

Pencils, Notebooks, and Tampons

Menstruating high school students are forced to balance academics and their own biology in silence.

Lindsey Zamboni-Cutter, Editor in Chief, Social Media Editor

Some students struggle with more than friends, academics, and peer pressure. This struggle is one of biology and silence. These students keep the secret for fear of embarrassment.

“Having to sneak a tampon or pad into my sleeve was terrifying. And I know I’m not the only one who has to deal with that. All my classes took most of the passing period to get to so I don’t have time to go between classes,” senior Alexandra Ardashnikova said.

As of December 12, posters deck the bathroom stalls to advertise the location of period products- the nurse’s office, the copy room in the English hall near the Engineering room, the Health room, and the Library.

The use of Euphemisms such as “Aunt Flo” or “Shark Week” allows people to indirectly talk about the taboo subject of menstruation, which only exacerbates the rampant period stigma. People who menstruate are often taught to stay silent, and the repetitive stigma creates a deep-rooted embarrassment of something natural.

Senior Rileigh Morgan said that periods are “already a highly stigmatized issue many people have to deal with,” and “The majority of those using period products feel the need to hide them when leaving class to go change them.” Although the removal of stigma and embarrassment is ideal, it is also unrealistic.

Handy access to free period products also reduces the economic impact of menstruation. One box of pads or tampons can cost from \$7 to \$10. On average, one box of tampons only lasts half of one cycle, and no one should have to decide between sanitary products and having more food on the table or more money for gas. Although many people at Cheyenne can afford these necessary items, not everyone can, and even for those who can afford it, money can be better spent elsewhere.

Periods often start unexpectedly. Spoon University states that “79% of women over the age of 18 have started their period without access to necessary supplies, and it is more likely that those in middle and high school are going to be lacking access to supplies if their period arrives unexpectedly.”

Senior Malina Ceballas said that, “If [period] supplies are easily accessible, girls don’t have to worry about if they need something or go to the nurse which can save time and prevent accidents.” If a student needed access to period products, they might have had to walk from the English department all the way to the nurse’s office. This walk can cut into education time, and create a greater barrier to understanding class topics. The longer walk is also enough time for the person to start bleeding through their clothes.



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