

## Menstrual Cup Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### How the cup works/cup material

#### Q. How does the menstrual cup work and how does it stay in place?

A. A menstrual cup is a flexible cup or barrier worn inside the vagina during menstruation to collect menstrual fluid. Unlike tampons and pads, the cup collects menstrual fluid rather than absorbing it. Its bell shape allows the menstrual cup to fit snugly and comfortably up against your vaginal walls, below but not touching your cervix. The rim is designed to help create a suction that keeps the menstrual cup in place and collects your menstrual flow inside of it. The small holes around the rim are to help release the suction when you remove the cup.

#### Q. What is the menstrual cup made of?

A. The Menstrual Cup is made from 100% medical grade silicone which is a safe and hypoallergenic material.

### Comfort/fitting

#### Q. Will I be able to feel the menstrual cup when it is inside my body?

A. Not if it has been properly inserted. If you do feel it, then it has probably not been inserted in the correct position and is too close to the vaginal opening. Adjust or reinsert your menstrual cup slightly higher in the vaginal cavity. Remember, the entire stem remains outside of your body.

#### Q. What is the best position to be in to insert the menstrual cup?

A. There are several positions you can try and you may want to practice insertion in different positions until you find the one that is easiest and most comfortable for you. You can insert it by squatting, standing, standing with one leg raised resting on a chair or bed, or sitting. If you have used tampons before try the same positions you use for inserting a tampon.

#### Q. How do I know when I have inserted the menstrual cup if it is in the right place?

A. Follow the instructions carefully to make sure it is correctly fitted. Once it is in place you can slide your finger around the cup to make sure it has opened properly and unfolded from the way it was inserted. Once correctly fitted it will make a seal and ensure there is no leakage.

#### Q. What is the best way to remove the menstrual cup?

A. Make sure you are in a place where you can empty your cup. You can remove it while sitting on the toilet and this may be convenient as the blood can be poured into the toilet bowl. Be careful not to drop the cup into the toilet. Pulling the cup out too fast or by tipping it at too steep an angle could cause some messiness. Again, once you get some practice removing and emptying the menstrual cup you should have no problems. Just remove the cup slowly and as close to straight down (with

minimal tipping) as possible. Always remember to relax your muscles when you remove, try not to tense up. Remember to release the suction seal by squeezing the cup at the base.

**Q. What about the stem of the menstrual cup where does that go and will it dig into me and make me feel uncomfortable?**

The stem should not give you any irritation or discomfort. The purpose of the stem is simply to help you reach the bottom of the cup but not for actual removal. Never pull on the stem to remove — it will hurt and make a mess. Proper cup removal happens only by squeezing the bottom of the cup itself to release the suction.

**Q. Is it comfortable? The menstrual cup looks quite big.**

A. At first you may notice the menstrual cup, but once you get used to it (usually during your first day of use), you should not be aware of its presence.

**Q. Can I use some lubricant to insert the menstrual cup?**

Y. Yes you can use water or a water-based lubricant to help insert the menstrual cup.

**Q. Can the menstrual cup be worn overnight?**

A. Yes, it can be worn overnight and it will stay in place. You can empty it when you get up in the morning.

**Q. Is it possible for the menstrual cup to get lost inside of me?**

A. No, you need not worry, once the cup is in place it will not get lost or move inside you even if you play sport.

**Q. Does the menstrual cup touch or come close to the cervix?**

A. No, when the cup is fitted it will not come near to your cervix.

**Q. Does the menstrual cup have an odour or smell?**

A. No, the material (Silicone) does not have any smell or odour.

**Messiness/leakage/capacity to hold blood**

**Q. Is using a menstrual cup messy?**

A. No, not once you get comfortable with it. In the beginning, you need to become accustomed to removing and emptying your cup. If the suction seal is not properly released before you remove the cup, it can sometimes be messy. Once you learn to release the cup properly, there should not be any problem.

**Q. Will my menstrual cup leak when I remove it?**

A. Pulling the cup out too fast or by tipping it at too steep an angle could cause some messiness. Again, once you get some practice removing and emptying the menstrual cup you should have no problems. Just remove the cup slowly and as close to straight down (with minimal tipping) as possible. Always remember to relax your muscles when you remove, try not to tense up. Remember to release the suction seal by squeezing the cup at the base.

**Q. Will the menstrual cup leak?**

A. No, the menstrual cup should not leak. However, there are conditions that could cause leakage. If the cup has not been inserted properly or if something has caused the cup to move out of place, some leakage may occur.

**Q. Will the menstrual cup leak if I wear it overnight?**

A. Yes, it can be worn overnight without leaking and it will stay in place. You can empty it when you get up in the morning.

**Q. Compared to a tampon/pad how much fluid can the menstrual cup hold?**

A. The menstrual cup has a greater capacity compared to a tampon/pad, and can be emptied every 8-12 hours.

**Q. Can I use the menstrual cup when my menstrual flow is very heavy?**

A. You can use the cup all through your menstrual cycle regardless of your flow. It can be used if you have a heavy flow or if you have a light flow.

**Visibility/wearing during active sport**

**Q. Will people know I am wearing a menstrual cup?**

A. No one will be able to tell if you are wearing a menstrual cup, it is like a tampon in that the whole cup is inside you and cannot be seen even if you are playing sport.

**Q. I am physically active and very involved in sports. Can I wear the menstrual cup?**

A. Yes you can use the menstrual cup even if you are very active. It cannot be seen and will stay in place.

**Q. What about swimming? Will the blood leak out into the water from the menstrual cup?**

A. The menstrual cup fits snugly inside you and will not leak in water even if you swim.

## Safety

### **Q. Has Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) been an issue with the menstrual cup?**

A. No. The menstrual cup is a relatively new product. But, it is known that most of the cases of TSS that were tied to menstrual products occurred because tampons absorb menstrual fluid. We therefore think it is safe to assume that there will be no such problem with The Menstrual Cup, since it is non-absorbent.

### **Q. What if I have a yeast infection, discharge or some discomfort using my menstrual cup?**

A. If you experience any problems contact the clinic immediately and stop using your menstrual cup.

### **Q. I have told my friend about the menstrual cup and she wants to try it. Can she try mine as long as she cleans it?**

A. No you should not let anyone else use your menstrual cup even if it is cleaned before and after. It is not safe to share intimate items because of the risk of infection.

## Emptying, cleaning and cup storage

### **Q. How often should I empty my menstrual cup?**

A. You never want anything to stay in your body for an extended length of time without removing it. The menstrual cup should be emptied and rinsed at least every 8 to 12 hours (2-4 times a day). Empty it more often if you are experiencing a heavy menstrual flow.

### **Q. What if I am in a toilet and there is nowhere to rinse my menstrual cup?**

A. If you are in a situation where there is no water or you do not feel comfortable rinsing your cup in a communal area, wipe it out with toilet paper or a tissue and flush the toilet paper or tissue away or put in a sanitary bin. If can bring a small water bottle or feminine wipes, to clean your cup when you are out.

### **Q. What about hand washing when I remove, empty or insert my menstrual cup. ?**

A. If you can, you should wash your hands before and after removal of your menstrual cup.

### **Q. What is the best way to wash my menstrual cup?**

A. First you can rinse with water and then use a mild non perfumed soap to gently clean the menstrual cup. It should be easy to wash. Do not use scouring or rough material/cloths to clean the cup. Avoid string soaps and detergents as these may damage the cup material. You can boil your cup to sterilise it by boiling for 2-5 minutes before first use and between uses. Boiling will not damage the material but be careful with boiling water.

**Q. where is the best place to keep my menstrual cup in between periods?**

A. The menstrual cup should be washed and dried and then kept somewhere safe. The best place to keep it is in the bag we give you as this will protect it. Make sure you store it safely away from children and pets.

**General questions**

**Q. Can I wear my menstrual cup during sex?**

A. No, The menstrual cup is positioned below the cervix and at the vaginal opening, so it would interfere with sex. If you want to have sex, remove the cup.

**Q. Can a woman who has never had sex (a virgin) use the menstrual cup?**

A. Yes, a woman who has not yet had sex can use a menstrual cup. Similarly to a tampon which can also be used before a woman has ever had sex.

**Q. Can IUD or diaphragm users use a menstrual cup?**

A. Yes IUD and diaphragm users can use a menstrual cup.

**Q. When I urinate or have a bowel movement, do I need to remove my menstrual cup?**

A. No. However, you may find your menstrual cup has travelled down closer to the entrance of your vagina if you push your muscles harder than normal. So, the cup may need to be readjusted after urination or a bowel movement.

**Q. Can the menstrual cup be used as a contraceptive like a diaphragm?**

A. No the menstrual cup cannot be used as a contraceptive, it will not protect you from pregnancy and it should not be used during sexual intercourse.

**Q. Will the menstrual cup protect me from infections like sexually transmitted infections?**

A. No, the menstrual cup will not protect you or your partner from sexually transmitted infections.

**Q. Can my cup tear or leak?**

Menstrual cups do not leak while in use unless the cup is damaged, it may leak if the cup is not inserted properly, or the cup being used is in the wrong size for you. Silicone is very durable, but you should inspect your cup regularly for signs of wear and tear such as any cuts, holes, areas that have a strong odour after cleaning. If you see any of these signs or if you experience irritation you should contact the study team. Damage could be due to how well or often the cup is cleaned and what cleaning agents are used.