

# Unit 6:

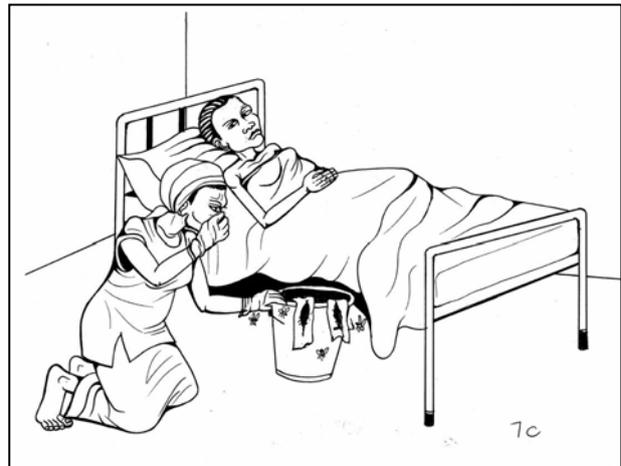
## Menstrual Period Management

### 36. Menstrual Blood and HIV

Menstrual blood of HIV-positive female clients can contain the HIV virus. However, there is an extremely low risk of getting HIV through care-giving activities if universal precautions are taken. It is important to wear gloves, plastic sheeting or other plastic material on your hands when you are handling any type of body fluid or waste (e.g. blood, pus, fluids, faeces, vomit, sputum, urine and waste from childbirth) or when the client or you have open sores or cuts that will come in direct physical contact with the other person. See Unit 4, Section 19 (page 54) for more information on how to stop spreading germs.

### 37. Safe Handling and Disposal of Menstrual Blood

Field research in Uganda showed that clients, caregivers and HBC providers need more support so they can know how to safely handle and dispose of menstrual blood.



Many challenges were identified:

- Supplies needed to safely handle the blood are often unavailable.
- Many people do not realize that female clients who are ill can still have menstrual periods, although some (but not all) who are severely ill do stop having their menstrual period.
- Most women do not like to talk about their menstrual periods and are unclear that HIV (and other illnesses/infections) can be transmitted by exposure to menstrual blood.

- Female clients who may be very sick and/or bedridden require sensitive and practical care during their menstrual period from their household caregivers and HBC providers.
- Women often hide the materials used to soak up menstrual blood and keep them for many hours or days before disposing of them or cleaning them for reuse.
- Care givers often do not cover their hands before touching a client's menstrual blood.

**It is essential to provide care in a way that helps the female client maintain her dignity so she can feel confident and in-control of managing her menstrual period.**

### **38. Keeping the Client and Her Household Clean Throughout Her Menstrual Period**

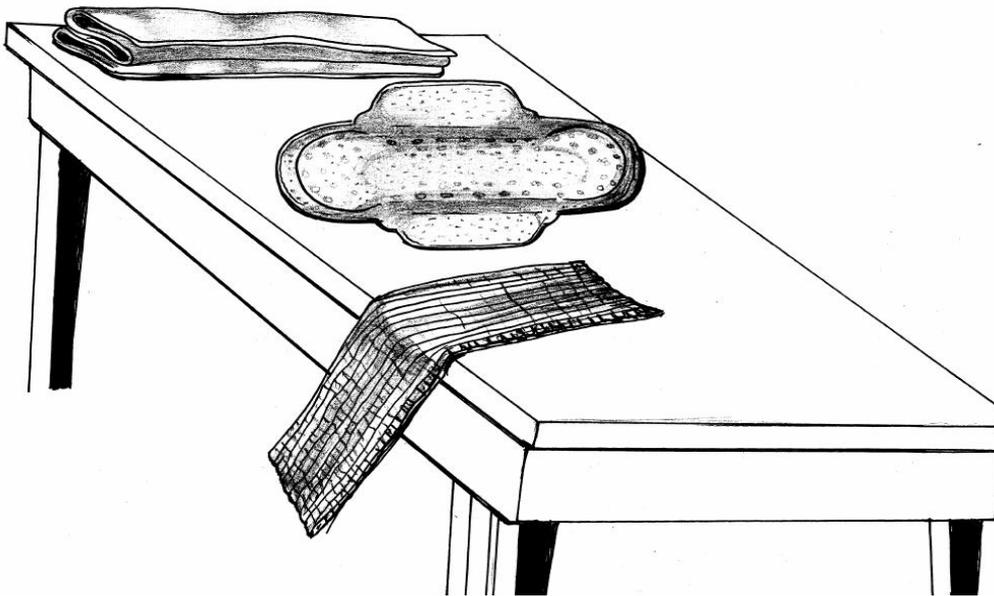
- Private parts (perineal) care (cleansing of the genitalia and rectal area) during a woman's or girls' menstrual period is a sensitive issue and should be kept as simple as possible, doing only what is necessary for the client and allowing the client to do as much as she can for herself. More information can be found on how to clean the female private parts



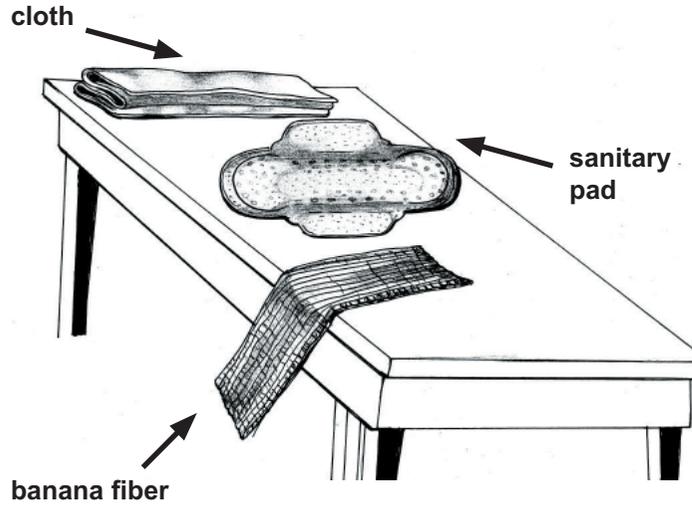
(perineal) area Unit 5, Section 32A (page 96). If your client cleans herself or if her hands came in contact with blood or other body fluids, she should wash her hands. If the client does not have handwashing materials within her reach, you and the household caregivers should place water, soap (or ash) and a basin/large bowl within the client's reach. The client should wash her hands with soap (or ash) as outlined in Unit 2, Section 5 (page 22).

### 39. What Materials Can Girls and Women use to Manage Their Menstrual Period?

- Sanitary Pad (preferred) – These are bought in shops or the market, used once and then thrown away.
- Rags, Towels or Cloth – These can be made from old clothes or material and can be washed and reused.
- Banana Fibres – These can be bought in the market or made at home. For information on how to make a sanitary pad from a banana fibre, please see Annex 3.



# MENSTRUAL PERIOD MANAGEMENT



Soak up blood with sanitary pads, cloth, or banana fibers.

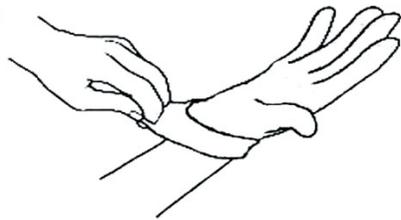
## Counselling Card



Keep clean cloth, washing water, soap (or ash), and a container for soiled cloth near bed-bound woman.



Do not store soiled cloth for a long time.



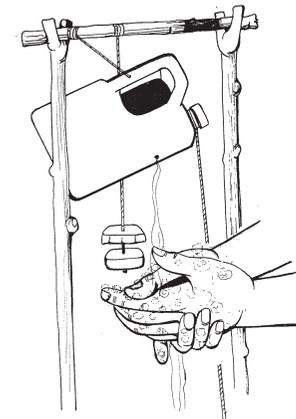
Use gloves

OR



Use plastic sheets

Always protect hands by wearing gloves or plastic material when touching someone else's blood.



Always wash hands with soap (or ash).

# MAKING SANITARY PADS FROM BANANA FIBERS

## Counselling Card

### 1 Harvest the Banana Fiber

Cut 1 to 1.5 meter long pieces of banana fiber from garden early in morning or late in evening when it is soft. (If it is picked when it is too dry it rips apart during preparation.)



Waterproof inside layer of 2 banana fiber pieces



Waterproof outside layer (called the "intestine layer") of 2 banana fiber pieces

### 2 Clean the Fiber

Wipe the banana fiber with a damp cloth to remove dirt.

### 3 Straighten the Fiber

Hold fiber with one hand and with your other hand gently, but firmly, pull your palm along length of fiber from one end of fiber to the other.

Straightening the fiber



### 4 Peel the Fiber

Carefully peel off waterproof layer from surface of fiber (the "intestine layer") that will lie against the skin.



Peeling the inside layer of the fiber

### NOTE: CRACKED FIBERS

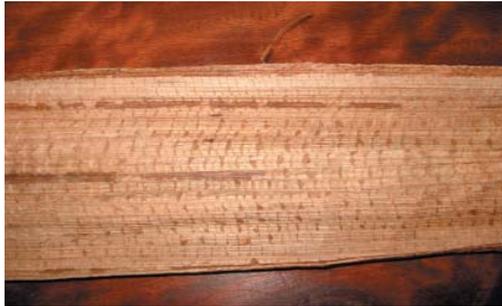
If banana fiber cracks near middle, it cannot be used. If it cracks near edge, tear off the cracked edge (as long as remaining uncracked width is sufficient for user.)



Cracked banana fiber  
crack

## 6 FIBER READY TO USE:

The banana fiber is ready for use once the waterproof layer (the “intestine layer”) that will lie against the skin is completely peeled off.



Banana fiber with inside (intestine layer) completely peeled

## 7 Use the Banana Fiber

To use banana fiber, attach fiber to belt (made from leather, cloth or string) in front of belly button, then bring fiber down between legs and attach it to belt above buttocks. Banana fiber can be attached to belt by either rolling fiber around belt (see picture on left, below) or by tearing the ends of the fiber and tying the torn bits to belt (see picture on right, below). Change banana fiber as needed.



Banana fiber wound around belt



Banana fiber ends torn and tied to belt

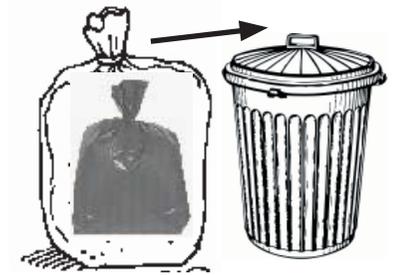
## 8 Disposal of the Used Banana Fibers

Get rid of used banana fibers by:

In URBAN areas:



1) Burning used fibers (preferred method)

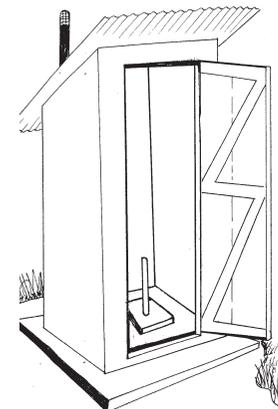


2) Putting used fibers in a bag and tying a knot in opening of bag. Put bag with used fiber in a second bag and tie it too. Put it in trash.

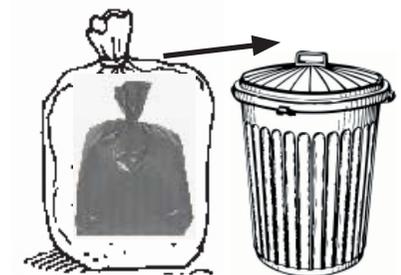
In RURAL areas:



1) Burning used fibers (preferred method)



2) Putting the used fibers in the latrine.



3) Putting used fibers in a bag and tying a knot in opening of bag. Put bag with used fiber in a second bag and tie it too. Put it in trash.

## 40. How to Dispose of Rags, Linens, Clothes, Banana Fibres or Cloth Soiled with Menstrual Blood

It is important that clients and household members do not store materials stained with menstrual blood for a long time as this can leave a bad smell, attract flies and other insects and potentially spread diseases in the home. Soiled/used disposable sanitary napkins and banana fibres that are soaked with menstrual blood cannot be re-used nor can they be thrown or discarded just anywhere. It is important that ANY soiled materials be handled with gloves, plastic sheeting or other plastic material and be disposed in the right location (see “Disposal or Cleaning of Menstrual Blood Soaked Materials” Counselling Card on page 121).

**To throw away (or dispose of) rags/linens/clothes/banana fibre or cloth soiled with menstrual blood in an URBAN setting, you have two options:**

### Option 1

Burn the soiled material in a safe area (preferred method).



### Option 2

“Double bag” it by putting the soiled material in a bag and tying the top, then putting it inside another bag and tying the top and throwing away the sealed bag in the garbage (least preferred method).



To throw away (or dispose) of rags/linens/clothes/banana fibre or cloth soiled with menstrual blood in an RURAL setting, you have three options:

**Option 1**

Drop the material down into the latrine hole (preferred method).



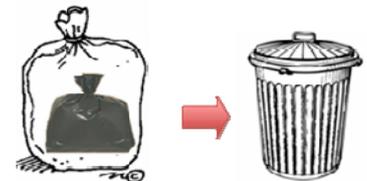
**Option 2**

Burn the bloody material in a safe area.



**Option 3**

“Double bag” it by putting the soiled material in a bag and tying the top, then putting it inside another bag and tying the top and throwing away the sealed bag in the garbage (least preferred method).



## 41. Cleaning Rags, Clothes, Linens and Cloth Stained with Menstrual Blood so They Can be Re-Used

It is important to ensure that the bedding, linens, cloth, mattresses and other materials are kept clean and free of menstrual blood.

To clean any cloth/linens/clothes soiled with menstrual blood so you can re-use them, follow these steps:

<b>STEP</b> <b>1</b>	Put on gloves, plastic sheeting or other plastic material to protect your hands before touching the material.
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<b>STEP</b> <b>2</b>	Soak soiled cloth/linen/clothes in a "1 part Jik to 9 parts water" solution for at least 20 minutes (as described in Unit 4, Section 20 page 62). If there is no Jik available, then a less preferable method is to soak the material in soapy water for 20 minutes. To ensure there is enough soap in the water, make sure there are lots of bubbles when you stir and shake the water with your hand.
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<b>STEP</b> <b>3</b>	While wearing gloves, plastic sheeting or other plastic material, wash the cloth/linens/clothes as you would normally wash, with soap and water and rinse well.
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<b>STEP</b> <b>4</b>	Allow the cloth/linens/clothes to air dry in the sun. To throw out the soaking water, dig a hole to dump the water in.
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<b>STEP</b> <b>5</b>	Remove your gloves, plastic sheeting or other plastic material from your hands.
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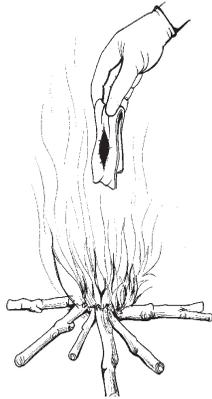
<b>STEP</b> <b>6</b>	Wash your hands, as outlined in Unit 2, Section 5 (page 22).
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# DISPOSAL OR CLEANING OF MENSTRUAL BLOOD SOAKED MATERIAL

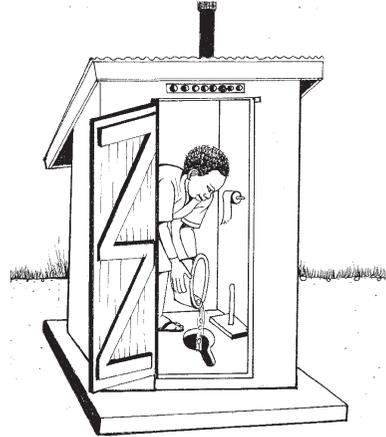
## Counselling Card

### NOT RE-USED

Soiled cloth that **will not be used again** and sanitary pads and banana fibers should be disposed of by:



Burning (preferred method for urban and rural areas)



Put in latrine (rural areas only)



Double bagged and put in trash (least preferred method for urban and rural areas)

### RE-USED

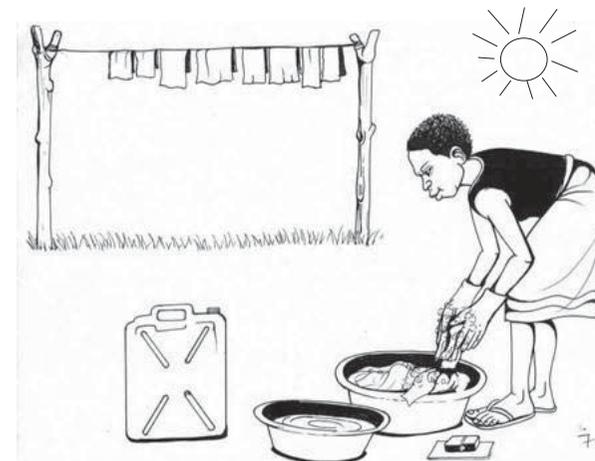
Soiled cloth that **will be re-used**:



Soak soiled cloth for at least 20 minutes in a mixture of nine parts water to one part Jik (if available)



Wash with soap and water



Dry in the sun

**NOTE:**  
Always wear gloves or plastic material when handling blood and wash hands afterward.