

Products + NDIS

Your practical guide to adaptive period
products and NDIS funding



IMPORTANT NOTE

Standard period products are designed for the general population. They do not account for the wide range of physical, sensory, cognitive, and anatomical differences experienced by people with disability.





This guide is here to help you find what actually works for your body.



STANDARD PRODUCTS

What they are and why they might not work for you

There are four main types of standard period products: pads, tampons, menstrual cups, and period underwear. Here's an honest look at each one, including why they may be difficult for some people with disability.

	What it is	May be difficult if you...
 Single-use pads	Sticky pad worn in underwear. Comes in different sizes. Most widely used product.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have fine motor difficulties (the sticky tab can be hard to grip and position)• Find the wetness sensation uncomfortable• Use a wheelchair (sitting position can cause leakage)
 Tampons	Inserted into the vagina. Absorbs blood internally. Essential for swimming in standard form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have limited hand or arm movement• Have conditions like vaginismus or pelvic floor dysfunction• Have paraplegia (cannot hold in place)• Have spinal/nerve conditions causing pain• Have sensory sensitivities
 Menstrual cups	Small, reusable cup inserted into the vagina. Can stay in for up to 12 hours. Praised by many for leak protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have limited hand dexterity• Cannot safely empty in public facilities (requires rinsing)• Have the same internal anatomical challenges as tampons
 Period underwear	Underwear with an absorbent lining. Reusable and washable. Highly popular across the disability community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need a very heavy flow option (most brands are limited)• Have difficulty pulling clothing up and down independently• Need something discrete under sporting attire

ADAPTIVE PERIOD PRODUCTS

What they are and who they help

Adaptive products are specifically designed to address the barriers that standard products create. Here's what's available:

Adaptive period underwear



Period underwear designed with people with disability in mind. Features to look for include: side openings or loops to assist with pulling up and down, magnetic or easy-open fastenings, seamless designs for sensory comfort, higher absorbency for heavy flows, and darker colours to reduce anxiety about visible leaks in sporting attire.

Research finding: 44% of active sport participants with disability use or need adaptive period underwear. It is currently the fastest-growing product category for this cohort.

Period swimwear



Swimwear with an absorbent lining built in. A genuine game-changer for people who cannot use internal products and participate in swimming, the most popular sport among the disability community. Look for options that provide light to moderate absorbency and are designed to look like standard swimwear.

Research finding: Swimming is the most common sport for people with disability (44%). It is also the biggest flashpoint for menstrual anxiety. Period swimwear removes this barrier entirely for many people.

Tampon applicators & adaptive inserters



Applicator tampons make insertion easier for people with limited hand strength or dexterity. Specialised adaptive tampon inserters go further, designed with extended handles and grip supports for people with conditions like MS, cerebral palsy, or arthritis.

Wipes, gloves, and hygiene supports



For people who need support to manage hygiene discreetly, or whose carers assist with product changes, hygiene wipes and disposable gloves are practical additions. 37% of inactive respondents with disability rely on wipes as part of their period management kit.

Menstrual discs



Sitting higher in the vaginal fornix than a cup, discs can be a more comfortable and manageable option for some people with pelvic floor or anatomical differences. Some brands offer one-use disposable options, removing the rinsing challenge of reusable cups.

Heating pads



Wearable or portable heating pads for cramp relief. 37% of both active and inactive respondents with disability rely on heating pads. Relevant for sport participation, particularly during phases of the cycle with higher pain levels.

Reusable pads



Cloth pads that fasten with a snap or velcro. More manageable for people who find the sticky-tab mechanism of disposable pads difficult to operate. Washable and reusable. Can be better for people with sensory sensitivities to adhesive materials.

MATCHING PRODUCTS TO YOUR DISABILITY

No single product works for everyone. Here's a quick-reference guide:

<p>Physical disability</p> <p>Fine motor challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive period underwear (with loops/side openings) • Applicator tampons • Adaptive tampon inserters • Reusable pads with snap fastening • Carer/support worker assistance 	<p>Paraplegia</p> <p>Spinal injury</p> <p>Reduced sensation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-absorbency adaptive period underwear • Menstrual discs (sit differently to cups) • Heating pads for cramping • Carer/support worker assistance • Timer/reminder systems for product changes
<p>Wheelchair use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menstrual cups (once comfortable with insertion) • Menstrual discs • Adaptive period underwear • High-absorbency pads for extended seated use 	<p>Endometriosis</p> <p>Heavy flow</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-absorbency adaptive period underwear (avoid maternity products where possible) • Menstrual cups (12-hour capacity) • Heating pads • Pain relief • Flexible training or uniform arrangements
<p>Autism</p> <p>Neurodivergence</p> <p>Sensory sensitivities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seamless adaptive period underwear (no crinkle, no adhesive) • Menstrual cups or discs (no wetness sensation once inserted) • Unscented products • Consistent brand/product to reduce sensory unpredictability 	<p>Swimming</p> <p>Water sports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period swimwear • Menstrual cups or discs (if tolerated) • Applicator tampons with adaptive inserter (if tolerated)

THE NDIS AND PERIOD PRODUCTS

What you need to know

As of October 2024, *adaptive menstrual products are officially recognised as NDIS supports* under Schedule 1, Item 9, 'Assistive products for personal care and safety.' This includes modified or adaptive products to manage menstruation, including applicators and period underwear.

This is significant. For years, people with disability and their families were told period products weren't covered, or were actively denied funding through ableist gatekeeping. The formal inclusion of these products in the NDIS supports list is a hard-won advocacy victory.

What is covered under the NDIS?

Adaptive menstrual products that are required specifically due to a participant's disability support needs can be funded. This includes:



Adaptive period underwear



Tampon applicators and adaptive tampon inserters



Other modified products where the need is directly related to disability

What is NOT currently covered?

Standard period products; pads, tampons, menstrual cups that are available to the general population are not funded by the NDIS, even if the participant uses them. Funding is specifically for the adaptive or modified element.

How do I access this funding?

Here is a plain-language step-by-step guide to accessing NDIS funding for adaptive period products.

STEP
01

Talk to your GP or treating health professional. Ask them to document in writing how your disability affects your ability to use standard period products. This is called clinical evidence and it is essential.

Contact your NDIS planner, Local Area Coordinator (LAC), or support coordinator. Tell them you need adaptive menstrual products as a disability-related support under assistive products for personal care and safety (Schedule 1, Item 9).

STEP
02

STEP
03

If you are using a plan manager, they can help you identify appropriate suppliers and process claims. If you are self-managing, you can purchase directly from suppliers and claim reimbursement.

If you are denied, you have the right to request an internal review. Cite the NDIS Transitional Rules 2024, Schedule 1, Item 9(d). Contact Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) or your state's disability advocacy service for support with appeals.

STEP
04

STEP
05

Keep receipts and records of all purchases. NDIS audits are possible, and clear documentation protects you.



Current NDIS landscape

The NDIS rules around period products have been contested and changed significantly in recent years. In 2024, there was a period where draft NDIS support lists proposed removing menstrual products from covered supports entirely, classifying them as 'lifestyle-related' expenses alongside vapes and gaming consoles.

Disability advocates and organisations including Women With Disabilities Australia fought strongly against this. The final rules that came into effect in October 2024 retained adaptive menstrual products as a covered support. However, this landscape continues to evolve, and it is important to stay informed. Check the NDIS website [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au) or contact WWDA for the most current information.

Need help navigating the NDIS?

- ▶ **Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA):** [wwda.org.au](https://www.wwda.org.au)
- ▶ **NDIS supports list:** [ndis.gov.au/participants/working-providers](https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/working-providers)
- ▶ **Share the Dignity Education Hub:** sharethedignity.org.au/education-hub

BEYOND THE NDIS

Other ways to access products

Not everyone with disability is on the NDIS. Here are other avenues worth knowing about.

State and territory government programs

Some state governments have announced free period product programs at community facilities, schools, and health services. Check with your local council or state health department.

Share the Dignity

The Bloody Good Sport initiative and vending machine network provide free period products at sport and leisure facilities across Australia.

Period poverty support services

Organisations like Share the Dignity's It's in the Bag program provide period products to people experiencing hardship, including those with disability.

Healthcare providers

GPs and allied health professionals can provide product recommendations and, in some cases, prescriptions or referrals that support funding access.

*The right product exists for your body.
You deserve to know about it.*



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