



**MENSTRUAL HEALTH  
SUPPORT  
GUIDE**



## INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a natural part of the female reproductive cycle, and yet shame and stigma around periods and menstruation remain for many women and female employees.

According to [research](#) carried out by The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), only 12% of UK organisations provide support for menstruation and menstrual health, and yet more than two-thirds of women with menstrual symptoms have experienced a negative impact at work, such as reduced productivity, absenteeism, or a feeling of stigma or lack of support.

15% of women surveyed also reported having a menstrual condition such as endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), or fibroids. Such conditions can be highly debilitating, causing severe pain, depression, irregular periods, and other symptoms that are often difficult for women to talk about openly at work.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MENSTRUAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Supporting menstrual health in the workplace is important for several reasons.

### DEMONSTRATING A COMMITMENT TO EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Menstrual health support can help employees manage symptoms such as pain, fatigue, or low mood, and create a stigma-free environment around menstruation, reducing stress and anxiety.

### BOOSTING EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY AND RETENTION

Providing access to menstrual products, flexible work policies, or accommodations for menstruation symptoms can boost productivity and reduce absenteeism, allowing employees to manage their symptoms more effectively.

### BREAKING DOWN STIGMA

By building awareness and normalising conversations about menstruation, leadership teams can demonstrate respect for diverse health needs, promoting gender equality.

Having supportive and inclusive health support policies in place can also help to attract and retain employees seeking employers who prioritise overall health and well-being.



# PROVIDING MENSTRUAL HEALTH SUPPORT

## MENSTRUAL HEALTH TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Managers and HR leaders play a vital role in creating a workplace culture where menstrual health is openly discussed and supported, for example in wellness blogs, HR information, sick leave and flexible working policies.

Appropriate training can also help to equip management teams with the confidence and knowledge to address menstruation sensitively and inclusively, and should include:

- **Understanding the diverse experiences of menstruation:** Acknowledging that individual experiences vary greatly in terms of symptoms, severity, and impact.
- **Promoting sensitivity and discretion:** Emphasising the importance of respecting individual privacy and comfort levels when discussing menstrual health.
- **Providing access to resources:** Informing managers about available resources, such as HR, occupational health, and external providers, for both employees and themselves.

## CREATING A POLICY FRAMEWORK

A menstrual or women's health policy should be cross-referenced with other relevant policies, such as a sick leave policy, guidance on long-term health conditions, flexible working policy, and a menopause policy. You may want to consider factors such as offering time off for women's health challenges, flexible working arrangements, and details of how female employees can seek support.

Organisational policies and procedures should be regularly reviewed and communicated to all employees.

## APPROPRIATE FACILITIES AND DRESS CODES

Providing accessible sanitation facilities to meet menstrual health needs is essential, particularly for employees in roles where it may be more difficult to take regular or scheduled breaks.

Employers should also consider menstruation when designing employee uniforms. Menstrual symptoms such as bloating and cramping can make tight or restrictive clothing uncomfortable, and uniforms should be designed with colors and fabrics that [minimise the visibility of potential leaks](#), helping employees maintain dignity and confidence.



## PROVIDING FEMININE HYGIENE PRODUCTS

Inadequate access to menstrual products (tampons, sanitary towels etc.) can cause anxiety, embarrassment, and disruptions to the workday. By providing free-to-access period products, employers can alleviate these concerns, enabling employees to focus on their work without the added stress of sourcing or purchasing these essential items.

Furthermore, offering free period products demonstrates a commitment to menstrual equity, ensuring that all employees have equal access to the resources they need. This initiative aligns with broader social responsibility efforts and can contribute to combating Period Poverty, a global issue that disproportionately affects lower-income employees.

## NEED MORE HELP?

You can get in touch with the team at: [info@future-plus.co.uk](mailto:info@future-plus.co.uk).

