

# Writer's Memo: "Menstrual Cups as a Menstrual Hygiene Solution for Resource-Limited Adolescent Girls"

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This literature review was originally a project for the course *Writing in the Medical Sciences*. Global women's health is a subject that I actively stay informed about, and while brainstorming topics, I reflected upon my own experiences with menstrual hygiene. My personal product of choice is the menstrual cup, which I discovered in adolescence after frustration with disposable pads—the only option my mother would buy for me due to her disapproval of tampons. My mother is an immigrant that grew up in rural Vietnam, where internal products like tampons were not only taboo due to stigmas conflating menstruation with sex, but wholly inaccessible. Instead of disposable products, my mother and her sisters would use cut strips of old T-shirts as makeshift reusable pads that had to be cleaned between each use with an overnight soak. My mother would lament about the irritation caused by the overworn cloth strips and the embarrassment from family members seeing her used cloths soaking by the laundry.

The solution to menstrual hygiene access for lower-income nations seemed simple on the surface: the menstrual cup is a high-quality and reusable option for girls and women that cannot afford or access disposable products. However, we face challenges to implementation with logistical barriers in stigma, safety, and feasibility. My intended audience includes scholars and activists interested in global period poverty; this review will identify hindrances to menstrual cup implementation in developing nations and discuss potential education-based solutions.