



Periods

Many girls feel self conscious and nervous about getting their periods. The more relaxed and organised you can be, the better the chances of no one noticing and you being comfortable and feeling in control. If you don't know much about periods and they haven't started yet, there is a lot of information in books and on the internet. Most schools will give you a talk about periods and puberty in Year 6 and Year 7. Your parents can also help.

1. Have a kit prepared

Always have a little kit of products that you keep with you e.g. in your school bag. This kit could include:

- 2 pads - with or without wings or 2 tampons (if you are using them)
- 1 spare pair of knickers
- Coins for any dispensing machine in the toilets
- A packet of tissues in case there is no toilet paper!
- A small bag or box to keep it all in.

Keep your kit in your school bag or locker so it's always available, and remember to replace any items so you don't get caught out in the future.

2. Practice

If you haven't started your periods yet, it's a good idea to practice putting some pads in your knickers and wearing them for a while. This way, you'll know exactly what to do when they do start, and it won't feel completely strange and uncomfortable. If any packets are difficult to open, it may be good to try another brand.

Some of girls may find inserting tampons difficult because you can't see what you are doing and you have to think about where it needs to go and visualise your body as you insert it. If tampons are too difficult to manage, pads should be used.

3. Know your toilets

If you haven't already thought about this, check to see which of the toilets at school have special sanitary disposal bins in them. These special bins are provided for used sanitary pads and tampons - nothing else. They have a lid that's designed to hide anything inside.

If you can use those toilets when you have your periods, you'll have a much easier time getting rid of your used pads or tampons.

4. Disposing of used pads and tampons

Used sanitary pads and tampons should be wrapped in toilet paper or a disposal bag, and disposed of correctly in the sanitary bins provided. When putting a used pad or tampon into the bins, it's important that you wrap it in toilet paper first.

5. Good hygiene is important

Remember to wash your hands with soapy water after you have changed your pads. If you are using tampons, you must wash your hands before you change them too. Always be considerate to other girls using the toilets by wiping down the toilet seat if necessary.

6. Emergency supplies

If you can't get to your locker, or you don't have any pads, you may be able to buy some from the dispensing machine in the girls' toilets. If your school doesn't have one, you can make a pad out of toilet paper (or even some paper towel), which should get you through to the next break. To make a

pad from toilet paper you can roll the toilet paper around your hand a few times to make a thick wad and place in your knickers. This should give you enough protection till the next break, when you can ask for a sanitary pad from another girl, or one of the staff, e.g. your form teacher, school nurse, or at the medical room.

7. What to wear

Depending on your school uniform rules, you might like to get yourself a pair of black sporty Lycra shorts to wear over your knickers, under your skirt or trousers. Lycra shorts stop your pad and knickers from moving around, which will give you confidence, especially if you're doing any sporting activities. Some knickers with Lycra in them would be good if wearing shorts isn't allowed.

8. What if you have an accident?

It's happened to every girl and woman at some point. They find that they've leaked and their knickers are stained, and sometimes their skirt or trousers. Yes, it is embarrassing if it happens to you. Hopefully you'll realise before anyone else does.

A quick-fix idea is to wrap your jumper around your waist, and that may be enough to get you through the day.