

## Access to Sanitary Pads and Tampons in NSW Health Services

**Summary** This Information Bulletin is to remind NSW Health services that free sanitary pads and/or tampons are to be provided to patients who are unable to supply their own.

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**Applies to** Ministry of Health, Local Health Districts, Specialty Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, Community Health Centres, Public Hospitals

**Distributed to** Ministry of Health, Public Health System

**Audience** NSW Health Services

## **Access to Sanitary Pads and Tampons in NSW Health Services**

### **PURPOSE**

All NSW Health services are required to provide free sanitary pads and/or tampons to patients who are unable to supply their own.

### **KEY INFORMATION**

Delivering personalised care and outcomes that matter to patients and the community requires a holistic understanding of wellbeing. For women, girls and people who menstruate, access to period products (e.g. tampons, pads) is an essential need.

All NSW Health services (including Public Hospitals, Affiliated Health Organisations and Community Health Centres) are required to provide access to free pads and/or tampons to patients who are unable to supply their own.

To support access Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks are to:

- Distribute the attached Information Bulletin on this requirement to all health workers through local communication channels;
- Ensure supply of tampons and pads to all NSW Health services and provide information to staff on how to order, access and provide these items to patients when needed; and,
- Consider whether additional training or information is required for staff to address barriers to accessing period products, particularly targeting priority populations and priority settings.

### **Barriers to accessing period products**

It is important that health workers are aware of, and responsive to barriers that women, girls and those who menstruate may face, including:

- sense of shame, discomfort or stigma around menstruation based on cultural beliefs, social context, gender identity (e.g. non-binary people, trans men) or intersex status,
- financial constraints or instability limiting ability to purchase period products (e.g. low-income households, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, people exposed to domestic violence),
- communication barriers preventing expression of needs (e.g. people with who require interpreters, people with an intellectual disability or cognitive impairment),
- lack of carer or support person to purchase products

- lack of trust or cultural safety due to past practices leading to reluctance to express needs (e.g. Aboriginal people, refugee people and people with refugee like backgrounds, people with mental illness), and
- lack of information or awareness of menstrual hygiene (e.g. children, young people).