



m.e. FIRST Ambassador Toolkit



Space Cookies
Team 1868

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About Menstrual Equity

Menstrual Equity refers to the **affordability, accessibility** and **safety** of menstrual products and is about making sure that people have the means, support, and choices to take care of their menstrual health.

Consider a typical restroom at a school, office, or venue. It wouldn't be acceptable to have toilet paper available only 20% of the time. Or to expect people to have a coin to pay for it. Why then do 80% of restrooms not stock menstrual products or have empty or broken coin-operated dispensers? Access to pads and tampons affects a person's ability to participate in physical activity, work, and study, to stay healthy, and to engage in the world with basic dignity.

A lack of menstrual products is not just inconvenient—it can be dangerous. Menstruating people may substitute products or simply not change their products, a major risk factor for reproductive tract infections and Toxic Shock Syndrome, which can be fatal.

Affordability is a major issue. One in five US teens live in poverty and can struggle to afford period products. More than 80% of US students have either missed class or know someone who has because they lacked access to period products. Students who cannot afford menstrual products may miss school or be less productive or engaged in the classroom. Missing just a few days of school can lead to significant performance gaps.

The **m.e. FIRST** initiative is the continuation of the Menstrual Equity project started by the Space Cookies Team 1868 as part of the 2021 **FIRST**® Innovation Challenge. Our idea was sparked by our members' experiences at **FIRST** and sporting events, but our research showed clearly that this is a much larger issue.

To have a fully equitable and participatory society, menstrual products must be safe and affordable to all who need them. This is the driving philosophy behind **m.e. FIRST**.



Period Products: A Primer

The menstrual cycle is the sequence of events that occur as a body as prepares for the possibility of pregnancy each month. Menstruation is the monthly shedding of the lining of the uterus. Menstruation is also known by the terms menses, menstrual period, cycle, or simply "period". A menstrual cycle begins on the first day of a period. The average cycle is 28 days long.

Menstrual blood flows from the uterus through the cervix and out of the body through the vagina. Menstrual products are used to collect the menstrual blood and there are many different options available. This primer focuses on the products most used by adolescents: pads and tampons.



source: goauntflow.com

Pads

Pads are rectangles of absorbent material that attach to the inside of underwear and catch menstrual blood. They are sometimes also called sanitary pads or sanitary napkins. Pads can vary by size or by absorbency and should be changed every 3–4 hours. Regular changing prevents buildup of bacteria and leakage.

Tampons

A tampon is made of absorbent material compressed into a small tube and absorbs blood from inside the body. It is important to change a tampon every 4–6 hours or when it is saturated with blood. Keeping a tampon in for too long puts people at risk for a rare but very dangerous disease called Toxic Shock Syndrome.

m.e. FIRST Ambassador Responsibilities

Follow this checklist to execute your team's responsibilities as a m.e. FIRST Ambassador:

- ❑ Complete the Ambassador application form to indicate which FRC competitions your team can support: tinyurl.com/meFIRST2024
- ❑ Allow for a few days, then confirm that your team has been assigned to the competitions you selected by checking for your team name and number on the application form. If you do not see your team listed, please contact the Space Cookies at 1868@spacecookies.org
- ❑ Some events may have more than one ambassador; contact the other team to coordinate coverage for the event. For example, you may have one team responsible for bringing products and the other responsible for placing them.
- ❑ Let your regional director/district leadership know you plan to bring products. Remember that they will be extremely busy leading up to competition and may not have time to respond. If you don't receive a response, just check in with a competition organizer when you arrive.

Note: Some venues may have restrictions on where you can place products. If you are not able to place products in restrooms, you can keep them at your pit or ask a competition organizer about where to place them. Options may include a volunteer station, a first aid station, or in a designated Quiet Room. Regardless of location, the goal is to have products be "self-serve"; make the products easy to pick up without needing to ask for them.

- ❑ Let your social media followers know that you are serving as a m.e. FIRST Ambassador! This is a great opportunity to educate people about the impact of Menstrual Equity. m.e. FIRST logos are available to download at tinyurl.com/meFIRSTcollateral
- ❑ Let the other teams attending your competition know that you will have products available for anyone who needs them
- ❑ Calculate how many products you will need using the calculator included in this toolkit
- ❑ Purchase the products. If this is a financial burden for your team, please contact the Space Cookies at 1868@spacecookies.org for assistance.
- ❑ Purchase or make containers to display the products (one for each location at the venue). IKEA's small "Variera" box is a great size and stacks easily.
- ❑ Pack the products and containers with your team's equipment and supplies
- ❑ Create signage for the containers and flyers for the venue using the templates available at tinyurl.com/meFIRSTcollateral or on the Aunt Flow site (see below for more information). If you are not sure of the locations for the products, leave that part of the signage blank and fill it in when you arrive
- ❑ Include contact information for your team to be alerted if refills are needed
- ❑ Place your flyers and products and have a plan for monitoring for refill needs

Purchasing Pads and Tampons

The Space Cookies have partnered with **Aunt Flow** to support **m.e. FIRST** ambassador teams. Aunt Flow is committed to promoting Menstrual Equity and is a generous donor of products to those in need. Visit goauntflow.com/aunt-flow-x-m-e-first to order or simply use the QR code below.



The **m.e. FIRST** Aunt Flow discount is available only to *FIRST* teams. You may order bundles of 50 pads or 50 tampons.

The size of the event should be used to estimate the number of bundles needed.

Up to 35 teams - One bundle of pads + one bundle of tampons

More than 35 teams - Two bundles of pads + two bundles of tampons

For very large events (50+ teams), consider purchasing an extra bundle of pads

If your team is serving as a **m.e. FIRST** Ambassador at more than one event, please purchase accordingly. Any leftover product can be donated to an organization serving women, saved for a future event, or used by team members.

Other Items to Bring

Students from other teams reach out to us when they need a change of clothing due to period emergencies. These situations can cause serious stress, anxiety, and exclusion. We recommend that ambassador teams keep leggings and underwear in several sizes in their pit to have available to anyone who is in need of clean clothes. These do not need to be expensive/high end items.

Leggings in size S-L-XL

Hipster underwear in sizes S-L-XL

m.e. FIRST Ambassador Swag & Labels

m.e. FIRST Ambassador buttons and stickers



Buttons and stickers are a great way to show your team's engagement with **m.e. FIRST** and to get other teams involved. You can order free buttons and laptop stickers when you complete the ambassador application. To place a reorder, please email 1868@spacecookies.org and note what you need along with a mailing address. We can ship products within the US only.



m.e. FIRST Apparel

Stand out in a crowd with **m.e. FIRST** apparel and accessories! Visit the Space Cookies Store at frc.spacecookies.org/me-first-store to purchase.



Let people know that the products you have placed are theirs to use at no cost and are provided as part of the **m.e. FIRST** initiative. A digital label template is available at <https://tinyurl.com/meFIRSTCollateral>. To edit the template, make a copy of the Google Slide and input your information. You can also design your own label, but make sure all necessary information is included.



Sample Flyer

Below is an example of a flyer to be posted to let competition attendees know that products are available and where they can be accessed. A digital template is available at tinyurl.com/meFIRSTcollateral. To edit the template, make a copy of the Google Slide and input your information.

Aunt Flow-branded signage is available on the [m.e. FIRST](https://m.e.FIRST) page on goauntflow.com.

You are also welcome to design your own flyer, but make sure all necessary information is included.



The flyer features a decorative header with icons of gears, hearts, and tampons, and the text "SUPPORT MENSTRUAL EQUITY". The main text is centered and reads: "Need a pad or tampon? Space Cookies Team 1868 is pleased to provide free menstrual products at the Silicon Valley Regional through the m.e. FIRST initiative. Products are located in the first floor women's restroom or the Space Cookies pit. If this location is out of stock, please stop by the Space Cookies pit to request a product refill. You can also pick up a m.e. FIRST laptop sticker to show your support for Menstrual Equity and learn about becoming a m.e. FIRST ambassador." At the bottom, there is a logo for m.e. FIRST and the website frc.spacecookies.org.

Need a pad or tampon?

Space Cookies Team 1868

Is pleased to provide free menstrual products
at the Silicon Valley Regional
through the **m.e. FIRST** initiative

Products are located in the first floor women's
restroom or the Space Cookies pit

If this location is out of stock, please stop by the
Space Cookies pit to request a product refill. You can
also pick up a **m.e. FIRST** laptop sticker to show your
support for Menstrual Equity and learn about
becoming a **m.e. FIRST** ambassador.

 Additional information is available at
frc.spacecookies.org