Tips for Women on the Trail and in the Backcountry
Hello ladies!

Looking forward to your trip into the backcountry - hiking, climbing or some other adventure? I’m guessing you’ve started to think about packing and may have some questions that would be nice to have cleared up. If any of those questions relate to women’s hygiene in the backcountry, then keep reading!

We want to help you be as prepared as possible for your trip. Here is information for personal care during your period, what items you can prepare before a trip and other general tips.

Whether you know you’re going to get your period or suspect it may occur while you are out, you can prepare before the trip. Your options for period care include tampons and pads or a menstrual cup. Both have their pros and cons, but ultimately go with the choice that you are comfortable with. Always clean your hands before and after changing a tampon or menstrual cup.

**Tampons and pads**
- Choose tampons without an applicator if possible to reduce packing size and waste.
- Bring a little more than you think you’ll need for the trip, but not an excessive amount.
- If backpacking, have enough for the day near the top of your pack. Have the rest packed away.
- If on a mule supported trip, have enough plus some extra for day and keep the rest in your duffel.
- Have a few quart size zip lock bags for used tampons. You can line these with foil or store in a colored sack for discretion.

**Menstrual cups**
- There are a wide variety of options. You can find a comparison of the popular choices here: https://menstrualcupreviews.net/
- Test yours out at least one or two periods before your trip to be comfortable using. They take practice but once you have used it, you can carry fewer supplies into the woods.
- Rinse with water when possible or wipe with toilet paper (carry out TP).
- When done with cup, store it in a pouch that allows it to dry (not a zip lock bag). They typically come with a bag for storage.
- Empty cup into a cathole, following the leave no trace guidelines - 6 inches deep, 200 feet from camp and water.

**Period Panties**
These are new to our radar in the world of periods, but there is a lot of positive feedback on them. In the backcountry, they could be used as a backup for the usual tampon or cup, or on their own for lighter days. You can find a guide to the top 10 period panties here: https://menstrualcupreviews.net/best-period-panties-reviews/

**Urinating in the woods**

Women can face an added challenge in the woods. Privacy is of concern for you, consider using a female urination device (or “pee funnel”). These make it much easier to be discreet while going to the bathroom, and can be especially beneficial in colder weather (where pulling your pants down does not sound ideal). There are many options out there; take the time to do some research and test out your choice before your trip. You can find a great guide for these here: http://www.backpacker.com/gear/the-complete-guide-to-female-urination-devices. The Freshette from REI is another option; it is rigid and made of two parts that helps minimize storage size.

Some women also use a pee rag (usually a handkerchief) to wipe after urinating. You can tie this to your backpack to dry and rinse when possible. This eliminates a lot of toilet paper waste that you would have to carry. Another item that can make your trip even more comfortable is baby wipes or feminine wipes. Using these once a day can help keep you clean. Carry these out in a zip lock bag.

Additionally, change your underwear daily. Rinse each pair after use to help maximize cleanliness and minimize the amount of underwear you need to bring!

If you have specific questions before a trip, please feel free to contact us. We want you to enjoy the trip and not have to worry about any of these topics while in the woods.