of being relegated to the home.



"Women and adolescent girls have the right to use clean materials for the menstrual cycle management, allowing them to absorb or collect blood menstrual so that it can be changed in complete privacy whenever it is necessary. In addition, they should have access to safe and convenient facilities for the disposal of the materials used. It is essential that they be informed of the basic facts about menstruation and how to handle it with dignity, without discomfort or fear." (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme 2012).

Bibliography:

<https://www.savethechildren.it/>

<https://www.unicef.org/>

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