

Health Trend: Tampon Alternatives



By

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A recent [health trend](#) has been on the rise in 2019 in the form of tampon alternatives. You don't need to limit yourself to only tampons. Tampons can hurt, depending on the brand, and they are packed with chemicals like rayon and bleached wood fibers that shouldn't be anywhere near our bodies. You can find 100% cotton tampons but they won't help you with the sustainability aspect of searching for tampon alternatives if that's why you want something different for your monthly flow. Let's forget about sleeping with a tampon in—that's a big no-no because the average person gets 7 to 9 hours of sleep, and therefore going way past the recommended time it's safe to leave a tampon in. You should use a pad instead. Pads aren't any better either—it can feel like you're walking around with

a stinky diaper all day. Exploring tampon alternatives can not only help you toward sustainability but can also help ease the cost and discomfort of having your period. You're also reducing the risk of potential illness with our [health tips](#).

Okay, Ladies—let's talk periods. Check out this new health trend for tampon alternatives!

Forget stained jeans on your next [date night](#) for this [health advice](#)—tampons are potentially dangerous. Toxic Shock Syndrome and other infections are every woman's nightmare. Tampons, especially the super-absorbent kind for heavier flows, and can trap bacteria inside called *Staphylococcus aureus* if left in too long, causing TSS. Although the syndrome is rare, this still can have fatal effects for women. Beyond this, tampons cause an unimaginable amount of waste during your monthly flow, and they're *expensive*. When you add up how much a woman spends in her lifetime on tampons, it can be up to \$5,600 dollars. We've gathered a list of alternative tampon products for you to try. Some of them may still generate waste, but nowhere does it equal the number of waste tampons produce:

1. Menstrual Cups: Menstrual cups are great because not only are they reusable with a one-time cost (therefore saving you upwards of \$120 each year and much more during your child-bearing years), but they also allow you to monitor your flow, have a less embarrassing odor, and lower landfill waste. Brands like Tampax, Diva Cup, and Luna Cup make their menstrual cups out of medical grade silicone. The cost might be pricey at about \$40 dollars to buy the cup but it will save you much more in the long run. Just be aware of the mess menstrual cups can make since they catch body fluids. Using a menstrual cup can have a learning curve as well because they can be difficult to remove—do not do it by the stem. In fact,

you might want to cut the stem down if it hurts. Do not panic if you can't get the cup out immediately. Pinch the base and pull slowly. It's best to practice using the cup before you start your period. Also—be comfortable with yourself. You have to get very familiar with everything down below so you don't hurt yourself inserting the cup.

It should be noted there have been some reports of menstrual cup-related TSS incidents, but only when the women have left them in far longer than the recommended time (7 days as opposed to 10-12 hours). Be sure to keep track of time when using any kind of insertable period product for your own safety. Timers on your phone do wonders.

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2. Disposable discs: Comparable to menstrual cups, disposable discs are inserted like a diaphragm and can be left in for up to twelve hours. You can even get frisky in bed with your partner while you are using one. The Flex Company, a disposable menstruation disc company, claims the Softdisc has not been linked to TSS, but be sure to do your own research before you decide to search out period alternatives. Soft disposable discs might be a better alternative to the stiffer silicone cups because they aren't as hard but still catch any fluid that leaves the cervix. You'll still spend money on your period products but they will still go farther than regular tampons.

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3. Period Panties: Specifically designed to catch your flow during the month, period panties are a tampon alternative that allows you to forgo inserting something in your body. If you have a heavier flow, some of these products may require something else to help catch excess fluids, but there are some brands that have introduced superabsorbent underwear that will

help you avoid using other products. Period panties—or thongs, boyshorts, hipsters, bikinis, or hi-cut—work in place of clunky pads that make it awkward through the day. Depending on the panty and the brand you buy, they are equivalent to the absorbency of 2 to 3 tampons. Be prepared to wash the laundry every day, too! Period panties may also be a good product to start your teen on when she starts her first period since she won't have to deal with embarrassing leaks or odors at school if you get her a few pairs that can handle a heavier flow to get her through the day.

Are there other types of period alternatives you've tried? Let us know in the comments below!