

Periods in the Backcountry

Having your period can be inconvenient even when you're at home, and it can be even more daunting to think about how to deal with it when you're on a backpacking trip. However, people have been having periods in the backcountry for as long as we have existed and it is a natural biological process for human beings. Having a period should not keep you out of the backcountry.

Bears and other large predators are not attracted to period blood or menstrual odors any more than to other body odors. This is a myth that has been disproved. You are not more at risk of bear attacks because you are on your period. Period related trash should be packed out, along with any other personal hygiene related trash.

Supplies

- You can use whatever period supplies you are most comfortable with. If you use pads, select ultra-thin ones as they will take up less space.
- Unscented wet wipes. Wet wipes are a great way to stay clean. Make sure you pack out all wipes with other trash, instead of burying them
- Extra toilet paper. Bringing your own toilet paper gives you freedom to use the bathroom more discreetly, without having to ask anyone for the bathroom kit.
- Nitrile medical gloves for inserting or removing tampons/menstrual cup
- A gallon ziploc bag (or several quart bags) covered in duct tape for trash privacy. You can put a dry tea bag, coffee grounds, or baking soda in the bag to absorb odors.

What to expect

- In most cases, you will be hiking for 4-6 hours per day, with a break for lunch. Sometimes, there are campsites with toilets along the way, but usually, bathroom stops along the trail will mean stepping away from the group and digging a cathole.
- If you find yourself needing to dig a hole, you can use the small trowel provided in the poop kit, a stick or rock, or your boot if the ground is soft enough.
- Most campsites will have a privy or pit toilet for bathroom use. Otherwise, individuals will select private areas to dig catholes. Human waste and toilet paper can be dropped in the pit toilet, or buried six inches deep. Used pads, tampons, wet wipes, and gloves should be kept in the duct tape covered bag and packed out.
- If it makes you more comfortable, feel free to request a solo tent so you have your own space. You don't have to disclose personal information, just email our administrative team or let your guides know before the trip starts.

If you have more questions or need more information, please feel free to contact us.