

# Planet-Positive Periods:



## The future of menstrual equity is sustainable

A new partnership is creating opportunities for education and access to more climate-friendly solutions.

### What is Menstrual Equity?

Menstrual (or period) equity is universal access to safe menstrual products, education, sanitation, and a shame-free social attitude towards periods.

### What is Sustainable Menstruation?

Sustainable menstruation is when periods are managed in an eco-friendly, affordable, safe, and accessible way.



## Free Disposable Pads and Tampons are a Vital First Step Toward Achieving Menstrual Equity

Why not reusable products too? Planet-Positive Periods encourages schools, colleges, and universities to also include free access to reusable menstrual products as part of their sustainability and menstrual equity commitments.

## The Planet-Positive Periods Team

Planet-Positive Periods is a new educational advocacy collaboration between three of the leading voices in menstrual equity and sustainability.



**PERIOD.** is a youth-fueled nonprofit that strives to eradicate period poverty and stigma through service, education, and advocacy.



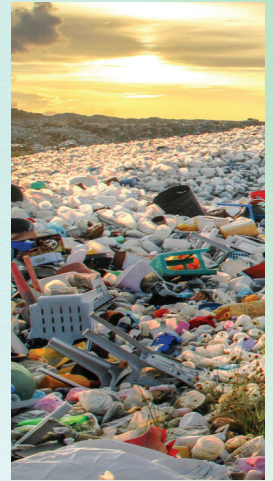
**Green Periods** is a social impact project creating awareness about the economic and ecological implications of menstruation.



**Aisle** is a groundbreaking certified B Corp that has been leading the sustainable menstrual care industry since 1993.

## Environmental Realities of Disposable Pads and Tampons

- ❌ 30 billion lbs (14 billion kg) of disposable menstrual products will end up in landfills and oceans in 2022 alone, costing an estimated \$50 billion USD.
- ❌ Over a lifetime, each person who menstruates will use an average of 11,000 disposable pads or tampons, generating about 220 lb (100 kg) of waste.
- ❌ Each disposable pad can contain up to 90% plastic, and each tampon can contain up to 6% plastic (excluding applicators, which are often also made of plastic!)
- ❌ The plastic in disposable pads and tampons can take more than 800 years to break down, resulting in smaller pieces called microplastics, which are also harmful to animals and the planet.



## Economic Impact of Disposable Menstrual Products

In addition to their negative environmental impact, disposable products also have high recurring monthly and annual costs. According to Green Period's data, the lifetime cost for a person using disposables is about \$3,360 USD.

- ❌ Disposables have to be purchased frequently because they are worn for a few hours and thrown away.
- ❌ Disposables may seem affordable with upfront cost, but their recurring lifetime costs quickly add up.

## Benefits of Reusable Menstrual Products

- ✅ Reduced waste, energy, and GhG emissions
- ✅ Cost far less than disposables over time
- ✅ More comfortable than disposables
- ✅ Ensure a consistent personal supply of products without needing to access an on-campus bathroom
- ✅ Support positive mental health by reducing anxiety about access to products



**Reusable menstrual product options:**  
period underwear, menstrual cup and cloth pads.

## Reusables in Institutional Settings

Colleges and universities are recognizing the value of providing reusable menstrual products to their students and team members. It's an exciting opportunity to make a measurable difference in terms of sustainability and menstrual equity.

**Campuses where reusable products are now being provided include:**



# 2021 Reusable Menstrual Product Pilot at a State University

(Name of institution withheld for privacy)

Colleges and universities that are providing disposable pads and tampons to their students are increasingly seeking out reusable alternatives. Thanks to its **Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)**, Aisle is able to provide detailed cost savings and sustainability impact data to its partners.

Students Served	200
Investment in Reusables	\$8,542.50
Equivalent Cost of Disposables	\$26,692.45
<b>Impact Over 3 Years</b>	
Net Savings	\$18,149.95
Disposable Units Diverted	75,190
GhG Emissions Saved	2,393 Kg of CO <sub>2</sub> e
Energy Saved	18,833 Mj

Data is based on equivalency calculations from [periodaisle.com](http://periodaisle.com)

## Education

Education is an essential way to successfully adapt individual period routines to include reusables. The Planet-Positive Periods toolkit includes a Slide presentation, Facilitator's Guide, Research Appendix and Assessment Quiz and Video webinar. **It's now publicly available free of charge.**

### Key Terms

- Planet-Positive Periods, or Sustainable Menstruation**  
When people manage their periods in an eco-friendly, budget-friendly, safe and accessible way over the long term. Also known as 'sustainable' or 'eco-friendly periods.'
- Menstrual Footprint**  
The amount of waste and expense associated with managing periods.
- Discussion Question:**  
Are there any questions you have about these terms, or what today's presentation is about?
- Let's jump right in!**

### "Eco-Friendly" Disposable Menstrual Products

Some disposable products are marketed as "eco-friendly", using words like "organic," "biodegradable," "compostable," "non-toxic," "chlorine-free," or "plant-based."

There is actually **no clear evidence** that these type of products are better for the environment than mainstream disposables.<sup>10</sup>

**Greenwashing** is when companies lead consumers to believe their products or practices are more environmentally friendly than they actually are.<sup>15</sup>

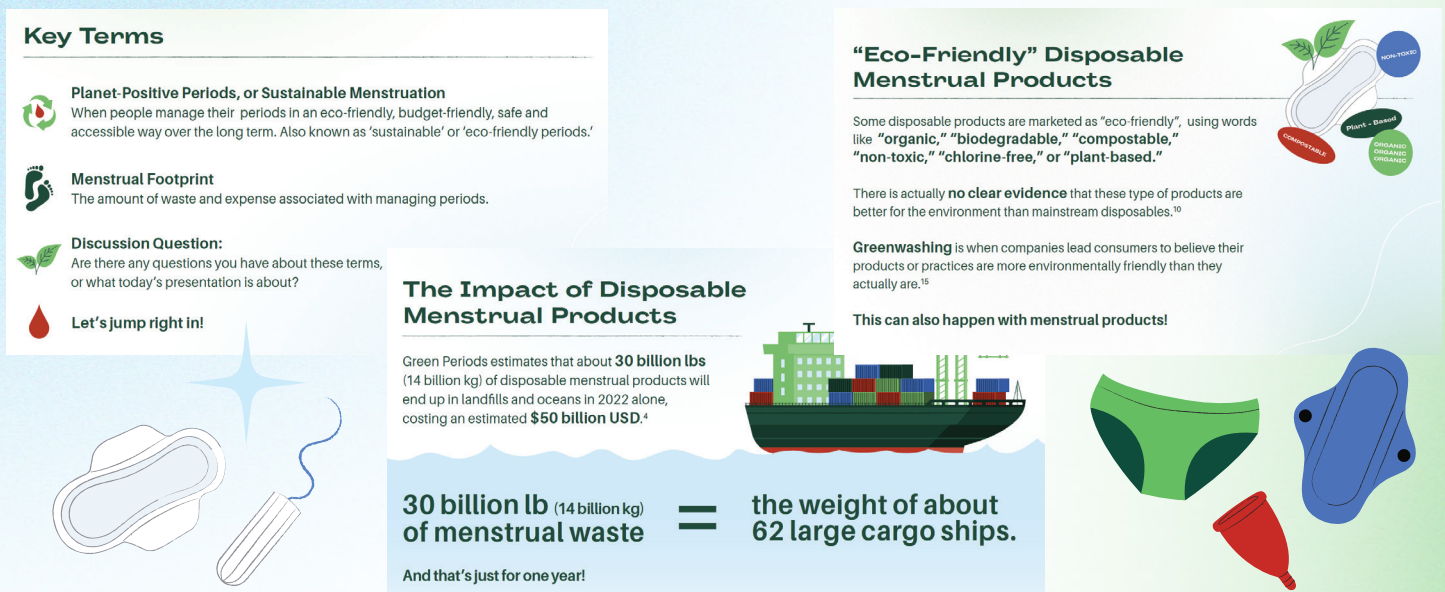
**This can also happen with menstrual products!**

### The Impact of Disposable Menstrual Products

Green Periods estimates that about **30 billion lbs** (14 billion kg) of disposable menstrual products will end up in landfills and oceans in 2022 alone, costing an estimated **\$50 billion USD**.<sup>4</sup>

**30 billion lb (14 billion kg) of menstrual waste = the weight of about 62 large cargo ships.**

And that's just for one year!




## Partner Testimonial

"From my perspective, sustainability is about taking care of people and planet, so providing equitable and environmentally friendly access to period products is a win/win. The ability for us to provide a spectrum of opportunities for people to access reusable options is crucial to making sure that we're as inclusive as possible."

- Alex Bryan, Sustainability Programs Manager, University of Michigan

## Learn More

Aisle's unique menstrual health partnerships offer easy, innovative ways to meet institutional menstrual equity and sustainability goals.

Email [partnerships@periodaisle.com](mailto:partnerships@periodaisle.com) to connect with our team.

