Foreword

While there is undoubtably still much progress to be made, women today are, on the whole, freer, more confident, more informed and more empowered than they have been in all of history.

Your Miacup is, in many ways, representative of this development.

Designed with great care and modern insight but based on a surprisingly simple idea – the menstrual cup is nothing less than revolutionary.

Simply, Miacup is our take on an idea that we feel, really is just better.

For you, your health and our planet: it’s time to start expecting a little more from menstrual products.

Congratulations on your purchase of Miacup. From all of us at Miacup South Africa: thank you for trying something new. We’re proud of our product and have every reason to believe that you’re going to love it.

Peter Taoussanis
Managing Director
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What is it?

Despite all the technological progress that’s been made since the early 1900s, little about tampons or sanitary pads has really changed since they were first introduced almost one hundred years ago.

Miacup is a modern, liberating way to deal with menstrual hygiene that solves many of the problems associated with traditional, antiquated methods.

Produced entirely in South Africa using a soft, highly pliable medical-grade silicone rubber, Miacup is a barrier that, like a tampon, is worn inside the vagina during menstruation. Unlike a tampon (which absorbs menstrual fluid) or a pad (which catches it outside the body), Miacup collects menstrual fluid.

The process is gentle on your body, clean, comfortable, and highly reliable.

Resembling a small bell-shaped cup approximately 5cm in length (excluding pull-tab), Miacup is compactly folded and then completely inserted into the vagina where it pops open to create a secure seal with the vaginal wall.

Once full, Miacup is easily removed by breaking the suction seal and carefully withdrawing. The contents are emptied and the cup wiped or washed clean before being reused: all surprisingly free of mess.

Between cycles, Miacup can be fully sterilised by boiling in a pot of water for a few minutes or by wiping with isopropyl rubbing alcohol. With reasonable care, a single Miacup can last for years.
Why is it better?

Can be worn for up to 12 hours at a time. Can be worn overnight.

Miacup can securely hold up to almost three times the fluid that an average tampon or sanitary pad can: between one third and one quarter of an entire average monthly flow. Perfectly suitable for both the lightest and heaviest flows, Miacup needs to be changed less frequently than even the highest absorbency tampons and can be worn overnight.

Many women will only need to empty the cup upon waking and again before bed.

Easy to clean. Nothing to throw away. Easy to sterilise.

When it does need to be emptied, Miacup can be easily cleaned with soap and water (when at home) or simply wiped clean with toilet paper or a feminine hygiene wipe (when on the go). There is nothing to throw away.

Between cycles, Miacup can be fully sterilised by boiling.

Easy to use. Comfortable. No strings.

With a little experience, Miacup is as easy to use as a conventional tampon. The soft, flexible silicone rubber that it’s made from means that Miacup is also incredibly comfortable when in place. Most women are unable to feel the cup at all when it is properly inserted. Some women even report that Miacup can help reduce the pain associated with menstrual cramps and endometriosis.

Worn within the body, Miacup is odourless and entirely invisible with no strings or other external parts.
More reliable. Perfect for swimming & other sports.

With proper insertion, Miacup pops open to form a suction seal that resists leakage and provides most women with more reliable protection than tampons. This makes Miacup ideal for those with an active lifestyle and especially suitable for activities like running, swimming, dance and yoga.

Perfect for travelling. Requires less space to store/pack.

Lightweight and small in size, Miacup is perfect for travelling. There is nothing bulky to pack or carry, nothing to throw away and nothing to run out of.

Can be worn before start of period.

Miacup may be comfortably inserted prior to the onset of menstruation, ensuring maximal preparedness. This also means that new Miacup users will have the freedom to practice using Miacup before their period begins.

Contains no harmful substances. Leaves no fibres behind.

Unfortunately, despite the common assumption that tampons are entirely inert, many are not. Chemicals are often present in non-organic tampons (1). These may include absorbency enhancers, pesticides used to produce the cotton, deodorants and chlorine compounds (2) used in bleaching processes.

It has been proposed that dioxin, a carcinogen, may be formed in the bleaching process itself.

Fragrances used in some tampons can cause irritation, allergic reactions and may upset the vagina’s natural microbial balance (3).

Fibre loss and damage done to vaginal tissue by fibres are also concerns (4,5). In particular, there has been some concern over the use of rayon, a manufactured fibre
consisting of tiny strands of plastic and often used in tampons. Some speculate that the rayon strands can cause microtears of the vaginal wall when a tampon is inserted or removed, possibly leaving the vagina more susceptible to infection.

Although individually wrapped to keep them clean, tampons are not sterile, nor are tampon companies required by law to list their ingredients (6).

Miacup leaves no fibres behind and is produced from the very same material used for permanent surgical implants such as heart valves, making it entirely inert.

**Hypoallergenic.**

Miacup is 100% hypoallergenic and suitable for women with sensitive skin, thrush, eczema and allergies (including latex allergies).

**Not associated with TSS, fungal or bacterial infections.**

Both tampons (7) and pads (8) can cause an increased risk of bacterial infection.

In particular, Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS), a serious and potentially fatal disease, is associated with the high absorbency of tampons (9) and with their prolonged use (10).

It is a fact that tampon users are 18 times as likely to develop menstrual TSS as non-users (11).

Miacup is antibacterial, entirely non-absorbent and is not associated with TSS or with other infections like cystitis (inflammation of the bladder, associated with sanitary pads (8)) or candidiasis (thrush).

**Does not interfere with the body’s natural processes. Does not irritate or dry.**

More than a quarter of the fluids absorbed by a tampon are, in fact, natural and necessary vaginal secretions (12).

The absorption of these fluids and the use of absorbency enhancers can lead to
vaginal dryness, peeling of the mucous membrane, ulcers and lesions (4,5). Contact dermatitis, a form of skin reaction, is associated with sanitary pads (13,14).

Miacup is different. It does not interfere with the vagina’s natural sloughing off of dead cells. It collects menstrual fluid, rather than absorbing it, leaving all moisture levels undisturbed and allowing the body’s processes to function unimpeded.

The material from which Miacup is produced is entirely biocompatible (that is, not harmful to living tissue). Keep in mind that this is the same material from which permanent surgical implants are made.

**Environmentally friendly. Lasts for years. Cost effective.**

Within the next 50 years, over 90,000,000,000 (90 thousand million) tampons/pads will be disposed of in South Africa alone.

In the United States, over 10,000,000,000 (10 thousand million) tampons will be thrown away this year. This number excludes sanitary pads.

Over a decade or generation, including all the packaging, it becomes clear that the worldwide environmental impact of disposable feminine hygiene products is considerable.

Beyond this, the manufacturing of tampons may, itself, be harmful to the environment. Bleach and other potentially environmentally damaging chemicals are often employed in tampon production, and important ecological resources, particularly trees, are sacrificed for the wood pulp from which tampons are largely produced.

Even discounting environmental impact, the average user will purchase over 220 tampons or pads a year (15). This equates to an expense of almost 9,000 purchased in her lifetime.

Miacup is made from an abundant substance, is highly durable and completely reusable. With reasonable care, a single Miacup can give many years of reliable service.
Using Miacup is a way of protecting the environment and saving you money: it normally pays for itself within a year or two.

**Can be worn by more women. Can be used with an IUD.**

Because Miacup sits lower in the vaginal canal than a tampon, it is well suited to address common anatomical variations among women, e.g. retroverted (tilted) uterus.

With some care during removal (see Frequently answered questions on page 20 for more information), Miacup may also be worn by those using an intrauterine device (IUD). In fact, Miacup is well suited for the increased menstrual flow that is sometimes experienced with this form of contraception.

**Guaranteed.**

We understand that, to many, Miacup’s cost represents a substantial commitment to an entirely new idea and that many women may feel uncomfortable with the prospect of paying for something with which they have little experience.

To illustrate our confidence in the product, we are offering a generous return/exchange policy with every Miacup sold. For hygiene reasons, no returned units will ever be resold or reused in any way. Every Miacup is shipped hygienically sealed in tamper-proof packaging.

**Ethical.**

Miacup South Africa takes a holistic view of our corporate social responsibility.

From a website hosted on carbon neutral servers to our use of recycled and sustainably-sourced packaging materials, Miacup is as concerned about the environment as you are.

A portion of proceeds from all orders (both store-bought and online) will be donated to Food & Trees For Africa (click here for more information). This is not a limited-time marketing gimmick.
Unlike some others in the industry, we have never tested and will never test our products on animals in any way.

We are a 100% privately owned organisation and one that is committed to the belief that business without profiteering or exploitation is possible.

References


(11) Monif, Gilles R.G., “Tampon users were demonstrated to be 18 times more likely to develop menstrual TSS as non-users” (1993), Infectious Diseases in Obstetrics & Gynaecology.


(13) Eason, EL and P Feldman, “Contact dermatitis associated with the use of Always sanitary napkins” (date unknown), Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Montréal General Hospital, Québec.


(15) This figure was calculated by assuming 17.5 tampons per cycle, 28 days per cycle and 39 years of menstruation on average.
Comparison table

See, at a glance, how Miacup compares with traditional tampons and pads below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tampons</th>
<th>Pads</th>
<th>Miacup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safe to wear overnight</td>
<td>Needs no changing for up to 12 hours at a time</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>Nothing to throw away</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly reliable</td>
<td>Highly reliable</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable for swimming &amp; other sports</td>
<td>Entirely invisible (no external parts)</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires little space to store/pack (ideal for travelling)</td>
<td>Can be comfortably worn before start of period</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not interfere with the body's natural processes</td>
<td>Contains no harmful substances</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaves no fibres behind</td>
<td>Not associated with TSS</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not associated with other fungal or bacterial infections</td>
<td>Does not irritate or dry</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentally friendly</td>
<td>Lasts for years</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost effective</td>
<td>Can be used with an IUD</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not affected by a tilted uterus</td>
<td>Hypoallergenic</td>
<td><strong>•</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Insertion guide

Although the instructions that follow are lengthy, they are intended for first-time users. Miacup is no more difficult to use than a tampon and usually takes only a few seconds to insert or remove.

Preparations before using for the first time (important)

First, wash Miacup thoroughly with a mild, perfume-free soap. Rinse well, then sterilise either by boiling in a pot of water for 6 minutes, or by soaking in some isopropyl rubbing alcohol (at least 70 proof) for 10 minutes. Rinse well again and you’re ready to use your new Miacup.

If you choose to sterilise by boiling, use a clean pot and make sure that you completely cover Miacup with water to avoid damaging it.

If you choose to sterilise with rubbing alcohol, always make sure to follow all safety instructions. Rubbing alcohol can be dangerous if misused.

When to insert Miacup

Miacup can be worn at any time in your menstrual cycle, during your heaviest and lightest flow. To ensure complete preparedness, you can even insert it right before your cycle starts.
1 Start by thoroughly **washing your hands** with soap and water. **Rinse Miacup well** to remove any fibre or dust particles. Especially when using Miacup for the first time, you may wish to **lubricate** the entrance of your vagina with water or a water-based lubricant to ease insertion.

2 With the pull-tab facing down toward the floor, hold Miacup in front of you with both hands as illustrated. Press both thumbs into the cup, just below the upper ridge, so that you **flatten the sides of the cup together**.
3 Still using two hands, **fold the flattened cup in half** (i.e. over itself) so that the rim at the top forms a “u” shape with the open end of the “u” facing your body. Holding it firmly to keep this shape, transfer the cup to your dominant hand and hold as illustrated. You should be holding the cup just below the upper ridge.

4 Relax your vaginal muscles and get into a comfortable position either squatting, sitting over the toilet or standing with one leg raised (for example, on a stool or closed toilet seat).

Spreading your legs, gently **separate your labia** with your free hand. Rim-first and with the rounded end of the “u” shape facing you, slowly **guide Miacup into your vaginal opening**.
5 While directing it toward the small of your back (the base of your spine), continue to insert Miacup into your vagina just until the cup and pull-tab are completely inside. It is normal for Miacup to pop open before it is completely inside - this should not interfere with insertion.

Please note: Miacup is not to be inserted high in the vagina like a tampon. Do not insert Miacup too far as doing so can make removal more difficult and can actually interfere with the effectiveness of its seal.

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6 Lightly pinch the base of the cup (not the pull-tab) and gently try to give it one full rotation in either direction. Doing so helps to avoid leaks by ensuring that the cup has opened fully. The cup should rotate easily when properly open.

As an extra measure, though one that is usually unnecessary, you can check that it is fully opened by sliding a finger up next to the cup and feeling all the way around it.

Once properly in place, wash your hands one final time and you’re done.

Insertion problems (discomfort)

When properly inserted, you should be unable to feel Miacup or its pull-tab. If Miacup feels uncomfortable or pinches when you sit down, you probably have it inserted incorrectly. Remember that the vagina is tilted backward, so always try to aim Miacup toward the base of your spine.

In particular, when seated, the pull-tab should stay inside the vagina. You can trim the tab if necessary (many women choose to), but please take care not to damage the bottom of the cup or to trim the tab so short that removal becomes difficult.

Rotating the cup in place and/or moving it up and down may aid in finding the correct position. Initially, you may feel some resistance when inserting Miacup. This is natural
and is caused by the contraction of the vaginal muscles that help keep Miacup in place. If you can't get Miacup in with your first attempt, try again.

**Insertion problems (leakage)**

If Miacup seems to move around, slip down or ride up during use, check that it inserted correctly and that the cup is fully opened. Remember that Miacup is not worn high like a tampon.

If you're using Miacup model 1 and it seems to leak and/or move around despite proper insertion, you may see better results by trying Miacup model 2. Model 2 is very slightly bigger (3mm at the diameter) and may provide a better fit even if you are petite, are under 30 years of age and have never had children. Every Miacup comes with a return/exchange guarantee. See the return/exchange form that came in your Miacup box for more information.

If you're using Miacup model 2 and it seems to leak and/or move around despite proper insertion, you may like to try strengthening your vaginal muscles through the use of Kegel exercises. Done daily for a few months, these should help to improve the hold that your vaginal muscles are able to exert on Miacup. If you'd rather return Miacup for your money back, see the return/exchange form that came in your Miacup box for more information.

**Additional notes**

Inserting Miacup too far is not in any way dangerous. Since the opening of the cervix at the top of the vagina is much, much too small for Miacup to pass through, it is completely impossible for Miacup to become “lost”. The worst that can come from inserting the cup too far is an unnecessary nuisance during removal.

Especially for new users who aren’t yet entirely confident with it, Miacup can be worn with a panty liner or even a sanitary pad as backup.

*Using Miacup should be easy, quick and reliable but, as with traditional tampons, it may take some practice and some getting to know your own anatomy before Miacup consistently works as well as it can. In particular, note that the directions we give are merely guidelines: it is normal to need to experiment a little before you find the method that works best for you.*
Removal guide

Although the instructions that follow are lengthy, they are intended for first-time users. Miacup is no more difficult to use than a tampon and usually takes only a few seconds to insert or remove.

When to remove Miacup

Depending on how heavy your flow is (this varies from woman to woman), Miacup will usually be full between 4 and 12 hours after insertion. When you first start using it, monitor the level of fluid in the cup. By doing so, you will quickly learn how often you’ll need to empty the contents.

Generally, Miacup should be removed, emptied and cleaned at least twice a day. As a precaution, don’t leave the cup in for longer than 12 hours at a time without emptying and cleaning it, even if it isn’t full.

Miacup may be safely worn overnight, again, if it isn’t inserted for longer than 12 hours. It is usually a good idea to empty and clean Miacup before going to sleep and again upon waking.

While it is not necessary to remove Miacup before urinating or having a bowel movement, it may be a good idea to check that the cup is still properly positioned after defecation.

Miacup must be removed prior to sexual intercourse.

Please note: Miacup is NOT a contraceptive device and does NOT provide any protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
1 Start by thoroughly **washing your hands** with soap and water.

2 **Relax** your vaginal muscles and get into a comfortable position either squatting, sitting over the toilet or standing with one leg raised (for example, on a stool or closed toilet seat).

Spreading your legs, gently **separate your labia** with your non-dominant hand. As if having a bowel movement, bear down lightly with your internal muscles. Doing so can help lower the cup, making it easier to grasp.

**Insert the thumb and index finger** of your dominant hand into the vagina until you’re able to reach Miacup’s pull-tab.
Following the natural angle of the vagina, gently tug on the pull-tab until you’re able to reach the ribbed base of the cup. As illustrated, firmly pinch the base to break the cup’s suction seal with the vaginal wall. While gently squeezing the sides of the cup and angling it slightly sideways to release any trapped air, remove Miacup. As the cup is completely removed, angle it vertically to avoid spilling the contents.

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Empty the contents of Miacup into the toilet and, with a mild and perfume-free soap, carefully wash and rinse Miacup.

Note that the 4 small holes below Miacup’s top rim should also be kept clean. If clogged, submerge Miacup in water and squeeze water out through the holes.

If washing facilities are unavailable or if you’d prefer not to use them in a public place, you may simply wipe Miacup clean with toilet paper or with a feminine hygiene cloth (again, preferably a mild, perfume-free variety). Some women like to bring a small spray bottle of water into the stall with them for rinsing. When wiping clean, make sure not to leave any paper or cloth fibres on the cup.

Re-insert the cleaned Miacup, wash your hands one final time and you’re good to go!
Always wash and sterilise Miacup at the end of your cycle so that it’s fresh and ready for next month.

To sterilise the cup (you can do this whenever you like), either boil it in a pot of water for 2 to 3 minutes or wipe it thoroughly with some isopropyl rubbing alcohol (at least 70 proof).

If Miacup becomes discoloured over time, you can soak it overnight in some isopropyl rubbing alcohol. If it develops an odour, you can soak it overnight in a glass of warm water and 1 teaspoon of vinegar or a few drops of tea tree oil.

Finally, rinse well, pat dry and store Miacup, properly ventilated, in its fabric draw-string bag until your next period. Do not store Miacup in a plastic bag or other airtight container.

Removal problems

The most important thing when removing Miacup is to remember to relax. It is completely impossible for Miacup to become “lost”. The vagina is a relatively short, muscular tube that leads directly to the opening of the cervix (the size of a pinhead) and nowhere else.

If Miacup has worked its way higher in the vagina toward the cervix and you’re unable
to reach it, there is absolutely no reason to panic: Miacup can be removed.

First, rest your buttocks on your heels in a squatting position. Doing so shortens the vaginal canal. While bearing down with your internal muscles as if having a bowel movement, insert your fingers into the vaginal canal and try to grasp the pull-tab or the bottom of the cup. If you can reach the pull-tab or the bottom of cup, simply remove as usual.

If, after this, you cannot reach the cup, simply leave in place it for the time being. Gravity will naturally bring it back down in several hours. Even if full, the cup poses no health risk during this time.

In the incredibly rare event that you are still unable to remove Miacup after 12 hours, seek medical advice. In the very worst case, your doctor will remove Miacup for you.

Additional notes

When removing Miacup, do not try to pull it down in an open position, holding it only by the pull-tab. The seal that Miacup creates with the vaginal wall will make doing so very difficult. Please follow the directions in this manual.

When travelling, only wash Miacup with water that is safe to drink, bathe or swim in.

When sterilising Miacup by boiling, use a clean pot and make sure that you completely cover Miacup with water to avoid damaging it. Ideally, you should select a small pot just for this purpose that will not be used for cooking.

When sterilising Miacup with rubbing alcohol, always make sure to follow all safety instructions. Rubbing alcohol can be dangerous if misused.

Using Miacup should be easy, quick and reliable but, as with traditional tampons, it may take some practice and some getting to know your own anatomy before Miacup consistently works as well as it can. In particular, note that the directions we give are merely guidelines: it is normal to need to experiment a little before you find the method that works best for you.
Frequently answered questions

What if I have to empty Miacup when I’m in a public washroom?

This is often a big concern for women who haven’t already tried using Miacup. The truth is that you’ll probably be surprised at how infrequently you’ll need to empty Miacup. Even during your heaviest days, you’ll probably only need to empty it a few times. Keep in mind that Miacup is able to hold between a third and a quarter of an entire average monthly flow.

If you do end up needing to change in a public washroom, you can simply wipe the cup clean with a piece of toilet paper. Some women bring a moistened tissue into the stall with them for this purpose. Others prefer to keep some hygiene wipes or even a little bottle of water/cleaning solution in their handbag.

Once you’re back home, you can wash Miacup as usual.

Isn’t using Miacup messy?

This is another common concern for those thinking about trying Miacup. In fact, most women are quite surprised to discover that once they’ve become accustomed to using it, it’s not nearly as messy as it sounds.

Insertion is fairly straight-forward. You can expect to come into contact with roughly the same amount of blood as you would when inserting a non-applicator tampon.

When removing Miacup, you hold it on the outside (which is usually rather clean) and keep it upright until tipping the contents into the toilet. The cup is rarely full, so spillage is unlikely. You then simply rinse or wipe Miacup before re-inserting.

It looks big. Is it comfortable?

When inserting, Miacup is folded flat and is less than half its width when open. When open, it’s not much bigger than a tampon that has absorbed fluid.

Keep in mind that the silicone rubber used to produce Miacup is also exceptionally
soft and flexible. When properly inserted, most women are completely unaware of its presence.

Why is it so expensive?

Over its useful life, Miacup is actually much, much cheaper than conventional menstrual products. While it may seem expensive at first, you only buy it once. Tampons or pads cost less to begin with - but you would need to buy thousands of them in your lifetime.

Can my young daughter use Miacup? She has just started her first period.

Anatomically, there is no reason that your daughter should be unable to use Miacup. Girls as young as 11 years old have used menstrual cups without problems.

The vagina is made of very flexible tissue and muscle that, even in young girls, is more than capable of accommodating Miacup. Virginity is usually not an obstacle but see the response to the question below for more information.

It should be noted that young girls may need more practice with Miacup initially. They are often less familiar with their own bodies and less capable of relaxing their vaginal muscles than older women. It can be a good idea to practice using cup during a period, when the vagina is naturally more flexible.

Can virgins use Miacup?

Anatomically, there is no reason that a virgin would be unable to use Miacup. A more complex question is whether using Miacup could cause a “loss” of virginity.

There are widely different historical, religious and cultural views as to exactly how virginity should be defined. Arguably the most accurate way, and the one most often favoured in modern cultures, is simply to say that a person is a virgin if he/she has never engaged in sexual activity.

Obviously, by this definition, neither Miacup nor tampons have anything at all to do with virginity.
There is a common belief (though it is a misconception) that virginity is somehow related to the condition of the hymen. In fact, it has been proven that the hymen is not even a reliable indicator of whether a woman has engaged in sexual intercourse.

Having said that, this will always be a question of personal beliefs. Using menstrual products like Miacup or tampons can sometimes increase the risk of damaging the hymen. If you have strong personal feeling about keeping the hymen intact, you may want to avoid using internal menstrual hygiene products.

**Does it leak?**

Generally, no. For most women accustomed to using it, Miacup gives more reliable protection than tampons. The most important thing is to make sure that Miacup is inserted correctly. This can sometimes take a little practice to get right. See the Insertion Guide in this manual for more information.

Some factors to consider if you are experiencing leaks:
- Are you using the recommended model?
- Are you emptying the cup frequently enough?

Finally, keep in mind that you are also bleeding while you insert the cup. It is possible that you have some residual blood in your vagina just after insertion.

Sanitary pads may be used with Miacup as backup on heavy days or when you’re still becoming accustomed to insertion.

**Is Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) a concern for Miacup users?**

TSS is a rare, though potentially fatal disease caused by a bacterial toxin. While it can be contracted in various ways, tampon users have been shown to be 18 times as likely to develop menstrual TSS as non-users (*Infectious Diseases in Obstetrics & Gynecology*).

While the exact reason behind this is currently unknown, it is known that TSS is associated with the prolonged use of high absorbency tampons.

The silicone rubber from which Miacup is produced is antibacterial and, since Miacup is entirely non-absorbent, it does not interfere with the vagina’s natural moisture levels or sloughing off of dead cells.
Neither Miacoop nor any other menstrual cup (and they’ve been around since the 1930s) has ever been associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome.

As a precaution, never leave Miacoop in for longer than 12 hours without emptying and cleaning. Also, always sterilise Miacoop between cycles.

Finally, be aware of the following symptoms of TSS:
Sudden high fever (usually over 39 degrees Celsius), vomiting, diarrhoea, a sunburn-like rash, sore throat, dizziness or fainting.

If you experience some or all of these symptoms during your period, remove Miacoop and consult your doctor immediately.

I find it a little scary that my gynaecologist hasn’t heard about Miacoop. Why hasn’t he/she?

Miacoop was only launched at the beginning of 2008 and, while we’re slowly trying to get information to gynaecologists across the country, doing so takes time. Many gynaecologists simply haven’t heard of us yet.

Having said that, Miacoop is simply a new brand: it isn’t actually a new idea. Menstrual cups have, in some form or another, been around since the 1930s. Even so, because menstrual cups are not yet widely used, many medical professionals have little or no experience with them.

Because of the recent trend in environmental awareness and health scares related to tampons, menstrual cups are now beginning to gain popularity across the world.

If your gynaecologist would like more information, you’re very welcome to put him/her in contact with us. Otherwise, a simple internet search for “menstrual cup” will answer many of his/her questions.

Can I use Miacoop if I have an IUD (intrauterine device)?

Miacoop itself won’t interfere with your IUD. The risk is that you accidentally dislodge or expel your IUD while removing Miacoop. The likelihood of this occurring when using Miacoop is similar to the likelihood when using tampons.
You can minimize the risk involved by remembering to place Miacup low down in your vagina and by always removing Miacup carefully: in particular, by making sure to first break the cup’s suction seal before attempting to pull it out (see Removal & Reuse instructions for more information).

You may like to speak to your gynaecologist about trimming your IUD’s strings. Doing so can help to prevent them from being tugged on. In any case, even when not using Miacup or tampons, it is always a good idea to regularly check for the presence of the IUD’s strings to make sure that the IUD is still in place.

In short: Miacup may be used with an IUD, as long as it is always carefully used and as long as you realise that IUDs can very occasionally become dislodged: by the use of Miacup, by the use of tampons and even just on their own. ALWAYS consult your gynaecologist before using Miacup if you have any concerns or questions.

Which Miacup model should I be using? What is the difference?

There are two Miacup models available.

“Model 1” is generally appropriate for women who fall into either of the following two categories:
- Women younger than 30 who have never had children.
- Women younger than 30 who have given birth by Caesarean section.

“Model 2” is generally appropriate for women who fall into either of the following two categories:
- All women older than 30.
- All women who have given birth vaginally.

For Miacup to work as effectively as possible, it is important that you use the correct model. Model 2 is very slightly larger in the diameter to account for the natural loss of vaginal elasticity that can occur with ageing or with vaginal birth.

It is worth noting that, occasionally, a woman will have greater success with a model not recommended to her by the above categories. In these cases, the return/exchange guarantee may be used to swap for an appropriate model.
Can Miacup be worn during sexual intercourse?

No. Miacup is positioned low in the vagina and would interfere with intercourse.

*Please note that Miacup is NOT a contraceptive device and does NOT offer any protection against Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs).*

Does using Miacup make me “loose”?

No. The vagina is a remarkably elastic muscular canal that is capable of stretching to many times its normal diameter (for example, during vaginal childbirth).

Even when popped fully open, Miacup is only very slightly wider than the average penis. The kind of insignificant stretching that occurs when using Miacup (or, for that matter, when having sexual intercourse) is incapable of having any kind of effect on the tone of the vaginal muscles. It is true that without exercise, as with other muscles in the body, the vagina can naturally lose some of its tone with age. Kegel exercises may be performed to prevent or reverse this natural decline.

What material is Miacup made from? Is it safe?

Miacup is made from an imported, medical-grade silicone rubber. This material is comfortable, highly durable, completely biocompatible (that is, not harmful to living tissue) and hypoallergenic (suitable for women with allergies, including latex allergies).

Some women are understandably concerned about silicone’s association with the breast implant scares of the early 1990s. In fact, the material used in Miacup is very different to the one that was used in breast implants.

The controversial implants were made from a fluid-like silicone gel held in a sac. These sacs were known to rupture and leak, potentially causing problems.

Miacup is made from a solid, stable rubber form of silicone. In this form, there is no way for anything to leak into the body. In fact, silicone like this has been successfully used for many years in medical tubing, baby bottle teats and even permanent surgical implants like heart valves and joint prostheses.
The effects of the material on human health have been extensively studied in both laboratory and clinical settings.

Can I use Miacup if I have a urinary tract infection?

Some women have been able to use Miacup without aggravating their condition, others not. We recommend that you play it safe and speak to your doctor before using Miacup.

Can I use Miacup if I have endometriosis?

Many women who suffer from endometriosis have been able to use a menstrual cup, like Miacup, without problems. In fact, some have even reported a relief of symptoms when using a menstrual cup. Having said that, endometriosis is a complex condition whose causes are not yet fully understood. There is one theory that endometriosis is, at least, associated with reversed menstrual flow.

While this theory has largely been discredited by recent studies, it should still be noted that Miacup collects flow, rather than absorbing it. In inverted postures, this could theoretically result in more backflow than would otherwise occur. As a precaution, empty Miacup frequently and never leave Miacup inserted for longer than 12 hours without cleaning.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States has considered this issue and has approved menstrual cups, like Miacup, for sale.

As always, if you have any doubts or questions, we would recommend that you speak to your gynaecologist before using Miacup.

Can I use Miacup if I have a yeast infection like thrush?

Miacup is unlikely to aggravate the infection. In fact, many women have reported an improvement in their symptoms after switching from tampons to Miacup.

Please do make sure, however, to wash your hands thoroughly before and after handling Miacup. In addition, make sure to wash Miacup well after emptying and to sterilise it between periods.
Can I use Miacup if I suffer from menorrhagia (abnormally heavy and/or prolonged periods)?

Yes. Because Miacup is reusable and needs changing less frequently than tampons or pads, Miacup can help relieve the inconvenience and cost associated with symptoms.

Can I use Miacup if I suffer from dysmenorrhea (painful cramps during menstruation)?

Yes. Some women have even reported that using Miacup helps to reduce the severity of their menstrual cramps.

Can I use Miacup for the bleeding that occurs after birth?

For the first six weeks after giving birth, there is an increased risk of infection. As a result, it is not recommended that any kind of internal menstrual product be used during this time.

What if I’m away from home and don’t have access to a “mild and perfume-free soap” as recommended for cleaning Miacup?

Strong, scented soaps often leave a harsh residue on Miacup. This residue can disturb the mucous membrane of the vagina and cause irritation.

If you’re out somewhere when you need to clean Miacup and are at all in doubt about the available soap, we normally recommend that you just rinse Miacup with water or give it a wipe with some toilet tissue and save the cleaning for when you’re back home.

If you’re planning an extended trip somewhere, it may be a good idea to bring along some of your own soap to make sure that you’ll have access to a gentle cleaner for Miacup.
What kind of lubricant can I use with Miacup?

We recommend only water-based lubricants for use with Miacup. Silicone or oil-based lubricants can damage Miacup over time.

What are Miacup’s measurements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Diameter</th>
<th>Height (+stem)</th>
<th>Height (-stem)</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size 1</td>
<td>43mm</td>
<td>70mm</td>
<td>53mm</td>
<td>25ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size 2</td>
<td>46mm</td>
<td>70mm</td>
<td>53mm</td>
<td>30ml</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is Miacup a new idea?

Miacup is a new brand: not a new idea. The first bell-shaped menstrual cup was invented in 1937. World War 2 rubber shortages, the squeamish sensibilities of the time and superior marketing by tampon corporations resulted in the quick demise of the menstrual cup.

The first successful menstrual cup was developed in the USA in 1987. Now, with modern materials and designs, there are several competing producers around the world. Of course, we feel that we’re offering something better than the rest… but we’ll let you decide.

The menstrual cup is an idea whose time has finally come: we truly believe this. Modern women are more comfortable with their bodies, more concerned with living their lives and more informed about their health and the health of their planet than they have ever been before.

For more questions and answers, please visit the Frequently Answered Questions section at www.miacup.co.za.
Where to get support

If you’re still struggling to get Miacup to work correctly, please consider visiting MiaTalk, our internet discussion board located at www.miacup.co.za/talk.

MiaTalk is an online community of women from South Africa and around the world. Besides being home to a wealth of information about Miacup itself (including support, frequently asked questions and tips), it is a place to share thoughts with other women. Health, love, sex, entertainment, careers, parenting, politics: it is an open discussion board for anything and everything on your mind.

Membership is free and no registration is required for browsing.

Otherwise, if you would prefer to contact us directly, you may reach our Customer Service Department by writing to: support@miacup.co.za.
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