

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

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Q What are the dangers of using a reusable menstrual cup like Diva Cup?

A. As long as they are used correctly, maintained and cleaned well, reusable menstrual cups are very safe. Current products (sold on the web and at natural food stores) include Diva Cup, Lunette, Instead, and Mooncup.

The Diva Cup is a small, silicone, reusable cup that is placed in the vagina for up to 12 hours to collect menstrual blood. It can hold up to one ounce of fluid (most women have an average monthly flow of 1-2 ounces).

During the days of menstruation, the cup is emptied, washed with mild soapy water (like a contraceptive diaphragm), and reinserted as needed. Most women empty it once in the morning and once in the evening.

Much like a young girl who uses tampons for the first time, menstrual cups do take some getting used to and there may be a bit of an “ick” factor to overcome. Happy users like the fact that cups can be worn safely for longer than a pad or tampon (which should be changed every 4-8 hours). The cup is excellent for activities where changing tampons would be next to impossible (like a day-long kayaking or snorkeling trip). Some

users also say that the cup is much less irritating than pads or tampons.

Another advantage of menstrual cups over more traditional feminine hygiene products is the lower cost. One cup lasts 12 months or more. Because menstrual cups are washable and reusable, they can lower one's carbon footprint and help the environment by reducing the amount of disposable sanitary pads and tampons dumped in landfills on a monthly basis.

Menstrual cups have NOT been associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), a serious infection caused by toxins produced by two types of bacteria: *staphylococcus aureas* and group A *streptococcus*. TSS is sometimes linked to the use of highly absorbent “super” tampons when left in place for too long.

For more cup info, check out these two websites: www.divacup.com and www.menstrualcups.org.



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