

What is Period Poverty?



Approximately

1/3 of all Canadian female and non-binary people struggle to purchase the menstrual products they need each month.

- Period poverty describes a lack of access to sanitary products and menstrual hygiene education.
- Menstrual products are cost-prohibitive for many female and non-binary students.
- In rural communities, many female and non-binary students don't have ready access to purchasing menstrual products.
- Menstrual products should be considered a basic right, similar to toilet paper and soap; they are **NOT** luxury items but essential to the health and well-being of female and non-binary students.
- Covid-19 has intensified the need for access to menstrual products.

Implications

- Lack of access to menstrual products can lead to improper usage, which then can cause serious health issues such as toxic shock syndrome and lower reproductive tract infections.

1 in 7 female and non-binary students miss school at some point because they don't have access to menstrual products. This impacts all aspects of school, including physical education class and extra-curricular activities.

- Students are often reluctant to seek out free menstrual products if they are not easily accessible in the washrooms themselves.

Precedents

In Ontario, the following school boards currently provide free access to menstrual products to their students:

- Toronto District School Board
- Thames Valley District School Board
- Waterloo Region District School Board

- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is currently piloting a similar project

- Nova Scotia and British Columbia have been providing free access to menstrual products in schools since 2019

- Scotland is the first country to provide free menstrual products to ALL people who need them in 2020



Further information:

How much do Canadian women ACTUALLY spend on tampons and pads each year?
Students provided with free menstrual products in schools
Free Menstrual Products Available in Schools
One-third of young Canadian women can't afford menstrual products, report finds
Free tampons, pads coming to 10 Hamilton Schools
Period Poverty in Canada and around the Globe
Toronto public schools to offer free tampons and pads to students