TOOL 8

MINIMUM ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN KITS FOR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

**Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in Emergencies** / IFRC / Pilot version

OVERVIEW

There are a number of essential items that are critical to enable women and girls to manage their menstruation. The minimum items outlined below are aligned with current global best practice guidelines, and are based on operational research and field experiences of both IFRC and other humanitarian agencies.

**Pads and underwear alone are not enough** – items like bucket, laundry soap, rope and pegs to enable washing, drying and disposal are critical.

This tool provides minimum items that should be included in any MHM kit or any dignity kit which supports menstrual hygiene.

**Minimum items are included for kits with:**

1. **Disposable pads**
2. **Reusable pads or cloth**
3. Tampons (for areas/countries where they are already used).

Part D shows additional top-up items that can be included depending on context, needs and approach taken to avoid overlap (coordinated between PGI and WASH).

Each kit has been designed for personal use (e.g. for one woman or adolescent girl of reproductive age) for a certain number of months; after which the consumable items will run-out (e.g. disposable pads, bathing soap, laundry soap etc.). Think about what strategy you will use for distribution and top-up or replenishment of consumable items – either in kind or using cash programming. Depending on the timeframe, the core, full kit may need to be distributed again (timeframe of non-consumable items estimated to be 12 months).

Consultation with women and girls should guide the selection of any hygiene, dignity or menstrual hygiene related items to be distributed. This includes aspects like size and colour of underwear, type of laundry soap (e.g. bar or powder, scented or unscented) and type of disposal pad (with or without ‘wings’, absorbency etc.). Consult with women and girls on ‘how’ distributions (in-kind or vouchers) should be done, ensuring safety, access and provision of information.

Additional supplementary items can be added into each kit, depending on what is appropriate for the local context and socio-cultural situation, and based on preferences and needs. For example, a cloth skirt/sari/kanga/sulu could be added to support dignity of women during bathing, or to hide blood stains on clothing etc. A torch could be included to increase safety (be sure to coordinate with PGI).

Remember that there can be large differences in preferences and materials used between urban versus rural areas; in water-scarce or arid regions washing cloth or reusable pads may be challenging due to lack of water; and in transit situations where women and girls are frequently on the move reusable cloth pads may not be practical or appropriate.

If using cash assistance, key considerations include market functionality, availability of preferred items in the market, women/girls access to markets/shops, household dynamics, etc. The prices of these items should be included into the MEB (minimum expenditure basket), updated through price monitoring and should be reflected in transfer value calculation.

MINIMUM ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN KITS FOR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

1. **MHM KIT A - DISPOSABLE PADS**

* Core, full kit: timeframe of consumables = 3 months. Re-distribute full kit every 12 months.
* Top-up, replenishment kit: every 3 months

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| **FULL, CORE KIT   REDISTRIBUTE EVERY 12 MONTHS** | | |  | **TOP-UP, REPLENISHMENT KIT (CONSUMABLES)   EVERY 3 MONTHS (IN-KIND OR CASH)** | |
| **DESCRIPTION** | **QTY** | **COMMENTS** |  | **DESCRIPTION** | **QTY** |
| DISPOSABLE SANITARY PADS (pack of), straight or winged, medium to heavy flow, minimum 8 pads per pack | 6 | Two packets (minimum 8 pads) per month x 3 months = 6 packets. If pads are the type fastened by an elastic band around the waist; minimum 2 x elastic waist bands must be included in kit. |  | DISPOSABLE SANITARY PADS (pack of), minimum 8 pads per pack | 6 |
| BATHING SOAP, 100 grams minimum | 6 | 2 bathing soaps per month x 3 months = 6 bars of soap |  | BATHING SOAP, 100 grams minimum | 6 |
| UNDERWEAR, cotton, not white or light colour | 3 | Choose most appropriate size and color dependant on context, and/or set-up exchange/selection during distribution. |  | Possibly:  PAPER BAGS, 1 – 2 litres, non-transparent (brown), pack of 20 | 1 |
| SMALL CARRY POUCH, ½ to 1 litre capacity, for storing or carrying pads | 1 | Non-branded and non-transparent. Maybe included in pad pack from manufacturer. |  |  |  |
| INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE AND CARE, including personal hygiene, washing, drying, disposal | 1 | Pictorial, with simple text in local language. [Examples that can be adapted are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic]. |  |  |  |
| PLASTIC BUCKET, with lid, 6 to 10 litres capacity, non-transparent, non-branded | 1 | For soaking and washing stained underwear or clothes. Also can be used for private storage of menstrual materials. |  |  |  |
| CARRYING BAG, with handles for easy transport, min. 5 litres capacity. | 1 | Non-transparent. Preferably textile not plastic. |  |  |  |

Recommended additional items – depending on context:

* PAPER BAGS; For supporting disposal of sanitary materials, depending on context. Paper or compostable material preferred over plastic to reduce environmental impact.

1. **MHM KIT B – REUSABLE / WASHABLE PADS**

* Core, full kit: timeframe of consumables = 3 months. Re-distribute full kit every 12 months.
* Top-up, replenishment kit: every 3 months

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| **FULL, CORE KIT**  **REDISTRIBUTE EVERY 12 MONTHS** | | |  | **TOP-UP, REPLENISHMENT KIT (CONSUMABLES)**  **EVERY 3 MONTHS (IN-KIND OR CASH)** | |
| **DESCRIPTION** | **QTY** | **COMMENTS** |  | **DESCRIPTION** | **QTY** |
| WASHABLE / REUSABLE SANITARY PADS OR CLOTH, see specifications on material quality, absorption, drying etc. | 6 | Specifically manufactured cloth pads (preferred) or pieces of cloth, which fasten in underwear (or are held in place with an elastic band around waist).  ***Quantity will depend on the material: quality, absorption, drying rate etc. Note that 6 is minimum for high-quality, specifically manufacture pads – for cotton cloth a suggested minimum is 8 pieces.***  If pads are the type fastened by an elastic band around the waist; minimum 2 x elastic waist bands must be included in kit. |  | BATHING SOAP, 100 grams minimum | 6 |
| BATHING SOAP, 100 grams minimum | 6 | 2 bathing soaps per month x 3 months = 6 bars of soap |  | LAUNDRY SOAP,  bar: 200 grams minimum, or powder: 0.5 Litres/200 g minimum | 3 |
| LAUNDRY SOAP,  bar: 200 grams minimum, or powder: 0.5 Litres/200 g minimum | 3 | Bar soap = 3 bars of minimum 200 grams each.  Powder soap = 1.5 litres volume or 600 grams minimum (bag or other container). |  | *Possibly:*  CLOTH or PADS– depending on quality and quantity included in kit | 6 |
| ROPE, at least 4 metres in length | 1 | To support drying. |  |  |  |
| PEGS, pack of 8 (minimum) | 1 | To support drying. |  |  |  |
| UNDERWEAR, cotton, not white or light colour | 3 | Choose most appropriate size dependant on context, and/or set-up exchange or selection methods during distribution |  |  |  |
| SMALL CARRY POUCH, ½ to 1 litre capacity, for storing or carrying pads | 1 | Non-branded and non-transparent. Maybe included in pad pack from manufacturer. |  |  |  |
| INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE AND CARE, including personal hygiene, washing, drying and disposal | 1 | Pictorial, with simple text in local language. [Examples that can be adapted are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic]. |  |  |  |
| PLASTIC BUCKET, with lid, 6 to 10 litres capacity, non-transparent, non-branded | 1 | For soaking and washing stained underwear or clothes. Also can be used for private storage of menstrual materials. |  |  |  |
| CARRYING BAG, with handles for easy transport, min. 5 litres capacity. | 1 | Non-transparent. Preferably textile not plastic. |  |  |  |

Recommended additional items – depending on context:

* CLOTH, as is locally appropriate (e.g. kitenge/khanga/sarong/sulu); for supporting private drying of menstrual materials and for dignity in case of blood leakage.

1. **MHM KIT C – TAMPONS (for areas/countries where they are used already)**

* Core, full kit: timeframe of consumables = 2 months.
* Top-up, replenishment kit: every 2 months

*Note: It is intended that this kit would only be distributed in areas where women and girls have previous experience using tampons and prefer this method; NOT to women or girls who have used sanitary pads or cloth their whole lives.*

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| **FULL, CORE KIT   REDISTRIBUTE EVERY 12 MONTHS** | | |  | **TOP-UP, REPLENISHMENT KIT (CONSUMABLES)   EVERY 2 MONTHS (IN-KIND OR CASH)** | |
| **DESCRIPTION** | **QTY** | **COMMENTS** |  | **DESCRIPTION** | **QTY** |
| TAMPONS, regular flow, box with minimum 10 tampons | 2 | Minimum 3 tampons per day x 7 days bleeding = Approximately 21 tampons per month x 2 months = 42 tampons approx. [Assuming boxes of 10 tampons this will be 40 tampons]. Always use the lowest absorbency for the flow. |  | TAMPONS, regular flow, minimum box of 12 | 2 |
| TAMPONS, light flow, box with minimum 10 tampons | 2 | Same as above. |  | TAMPONS, light flow, minimum box of 12 | 2 |
| BATHING SOAP, 100 grams minimum | 6 | 2 bathing soaps per month x 3 months = 6 bars of soap |  | BATHING SOAP, 100 grams minimum | 6 |
| SMALL CARRY POUCH, ½ to 1 litre capacity, for storing or carrying pads | 1 | Non-branded and non-transparent. Maybe included in pad pack from manufacturer. |  |  |  |
| UNDERWEAR, cotton, not white or light colour | 2 | Choose most appropriate size dependant on context, and/or set-up exchange or selection methods during distribution |  |  |  |
| INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE AND CARE, including personal hygiene, washing, drying and disposal | 1 | Pictorial, with simple text in local language. [Example that can be adapted are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic]. |  |  |  |
| CARRYING BAG, with handles for easy transport, min. 5 litres capacity. | 1 | Non-transparent. Preferably textile not plastic. |  |  |  |

Recommended additional items – depending on context:

* PAPER BAGS; For supporting disposal of sanitary materials, depending on context. Paper or compostable material preferred over plastic to reduce environmental impact.

1. **ADD ON ITEMS (OPTIONAL)**

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| **DESCRIPTION** | **QTY** | **COMMENTS** |
| PAPER BAGS, 1 – 2 litres, non-transparent (brown), pack of 20 | 1 | For supporting disposal of sanitary materials, depending on context.  Paper or compostable material preferred over plastic to reduce environmental impact. |
| CLOTH, kitenge/khanga/sarong/sulu | 1 | As is locally appropriate. Can use for covering pads and underwear that are drying (for privacy). Can also be used to wrap around body in case of blood leakage. |
| LAMP, TORCH, solar, solar panel integrated | 1 |  |
| CARRY BAG, cloth or plastic, non-transparent, min. 5 litres capacity | 1 | For carrying extra menstrual supplies when female is away from household. Non-branded. |
| WASH BASIN, for washing, round, plastic, 20Lt | 1 |  |
| WASTE BIN with lid, min. 8 litres | 1 |  |
| SCISSORS, office, 15 - 18cm | 1 |  |