FEMININE HYGIENE ON AN OUTWARD BOUND COURSE

The Instructor/Teacher Role:

- In the early stages of every Outward Bound course, the instructor will discuss ways of maintaining feminine hygiene. If the group is co-educational, the instructor will discuss this while the male participants are engaged in another activity.
- Every co-ed or female Outward Bound group will have at least 1 female teacher and/or instructor, to make it more comfortable for participants to discuss any issues/or concerns.
- The instructor is aware and knowledgeable of any issues or concerns that may arise.

General advice and information:

- The menstrual cycle can alter, (resulting in an early or late period), due to change in diet, increased activity and raised hormonal levels due to a change of environment. This is a normal occurrence so be aware that this may occur and be prepared.
- All Female Participants should bring their own supply of sanitary pads/tampons, even if their period is not due or hasn’t commenced (as noted above). If required, extras can also be obtained from the instructor or teacher who carry spares, just in case.
- Privacy can be obtained, there are ample opportunities to maintain hygiene and remove oneself from the group. During activities groups stop frequently for rests, snacks and meals.
- Hygienic practices are extremely important; therefore water is always available to ensure that a high standard is maintained. There is also disinfectant provided for hand washing after going to the toilet. If concerned, participants can bring a small packet of ‘baby wipes’ or ‘wet ones’ to also keep clean. Anti-bacterial hand wash gels are now available, which require no water, and come in small bottles, which can fit easily into pockets.
- Water activities, if in your program, are only a small part of each course and do not present a problem. The instructor/teacher can advise any participants who have concerns about this. There is one short compulsory swim in every course, involving a water activity, and anyone with concerns about this can take their swim as other participants are finishing and changing back into dry clothes.
- To dispose of sanitary pads and tampons wrap them in toilet paper and then double bag them with plastic bags. Only toilet paper is allowed in the toilets. It is recommended that girls bring small plastic or paper bags for their own discretion. This can then be placed in the communal rubbish bag just before it is disposed of. The communal rubbish bag is collected most days from each campsite. Participants therefore do not have to carry rubbish for the entire course.
- If a participant takes medication for period pain, bring it on course and note this on the medical form (as with any medication). The participant must make sure that the instructor is aware of this medication, and is advised every time it is administered, including dosage. Panadol, and similar pain relief, is not recommended in the Outdoors as it can lower body temperature and mask other symptoms. Medication should only ever be taken under supervision by an instructor and only as deemed necessary, not for minor symptoms.

We understand that this is a sensitive issue and our experienced instructors will deal with it with care, discretion and sensitivity. Our aim is to make the experience as positive as possible. The possibility of having a period on course need not cause distress or non-participation.