

# Menstrual hygiene is fundamental to



Image: WASH United

# ENSURING HEALTH

## #Menstruation Matters

Poor menstrual hygiene not only affects physical health, but also social and mental well-being, thus is a **violation of the human right to health**.

### The Challenges

1. In Uganda, pain and physical discomfort due to menstrual cramps are common reasons for missing school. Since the majority of girls do not have access to pain management (such as painkillers) they prefer to stay in bed and avoid physical activities.
2. In rural India, many women and girls use unsanitary materials such as old rags, husks, dried leaves, grass, ash, sand or newspapers because they do not have access to affordable, hygienic and safe products and facilities.
3. Commercial menstrual pads can be too expensive for low-income girls and women to afford. In Mukuru in Nairobi,

- many girls aged 10-19 have reported having sex with older men to pay for basic items, such as pads.
4. In urban India, 43%-88% of girls use reusable cloth, yet they are often washed without soap or clean water.
5. Poor menstrual hygiene, stigmas and lack of information may result in more stress, fear, shame and social exclusion.

### The Good News

6. There are many natural ways to help alleviate period pain including applying warmth to the lower belly, following a healthy diet low in salt, sugar, alcohol and caffeine and practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga.

Good Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) requires access to:

- accurate information
  - affordable hygienic materials
  - adequate water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH) facilities
  - safe disposal of used sanitary materials
7. In Bangladesh, MHM has recently been integrated into the National Hygiene Promotion Program.
  8. The Kenyan government will spend over USD \$2 million to provide pads to 678,770 disadvantaged school girls.

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*Use these facts to end the hesitation around menstruation!*