

KEY PRACTICAL ACTIONS FOR ACHIEVING MHM in WASH FOR ALL!

WASH infrastructures - what are needed?

- Water and Sanitation facilities are basic essentials for Menstruation Hygiene Management.
- Menstruating women or girls should have easy access to toilets and water.
- Water and soap availability to maintain personal hygiene.
- Safe, clean and private space for changing the materials and space for washing and drying used materials.
- Menstruation-friendly toilet (lockable door, privacy, light and ventilation).
- Water should be available inside the toilet to wash.
- Don't throw pads or reusable pad into the toilets. Keep dustbin inside the toilet. If there is no disposal mechanism then dispose of materials by burial or burning. Do not dispose of them in dumps.



Hygiene Management

Cleanliness consideration during the menstruation

Always use clean cloth or pad.

- Change them regularly at least 3 times a day depending on how heavy the flow of blood is.
- Wash your hands before and after changing your pad or cloth to stop the spread of germs which cause infection.
- Keep the genital area clean and dry.
- In case of reusable cloths or pads - wash the cloth with soap and water and always dry the cloth under the sun. If possible, iron it and store it in dry and clean place.

Who is this Brochure for?

This Brochure will serve the interests of:

- ➔ Water Users and Sanitation Committees, Female Community Health Volunteers, health post staff, social mobilizers and community triggerers
- ➔ Municipality WASH Unit staff
- ➔ Municipality WASH Management Committees, and Municipality WASH Coordination Committees

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Menstruation and WASH

RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT IN WESTERN NEPAL PHASE II Western and Mid-Western Nepal



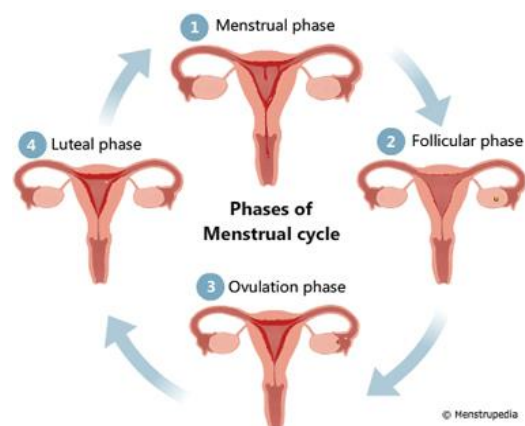
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What is Menstruation ?

Menstruation is the discharge of blood and tissue from the lining of the uterus that occurs at monthly flow of blood through the vagina experienced by girls and women of reproductive age. It is controlled by natural hormones. Girls usually start getting their monthly period around the age of 10 years approximately. Each woman's menstruation cycle varies, but the process is always the same. Older women usually stop getting their monthly period around the age of 50 approximately (this is called menopause). The bleeding usually lasts for 5 to 7 days, but it can be more or less. Menstruation is a natural process for all women and girls worldwide.

The typical menstrual cycle of 28 days starts with menstruation (days one to seven). 2) Development of the egg. 3) Ovulation – release of an egg from an ovary, at approximately half way through the cycle. 4) If the egg is not fertilized by sperm, the lining starts to break down and detach until the end of the cycle and menstruation starts again. The discharge contains blood and uterine cells. Fresh menstrual discharge from a healthy woman is not harmful.



Menstruation is not a sickness, but if not properly managed it can result in health problems.

Human right to water, sanitation and hygiene:

Water and sanitation services must be available, affordable, accessible, safe and acceptable for everyone, at all times. This means that also women and girls, whether menstruating or not, have access to water and sanitation, at all times.

Environment: It is vital that sanitary items are disposed of properly – by burning or burial – and not allowed to pollute the environment.

Non-discrimination and gender equality: Taboos and myths related to menstruation often portray women and girls as inferior to men and boys. As long as women and girls need to sleep outside their homes and are forbidden to touch water taps and use toilets during their periods and/or after child birth, there is no gender equality.

Contact: There is no reason to avoid touching a menstruating woman. She is not infectious and cannot cause an illness in other humans or animals by touching them or eating some foods.

Education: No female teacher or student should miss school days simply because they are menstruating! Education is the foundation for women's empowerment and gender equality, and important for the whole family and the community!

Menstruation should not impair the overall quality of life and dignity of girls and women – it is an important sign that they are able to bear children.

International Menstruation Day is 28th May – let's celebrate!



School students preparing reusable pads at school.

Health: Health is compromised by being forced to go for open defecation, forbidden to use the water tap or to sleep outside of home, and generally being left to practice poor menstrual hygiene management. If women can't use the toilet and must 'hold on' until dark, they may suffer from urinary tract infections.

Exercise: There is no reason to stop girls and women from exercising during menstruation. They can carry out all normal activities.

Nutrition: Women should eat nutritious food at all times, including during their menstruation.

Productive work: Menstruation should not interfere with normal work. For instance, female teachers shouldn't have to miss working days. Women working as Village Maintenance Workers need to be able to touch water sources, pipes and taps during their periods.

Safety: If women are forced to defecate or urinate outside during menstruation they face the dangers of sexual violence and wild animals.

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) means the use of clean menstrual management materials (cloths, pads, tampons, cups) to absorb and collect blood and the safe disposal/washing of used menstrual management materials. The materials should be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of the period, using soap and water for washing the body each day. MHM focuses on practical strategies for coping with monthly periods.

Unsafe and unhygienic sanitation facilities for taking care of menstrual hygiene, and unhygienic materials to absorb menstrual blood can lead to vaginal infections, with possible long term effects on reproductive health. These can have serious health impacts, even death.



The more we talk about menstruation, the easier it gets to talk about it, and with this, the easier it is to change harmful practices.