

# State of the Period 2025

Commissioned by Thinx, Inc. & PERIOD.

## Key Highlights

- **Period stigma has surged since 2023**, and teens are feeling the pressure in various daily environments, from the classroom to after-school activities. Teens of color experience period shame more intensely than others, with Black and Asian\* youth feeling the highest impact in sports and extracurriculars, and over two-thirds of Hispanic students believing that society is reinforcing period shame.
- **Access to free period products in public spaces has improved** over the past two years and serves as vital relief. Affordability continues to be a barrier for a quarter of teens, and 42% of teens even report it's easier to access free WiFi than free period products.
- Period conversations are gaining ground in classrooms, yet remain scarce in other parts of teens' daily lives. Coaches and teachers in sports and after-school programs can play a critical role in normalizing and supporting menstrual health.
- **Teens trust people over AI for period questions.** However, digital devices and AI technology are evolving conversations, with already three in ten teens choosing to ask a private health question to an AI chatbot rather than a trusted adult at school. Moreover, while Moms are teens' go-to source for period answers, Dads fall at the bottom, trailing even behind AI chatbots.

## Methodology

This research was conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of PERIOD from July 21 - August 7, 2025, among 1,014 U.S. teens who menstruate, all between the ages of 13 to 19. Results were weighted for age, region, race/ethnicity, and parents' education, where necessary to align with actual proportions in the population.

It also references findings from the 2023 State of the Period, conducted online by SKDK between September 5 - 10, 2023, among 1,020 U.S. teens who menstruate, all between the ages of 13 to 19.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

\*Caution, small base size (n<50) — use for directional purposes only.

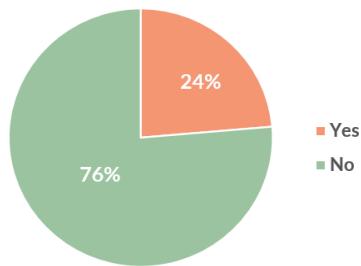
\*\*Lower-income is defined as a household income of less than \$50,000.

## Section 1: Period Access & Affordability

In 2025, period poverty remains a disruption in daily life, but especially in the classroom.

Nearly a quarter (24%) of teens in the U.S. continue to struggle with affordability in 2025 (2023: 23%). As inflation and economic uncertainty compound financial challenges within households, it's no wonder that almost four in 10 (39%) teens indicate economic pressure has taken a toll on their ability to purchase period products. With intensified financial strain comes an increased likelihood of menstrual mishaps. 45% of teens admit to wearing a period product longer than recommended due to not having accessible products, while lower-income\*\* (53%) and Hispanic teens (52%) report experiencing this more frequently. Additionally, more teens (64%) this year have reported a "Code Red": a moment in which they've resorted to asking a friend or classmate for a period product due to inadequate access — a six-point increase from 2023. Lower-income students are impacted the most by access issues, with over a third (34%) struggling to afford period products or being unable to purchase them at all. Meanwhile, 45% of Black teens express that overall economic pressure on their family has affected their period product purchasing habits. The data this year makes it clear that more than ever, period products should be provided at no cost to foster menstrual equity.

- 24% of teens have struggled to afford period products (2023: 23%).

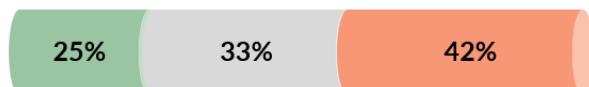


Struggled to afford period products

The price of period poverty is evident, and particularly so in the classroom. A third of teens (33%) report missing at least 15 minutes of class from a lack of access to period products. That's lost learning time and a clear sign that period poverty is actively interfering with education. Four in 10 teens (39%) have also felt unable to do their best on schoolwork due to limited period product accessibility, showcasing that period poverty is not just about the lack of access to products, but a matter of academic equity.

- 42% of teens report having easier access to free WiFi than to free period products weekly.

■ Free period products ■ About equal access to both ■ Free WiFi



In an average week do you have easier access to:

**From free products to emotional care, students desire school support in all aspects of the menstrual cycle.**

Physical symptoms from menstruation are an unspoken cost in and outside of school. Two-thirds of teens have felt unable to perform their best in the classroom (66%) and have missed class time (65%) from symptoms alone. 93% of teens have also endured negative experiences participating in sports or extracurricular activities because of menstrual cycle symptoms. However, over half (53%) continue to participate despite not being at their peak performance. It is evident that beyond affordability, students are grappling with multiple menstrual-related struggles, whether in class or on the court, that carry a physical price.

**However, free products are easier to find than two years ago, bringing teens one step closer to managing menstruation with confidence.**

In 2025, improved accessibility is transforming how teens can obtain the period products they need. In fact, a notable 83% of teens express greater ease in accessing period products when asked to reflect on the past two years (vs. 17% who report access has become “somewhat/much harder”). Free period products in public spaces have further amplified access, particularly when, this year on average, teens report spending \$40 per month on menstrual products in their household. Nearly four in 10 (39%) teens say they rarely or never find period products in school bathrooms today, which is a significant 14-point improvement from 2023 (53%). Teens also express similar improvements in public bathrooms: while 50% still cite trouble finding free products, this is a considerable 14-point drop from 2023 (64%). Desire for free products in schools and public spaces remains steadfast, as teens continue to see them as vital access points for period relief.

## Section 2: The Stigma Around Periods is Rising

**Silent suffering defines the teen experience in 2025.**

Period stigma is higher since the last State of the Period in 2023. 62% of teens indicate that society teaches people to be ashamed of their periods (2 points up from 2023). Reports of teens feeling personally affected by the negative associations surrounding menstruation have especially risen this year (59%, 14 points up from 2023). Shame-induced behavior persists, with 77% of teens hiding period products when walking out of class to the bathroom; a practice more frequently reported by Black (83%) and lower-income (82%) students. Undoubtedly,

silent suffering remains an ongoing invisible challenge, as evidenced by three-quarters (73%) of teens who admit they've felt pressure to 'tough it out' and not complain when experiencing period pain. Learned shame weighs heavily on Hispanic teens in particular, with over two-thirds (67%) saying that society teaches people to be ashamed of their periods (vs. 63% White, 51% Black).



**Nearly six in 10 (59%) of teens have felt personally affected by the negative association surrounding periods**

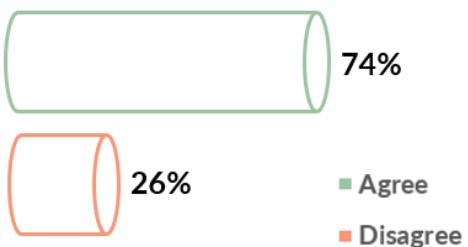
**Teachers and coaches play a pivotal role in relieving performance pressure and deconstructing period stigma.**

Teens are self-conditioning from an early age to dismiss menstrual pain, yet adult support in everyday spaces falls short. Roughly a third of teens express discomfort asking for accommodations during their period in public spaces (34%), school (32%), or at a job (32%). This learned suffering also permeates into sports and extracurricular activities, with 37% of teens feeling pressure to participate despite not feeling well. Meanwhile, teens experience the most trouble asking for accommodations during fitness activities, with nearly four in 10 (37%) expressing discomfort doing so. For teens of color, asking for accommodations can be especially difficult. 39% of Hispanic teens struggle to ask at school (7 points higher than average), while 43% of Black teens struggle during sports or fitness activities (6 points higher than average).

A lack of adult support further intensifies performance pressure, as roughly one in five teens feel unsupported by their coaches/instructors (19%) or experience teasing/judgment (18%) from being on

their period. In particular, over half (55%) of Black students admit to avoiding certain movements or activities due to menstrual symptoms. Coaches and teachers must proactively provide period support as they can be crucial lifelines when teens are often left feeling unseen in the moments that matter most.

- 74% of teens admit, “I’ve downplayed how I feel during my period so I wouldn’t seem dramatic.”

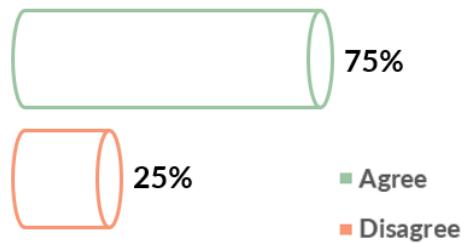


I've downplayed how I feel during my period so I wouldn't seem dramatic

### Early menstrual education empowers teens and challenges societal taboos.

On average, teens report first learning about the menstrual cycle a year before their first period. Early education makes a noticeable difference, as 69% of teens feel well-informed about what was happening when experiencing their first period, despite the uptick in negative stigma. Moreover, fewer than half of teens (48%) describe their first period as “scary” (18 points lower since 2023), and just a quarter (26%) of teens find it “gross” (29 points lower since 2023). The divide between stigma and personal perception highlights the power of early education in normalizing menstruation and disrupting learned shame.

- 75% of teens agree, “There is a negative association with periods that they are gross or unsanitary” (2023: 75%).



There is a negative association with periods that they are gross or unsanitary

Teens also continue to pursue menstrual education as they mature, with 86% saying they’ve learned about different period products such as tampons, cups, and underwear as they’ve grown older. After several periods, about a third of teens describe their period as “natural” (34%) and “healthy” (30%), but also “upsetting” (31%). This emotional split reflects the modern-day tension teens experience as they navigate outdated taboos with the emerging wave of period empowerment.

### Section 3: The Need for Open Communication

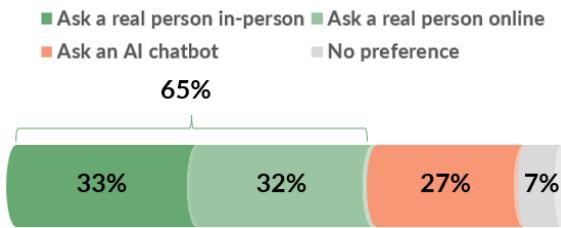
**Period talks are safe at home, rising in school, yet absent in after-school activities.**

Home remains the safest place to have period talks, with most teens openly discussing periods in the comfort of their own space (72%). In school, period conversations are catching up: 60% of teens now say they have period discussions at school, with just 37% of teens saying they do not, reflecting an incredible 22-point improvement since 2023 (59%). Moreover, roughly three in four teens this year (74%) agree that they are more comfortable talking about their period than their parents’ generation (2023: 72%).

However, discussion is limited in other daily environments and could be improved. Over half of teens note that conversations are still missing from extracurricular sports/clubs (56%) and after-school programs (55%), reinforcing the performative normalcy teens often admit doing in these spaces.

### **Even in a world full of digital resources, teens turn to people first for period questions.**

Trust that is fostered by human connection is far from being replaced by digital sources. Teens place equal trust in school health teachers/nurses and their friends for information about menstruation (85%), emphasizing the dual importance of education in both the classroom and everyday conversations. On the other hand, online resources reveal a clear trust gap, where teens rate health websites as considerably more reliable (85%) than social media content creators (71%) and AI chatbots (64%).



Approximately two-thirds (65%) of teens would prefer to ask a real person (online or in-person) about periods anonymously

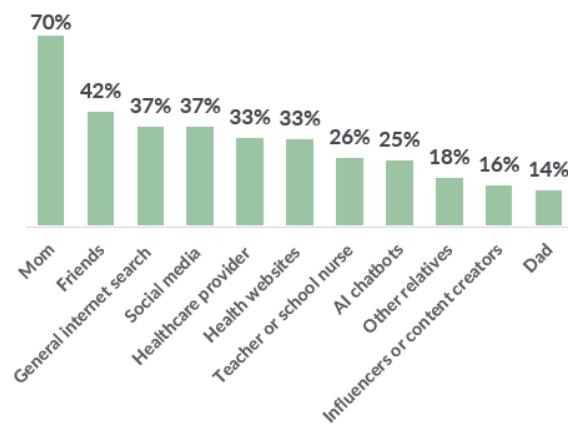
### **Health providers and schools are recognized resources, but are rarely reached out to.**

Teens trust healthcare providers (92%) more than parents/family (89%) for menstrual health information, but do not consider experts a top-of-mind source for period questions. Just a third of teens (33%) turn to healthcare professionals for answers. In a world shaped by digital devices and AI, convenience and approachability could be driving this shift, with a notable three in 10 teens preferring

to ask an AI chatbot rather than a trusted adult at school about a private health concern.

### **Moms are first for period answers, Dads are last.**

In 2025, 98% of teens actively look for answers when they have a menstrual question. Moms are overwhelmingly teens' first source to turn to (70%), followed by friends (42%), and tied between internet searches (37%) and social media (37%). In stark contrast, Dads (14%) are a last resort, coming after all other sources, including influencers/content creators (16%), other relatives (18%), and even AI chatbots (25%). This 11-point gap between AI chatbots and Dads underscores how period stigma contributes to teens' struggles in bringing period conversations with male household figures.



If you have a question about your menstrual cycle, where do you typically turn to for answers?

### **Teens learn more about menstrual health online than in the classroom.**

Four in ten (43%) teens indicate learning more about their period from social media than in school, with rates even higher among Black (51%) and lower-income (48%) teens. Deeper analysis shows nearly seven in 10 teens (69%) are learning new information from TikTok, 64% from YouTube videos, and over half (54%) from Instagram posts. Despite AI chatbots ranking below most social platforms for

learning, this year's data reveals a striking reality where teens feel more confident using AI than using a tampon.

- Nearly four in 10 teens (37%) report feeling more confident using an AI chatbot than a tampon.

■ A tampon ■ About equally confident in both ■ An AI chatbot



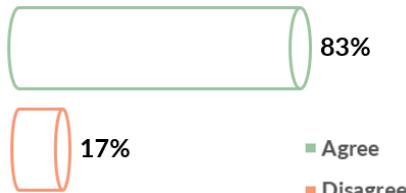
Which of the following are you MORE confident using?

## Section 4: Advocacy & Institutional Support

### The menstrual equity marathon continues.

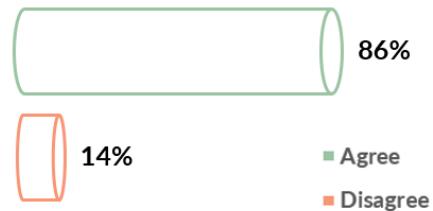
The push for menstrual equity remains steadfast in this year's findings. 86% of teens agree, "if there is free toilet paper in bathrooms, there should be free menstrual products" (2023: 89%). While 83% of teens believe period conversations are becoming more normalized in society, the same proportion express that the lack of access to period products is not talked about enough.

- 83% of teens agree, "Lack of access to period products is not talked about enough" (2023: 82%).



Lack of access to period products is a not talked about enough

- 86% of teens agree, "Lack of access to period products is a critical issue people face" (2023: 89%).

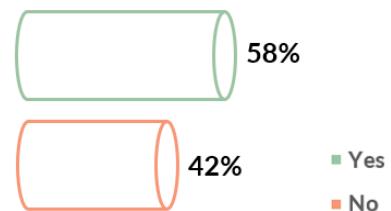


Lack of access to period products is a critical issue people face

### Brands that empower teens are top-of-mind.

Teens remember when brands step up during times of menstrual need. When asked which brands help them feel empowered about menstrual health, Always, Tampax, and Cora are mentioned most often, with Thinx and Kotex tied for fourth, and Stayfree rounding out the top five. Freely accessible period products in public spaces make a measurable and memorable difference, with teens reporting feeling more comfortable during their period (63%), seen and respected (62%), and reassured that the institution cares about them (55%). Hispanic teens express marked improvements, with nearly seven in 10 (69%) indicating feeling more comfortable and 48% feeling more connected to that space.

- Nearly six in 10 teens (58%) recall a moment when a brand, school, or public space "showed up for their menstrual health."



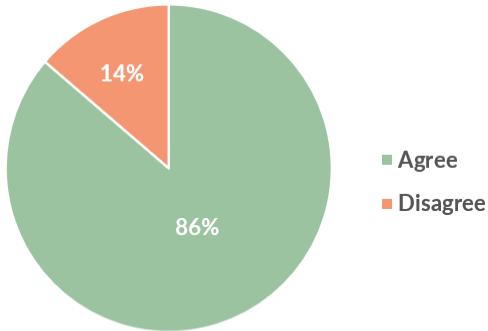
A moment when a brand, school, or public space "showed up"

## School support remains a work-in-progress.

Period support in the classroom shows large potential to improve, as just 30% of teens claim their school actively supports students during their period. In comparison, over half of teens (51%) believe their school could do more than just basic support, and nearly a fifth (19%) report feeling ignored or say their school makes periods feel shameful or taboo.

advocacy from influential figures is key to making menstrual equity an actionable priority.

- 86% agree, “Public schools should provide free period products for their students” (2023: 89%).



**Public schools should provide free period products for their students**

## Teens are ready to break period taboos, even if it means doing so on their own.

In the fight for broader awareness, teens are taking period advocacy into their own hands to break the red stigma. A resounding 82% of teens want to see more advocacy around menstrual health in 2025. This sentiment is echoed by individual efforts, where despite less than two-thirds (62%) reporting feeling in control of their own period, an overwhelming 81% of teens say they've helped someone feel more comfortable talking about their period. As conversations around menstruation grow and continue to be normalized, increasing vocal