

Planet-Positive Periods:

A Toolkit for Sustainable Menstruation



Appendix B:

Questions to Consider When Choosing Quality Reusable Menstrual Products

Reusable menstrual products are increasingly available from a variety of brands, and like other products, vary in quality. Just because something is reusable, does not necessarily mean it is truly sustainable. For example, products might fall apart quickly due to poor quality construction, or may not be made with sustainable fabrics. Consider this, and the questions below, when choosing quality reusable menstrual products.

What ingredients are used in the product? Has it been carefully tested for potentially harmful chemicals, and is the company open about the results?

Consider buying from a company that's open about their product ingredients and testing.

Does the product meet federal or international standards?

Is the product accepted by federal government bodies like the U.S. FDA (Food and Drug Administration) or Health Canada, or an international body such as ISO (International Standards Organization)?

How is the product made? Who owns the company?

How easy is it to learn about what factories that the company works with and how those factories are run? Look beyond the trendy branding and cheap prices. Look for transparency around sustainability, ethics and certifications.

Is the company a certified B Corp?

B Corps are companies that walk the talk when it comes to sustainability; they measure their social and environmental impacts carefully and thoroughly - and have to meet high standards for both.

Will the product work really well and last a long time?

For reusable pads and period underwear, you want fabrics and construction that do both. While natural fibers like cotton are often considered more sustainable, some human-made performance fabrics like microfiber (which is often used for the absorbent core of cloth pads) have long-term value because they're super absorbent, leak proof, washable and durable. Cut-and-sew construction can be more durable than 'bonded' (glued) treatment.

For pads and underwear, are the fabrics sustainable?

Look for certifications from GRS (Global Recycled Standard), Bluesign and OEKO-TEX, a highly respected textile testing certification. Organic fabrics should be certified, too; two common ones are GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) and OCS (The Organic Content Standard).