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## SHTF Survival: Women's Health

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Typically, in a post SHTF situation, [sanitation conditions](#) <sup>[1]</sup> are going to be at a minimum (at the very least). Therefore, a woman's personal hygiene is essential to her health and should be considered a priority. When sanitary conditions are not up to par, there is an increase of diseases such as cholera, typhoid and diphtheria. Typically, women and children are the most affected by poor sanitation conditions. Taking proper precautions and stocking up on sanitary items will help eliminate most issues regarding poor sanitation.

### Tampons to the Rescue!

Did you know that tampons and sanitary napkins can be used for medical care? Due to their high absorbent nature, both items make good wound care dressings. In fact, the U.S. Army Medics have been using both items in combat situations. Luckily, since pads and tampons are considered a paper item, they have an indefinite shelf life, thus making them a good prepping investment. Remember to store sanitary items in a dry spot away from direct sunlight, heat and humidity.

Getting caught without a pad or tampon while on your period is not way to survive (or even get by) in an emergency situation. A great way to be prepared for a disaster is to make a personalized woman's sanitation kit that will fit your monthly needs. Some items you can include are:

- Midol or pain reliever
- Disposable pads or tampons
- Disposable towelettes or toilet paper
- Soap
- Disinfectant gel
- Trash bag
- Instant and reusable heating pad

### Personal Hygiene Makes a Difference

A basic understanding of proper sanitation for women are necessary to ensure that diseases and illness do not occur. Taking time to clean yourself daily will help reduce the growth of bacteria, infections and diseases.

- Cleansing – Using mild soap, completely clean the genital area. Clean the genital area every day, and more frequently during menstruation and after intercourse.
- Menstruation – Change any sanitation item at least every 2-4 hours. And keep the area clean. Remember to wash your hands frequently as well.

### Disposal of Feminine Sanitation Items

It is important to properly dispose of sanitary napkins, as they contain bodily fluids that could pose a health hazard to others. Methods of disposal may differ according to where you are and what you have available. However, tampons and feminine napkins do not decompose quickly. Therefore, the best way to dispose of used feminine napkins tampons is to burn them. The fire must be very hot in order to thoroughly destroy the used items. Incinerate any pads or tampons, as well as any paper items used to clean your self with (disposable towelettes, toilet paper, etc).

As many of us are already aware, feminine napkins and tampons are quite costly, and take up a lot of space in the storage closet. However, as convenient as they are to have around, there are some alternative and less costly ways to deal with our visitor.

### Alternatives to Disposable Sanitary Items

- **Diva Cup** – The diva cup is a sanitary and efficient way to go without the typical pad or tampon. In fact, according to the [website](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, this product is made from top quality, health care grade silicone, which is 100% latex-free, plastic-free, BPA-free and odorless. Consequently, due to it's non-absorbent nature, it does not disrupt one's natural vaginal environment. This is also very cost efficient, as well. A women typically spends \$150-\$200 a year on sanitary needs. Making the diva cup's \$30 cost point a cost effective alternative.
- **Cloth Sanitary Napkins** - Another cost efficient way to maintain good sanitary means is with cloth menstrual napkins. Cloth sanitary napkins can be made from soft fabrics such as flannel or soft cotton, or can be sewn from worn fabrics. The cloth sanitary napkins can be cleaned after each use and put away for the next month's use. Typically, a 3 pack set of cloth pads can be bought online at store sites such as [Amazon](#) <sup>[3]</sup> for around \$25, but inserts must also be bought for around \$10. Or, if you are handy with the sewing machine, make your own. [Click here](#) <sup>[4]</sup> to view sewing instructions.

*If you choose to use any of the alternative methods, remember to thoroughly clean them for future use.*

Sanitation is an often overlooked area of preparedness, and very well could be one of the most important components to survival. Maintaining proper sanitation during an emergency situation will ensure that you, as well as those around you will stay healthy.

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[1] sanitation conditions: [http://readynutrition.com/resources/what-to-do-when-the-sanitation-hits-the-fan\\_22122010/](http://readynutrition.com/resources/what-to-do-when-the-sanitation-hits-the-fan_22122010/)

[2] website: <http://www.divacup.com/en/home/faqs/>

[3] Amazon: [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_ss\\_i\\_1\\_20?url=search-alias%3Dhpc&field-keywords=cloth+menstrual+pads&prefix=cloth+menstrual+pads](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_1_20?url=search-alias%3Dhpc&field-keywords=cloth+menstrual+pads&prefix=cloth+menstrual+pads)

[4] Click here: <http://www.hillbillyhousewife.com/sanitarypads.htm>

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