

Managing Your *Period* During a Natural Disaster

Natural disasters are stressful. They can strike anywhere and at any time. In an emergency, you may run out of period supplies or not have access to them. Disaster shelters may have limited or no period supplies. Planning ahead can help you stay healthy and comfortable **if a natural disaster strikes.**



Prepare for natural disasters.

Have these supplies in your emergency kit to be prepared for getting your period during a natural disaster. Customize this list to your needs.

- ☐ Period products for 2 cycles
- ☐ Soap, hand wipes, or hand sanitizer
- ☐ Clean underwear
- ☐ Over-the-counter pain relievers or other items for pain relief
- ☐ Snacks or other comfort items

Change tampons every 4 to 8 hours. Do not wear a single tampon for more than 8 hours at a time.

Seek care and talk to a doctor if you experience a change in smell from your vagina, have extreme or unusual pain, or have more severe period symptoms than usual (such as a heavier flow or longer period).



Period products can include



Tampons



Sanitary Pads



Menstrual Discs



Menstrual Cups



Period Underwear



Stay healthy during your period.

Practice good menstrual hygiene to prevent infections, reduce odors, and stay comfortable during your period.

- ☒ **Wash your hands** with soap and clean, running water before and after using a period product and the bathroom. Use hand sanitizer if you can't find soap or clean, running water.
- ☒ **Change your period product every few hours or when it is dirty**, no matter how light the flow. Wearing a pad or period underwear for too long can lead to a rash or an infection.
- ☒ **Keep your genital area clean.** Wash the outside of your vagina (vulva) and bottom every day.
- ☒ **If you have contact with floodwater while wearing a period product, change it as soon as you can after leaving the water.** This will reduce the chance of infection. If possible, replace dirty underwear with clean underwear.
- ☒ **Discard used disposable period products properly.** Wrap them in toilet paper, a tissue, or a bag and then throw them in the trash. Don't reuse dirty period products or flush them down the toilet.
- ☒ **Clean reusable period products properly.** Wash with soap and water that is safe enough to drink.
- ☒ **Store your period products** in a clean and dry place. Make sure reusable products are completely dry before storing them.



Stay safe in a shelter.

In a shelter, know that:

- There may be wait times and less privacy than you like for toilets.
- You may feel uncomfortable, anxious, or embarrassed if you can't find space in a disaster shelter that is safe and clean for managing your period.

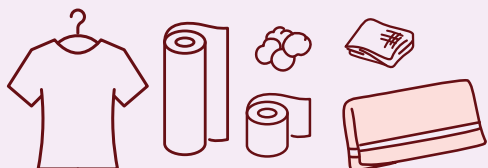
Ask shelter staff, a family member, or a friend to help you find a safe, clean, and private space to manage your period.

Follow these tips if you don't have period products.

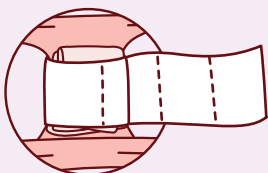
If you need period products, ask family, friends, or shelter staff for help. Someone may have some or know where to get them.

You can also make a substitute pad

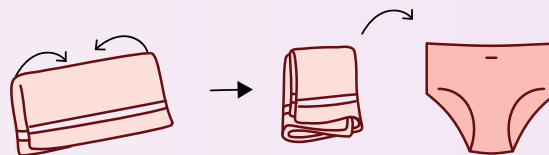
1. **Find clean material:** Cloth (T-shirt, towel), soft absorbent material gauze, cotton balls, cotton rounds), toilet paper, or paper towels.



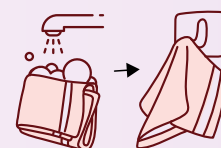
3. **Hold it in place** by wrapping it with toilet paper or more material. For cloth, change every few hours or when it is dirty.



2. **Fold it** to fit in your underwear.



4. **Wash cloth material** with soap and hang dry. For **disposable cotton, gauze, or paper products**, throw in the trash and replace with clean material.



Take care of yourself.

Make it a priority to take care of yourself, even in small ways.

- ✓ **Try calming breaths** or other ways to relax.
- ✓ **Get active** with gentle exercises like **walking** or **stretching**.
- ✓ **Connect** with friends and family.
- ✓ **Take breaks** from news and social media.
- ✓ **Drink water** and **eat** regularly. Ask for a snack if you need one.
- ✓ **Try to get good sleep.**



Support others.

We need to support each other, especially during tough times.

You can help others by sharing these practical tips, sharing supplies, or just being there to listen.

These steps can make a big difference.



Ask for help when you need it. For more support, you can call or text the Disaster Distress Hotline at **1-800-985-5990**.

For more information on health and safety after a natural disaster, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/natural-disasters/>.

For more information on staying healthy during your period, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/about/menstrual-hygiene.html>.