



VAGINAL CARE AND MENSTRUATION ON THE TRAIL

General Hygiene

In the backcountry, where access to regular facilities is limited, it is essential to adopt practices that keep your genital area clean to reduce the risk of bacterial infections such as urinary tract infections.

Stay clean! Wash as often as possible. Stay 200 feet from water sources and wash with water and soap. If water is limited, use the wipes in the BOSS Menstrual Kit. Clean and change underwear regularly.

Stay dry! Wiping with a dedicated bandana or antimicrobial cloth, AKA a pee rag, is good practice on the trail. Rinse it regularly and hang it securely on your pack to dry, letting UV rays disinfect it. Female participants can bring an extra bandana into the field as a pee rag.

Stay hydrated! Hydrate appropriately, and do not hold in your pee.

If you notice anything unusual for you, inform an instructor. We have medical training and carry additional medical supplies. We are used to working with challenges that arise in the backcountry, including hygiene-related issues.

The BOSS Menstrual Kit

- 2 Black Ziplock Waste Bags
- 14 Hygiene Wipes
- 1 Bag of 10 Sanitizing Wipes
- 1 Pack Tissue Paper

There are many ways to manage a menstrual cycle in the backcountry. And no, bears are not attracted to people on their period. We always recommend using whatever products you are used to using at home.

If you use tampons or pads, use the black ziplock waste bag to pack out the applicator, the tampon or pad itself, and any packaging. There will be times during the course to dispose of trash. **Pack out all hygiene products!** BOSS instructors carry extra tampons and pads in their group first aid kits.

If you use a menstrual cup, you should dig a small hole, dispose of your menstrual blood, and then cover it up. You can clean the cup by rinsing it with drinkable water. We recommend carrying an alternative option for when water is limited.

It's common to see changes in the menstrual cycle on backcountry trips, especially when the conditions or activities are strenuous or challenging. Even if you don't expect to get your period during your course, it's better to overprepare than underprepare, so bring a few extra supplies.



The Backcountry Bidet Method™

This is an excellent method for staying clean that avoids needing to pack out used toilet paper or wipes. This is as close to being shower-clean in the field as you can get! All you need is water and biodegradable soap. Only use this method when there is an abundance of water available.

- Designate a wiping hand and a clean hand.
- Take your clean hand and water. Pour a little bit of water on your wiping hand.
- Wipe (or splash if you prefer) with a flat palm, avoiding fecal contamination under your fingernails.
- Dump clean water onto your wiping hand and alternate it with a bit of biodegradable soap. Do so until you don't see any more residue. It's okay (and encouraged!) to wash with soap and water as many times as you need to feel clean.
- Dry thoroughly!