



# Moon Box

## How to Wear and Care for Cloth Pads

### Which way up?

Often the softer side of the pad is intended to be the top (skin side). Some brands of pad will have "channel stitching" on the top (sewn lines around the centre of the pad on one side only). Generally if the pad has a brand label on it, that label side is worn against the underpants. Pads may have the printed side as the top or the backing, depending on the brand.

Unless the pad has waterproofing, it probably doesn't matter which way up you wear it. If the pad has waterproofing, then you need to make sure you wear them the right way up. If you are unsure which side is which, please ask the padmaker for clarification.

### Which end goes where???

Some pads have one end of the pad wider and/or longer than the other. Most cloth pads can be worn with either end at the "front" (eg closest to your pubic bone) or "back" (closest to your butt). Even if one end is longer or wider than the other. You may choose to wear that longer/wider end wherever you need more coverage.

### Absorbencies

We use the following absorbency levels:

- "Light" - Light flow. Suitable as a pantyliner or light flow pad. For cup backup, mild stress incontinence, between periods or light flow. May be able to cope with a "regular" or "moderate" flow if changed regularly. These pads have 1 layer bamboo fleece core or equivalent.
- "Regular" - For Regular/Moderate flow. Suitable for use through most of your period. Can cope with heavy flow if changed regularly. These pads generally have 2 layers bamboo fleece core or equivalent.
- "Heavy" - Suitable for heavy flow, post partum, overnight or incontinence. These pads generally have 3 layers bamboo fleece core or equivalent.

### Cloth Pads & Underpants

Different shaped underpants may have an effect on the way the pads snap around at the crotch. Sometimes wider crotched underpants will gather ("bunch") in at the crotch when a pad is snapped around them. This generally does not affect the performance of the pad, and the underpants will flare back out to their normal shape at the ends of the pad. Often the underpants bunch/gather slightly while being worn anyway, but you can't see it. Some pads have 2 snap settings to allow you to adjust the width to suit your needs.

### Slipping & Sliding

If a pad slides around in your underpants, it is usually due to the underpants being too loose-fitting (not holding the pad close enough to the body), or the wings not snapping tightly enough around the crotch of the underpants. Snug fitting cotton underpants, with a crotch size wide enough to securely hold the pad are recommended for use with cloth pads (synthetic underpants can be too "slippery"). If you find your pads slipping around, try different styles of underpants. Wearing old, worn out underpants with loose elastic is not recommended!

## When to change pads

How long you can go before changing pads will depend on your flow and preference. Some people like to change their pads frequently to remain dry, other people are happy to leave the pads on longer. Changing every 3-4 hours is about average for a regular flow and pad. Pads without waterproofing should be checked for leaking through every so often until you are familiar with your flow and how well the pad performs.

## Washing

When you change pads, there are different methods to deal with washing the pad. Lifestyle as well as your blood's tendency to stain can determine which method you find suits you best.

- Soaking Method - Place the used pad in a container of plain cold water to soak until you wash them. You may leave them soaking until the end of your period and wash them all together, or wash at the end of each day. A little teatree, eucalyptus or lavender essential oil in the soaking water helps combat any odour, however it is recommended to change the soaking water every day or two if not washing straight away. The soaking water can be used on the garden as "grey water". Rinsing the pads out before putting them in the container to soak, and/or daily emptying the water out, rinsing all the pads and refilling the water, can help prevent odours.
- "Dry Pailing" - That is to not soak them. Just place the used pads into your laundry basket (or empty washing machine) and leave them until you wash them. Some shapes of cloth pad can fold up to keep them tidy. Fold the ends of the pad into the centre, then snap the wings around to keep it secure. If this folding technique puts strain on the wings due to the shape of the pad, it is not recommended. Some people can find that allowing the blood to dry can lead to staining however, and prefer to rinse the pads out or leave them to soak.
- Rinsing - Rinse them out straight away after you take them off, until almost clean, then either drypail, soak or put them in the wash. This method has the advantage that the majority of the blood is removed from the pad before it is left to sit until it is washed, which can help prevent odours and staining.
- Shower Method - Some people like to rinse the pads in the shower to save water. To do this, lay your pads on the floor of the shower, and as you have your shower, stand on the pads to "squish" them and force water in/out of the pads to help rinse them clean. The soap and shampoo runoff from your body can help clean them. Make sure you remove the cloth pads before conditioning your hair, as the conditioner may affect the absorbency of the pads.

A little baking soda rubbed onto fresh blood before washing can help remove stains, as can allowing them to hang to dry in the sunlight. You can also try commercial stain removers. If you have left the pads soaking too long and they have developed an odour, you can try re-washing them with a little disinfectant, "napisan" or essential oil, then allow them to hang to dry in the sunlight.

Cloth pads can generally be hand-washed or machine washed, on hot, cold or warm setting. Hot wash only if you have thoroughly rinsed the pads first, as hot water can set stains. Hand-washing and rinsing in warm water seems to be fine (doesn't cause staining) for most people. You should not use fabric softeners or dryer sheets on cloth pads, as this can coat the fabric and cause them to repel liquid.

Tumble drying pads is often not recommended by pad makers, as synthetic fibres (eg fleece or PUL) and snaps may be effected by high heat and tumble drying may decrease the lifespan of your pads. If you need to iron the pad (cotton can become wrinkled), do so on a low heat (start off low and increase if you must) and iron only the cotton side (do not iron exposed PUL or synthetic fabric), being careful not to touch the snaps with the iron.

This is a general care sheet for cloth pads – please see the care sheet for any particular brand of cloth pad to see if there are any additional or different instructions given for those pads.