

# *Troop 570 Beginners Camping Guide: The Pink Folder*

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## ***Hello Ladies and Welcome to Camping!***

You may be new to Camping or just need some better tips for taking care of hygiene in the Backcountry. If you are an outdoors kind of girl, we could all use new and helpful tips to taking care of business outside. It's also good to know where and when to use certain products like toilet-paper, and when and what products you need to pack out with you...and how! Hopefully this simple guide can give you a start on learning more about how to keep yourself clean and comfortable in the woods, AND protect our precious natural landscapes we all share.

In this appendix to the Beginner's Camping Guide we will discuss...

- General hygiene tips for camping and backpacking
- Feminine Hygiene while camping and in the backcountry
- Toiletry Tips

### **General Hygiene while camping:**

Know where you are going! Before you start packing for your trip make sure you know exactly where you will be staying and for how long. Also, check your menstruation Calendar or app to see if you need to plan for feminine hygiene products. If you are close to your "start date," it's always wise to pack some just in case. (And just in case for your sister campers!:) )

Most State run Campgrounds have a place with running water and flushing toilets. In this case, feel free to bring a comfortable hygiene case with you with all of the amenities you normally have at home. You can bring everything down to your hairdryer.

### **Some etiquette for State Campgrounds:**

- Dispose of all feminine hygiene products by wrapping them in toilet tissue or the packaging they come in, and dispose of them in the garbage bins.
- **Never flush tampons or pads or put them in pit toilets.** They can easily clog toilets and rangers are not always readily available to fix them....then we all have to deal with a very unpleasant flood. Not our favorite! Rangers also have to deal with the unpleasant job of removing your tampons or pads from pit toilets, as they are either composting or removed. Please don't think to yourself: "It's just one...what can it harm?" or "I know I shouldn't, I just don't want to deal with it right now." When several people do that, it causes an ENORMOUS problem. Do your part, and Leave No Trace.
- Use sinks quickly and don't "spread out" cosmetics and toiletries in the sparse shelving in front of them.
- Bring a **water-resistant bag for all your things, flip flops for shower, toiletries and towel**, and leave your items in the bag while you work through your nightly routine. Do without the mirror. Most ladies at the campground are cool with taking turns to the sinks for toothbrushing. \*attach a wide hook to toiletry bag; hang on stall wall by the sink for times when there's no shelf space
- Keep your shower to a minimum. Just the important bits, and dry off/change as fast as possible--there is usually a line!
- Pro tip: Not many people are in line in the evenings. An evening shower can mean a shorter line.

### **Backcountry Feminine Hygiene:**

#### **Toiletry Tips:**

- Have a Toiletry Bag for "Camping" and for the "Backcountry"
- Bring a quick dry towel with a loop on the end for hanging to dry
- Bring a safety pin or carabiner to use for hanging undies up to dry in your tent
- Always choose "unscented" items when camping or backpacking
- A lightweight mesh bag for your backcountry toiletries will help keep everything you need organized and small containers from falling all over your pack.
- Keep toiletries to a minimum. Just bring enough of what you absolutely need. Many backpackers will squeeze what toothpaste they will need for their trip into a plastic baggie and dip their toothbrush in it, instead of bringing a whole travel tube which has about a weeks worth in it. (Remember ounces make pounds) Find a lightweight hairbrush or comb instead of bringing your large one from your bathroom counter.

Dr. Bronner's soap doubles as shampoo if you absolutely must wash your hair. Separate soap/lotions/etc. From larger containers into smaller containers which have just enough of what you need. This will lighten your pack!

- A second bag for your toilet and feminine hygiene products is also helpful. If you know you will be menstruating on the trail, prepare your items and consolidate them into small plastic baggies to reduce waste. Unwrap tampons and pads, which will minimize how much garbage you have to pack out, and manage.\*restock your feminine hygiene kit as soon as you get home
- For used tampons and pads, line a quart size plastic bag with aluminum foil to keep the contents discreet. All of your feminine hygiene items (**unused and used**) must go in the bear bag or container in the evening. Keeping your items in your toilet bag and baged in your ziptight bag makes it easier to keep your items separate and un-noticeable to others. Add dry tea bags to this bag to help mask odor.

#### Packing List for Toilet Bag:

- Quart plastic bag containing: Unwrapped tampons and pads (pack a few extra as you will be moving hiking with a pack which may increase your flow)
- 2 aluminum foil lined quart size ziptight plastic bag for used tampons and pads
- Small container of hand sanitizer
- Small roll of toilet paper
- Trowel for catholes
- Several feminine wipes in a ziptight bag
- 2-3 teabags
- Pack one extra pair of undies than you think you need

#### **Feminine products for Camping:**

##### For hair care:

- Dr. Bronner's soap
- Camp suds (available at most sporting good stores)  
***All soaps should be biodegradable and used 200 feet away from a stream***
- Some women choose to skip hair washing when on the trail, especially if you are going for a short trip. In that case, many put their hair in a tight braid and cover it with a scarf or bandanna. Other serious women backpackers opt for a short cut for low maintenance.

## Female Devices for the Trail:

**Female Urination Devices or FUDs:** Female urination devices allow you to stand while urinating which eliminates the worry of being seen or surprised by other hikers. \*Practice at home fully clothed BEFORE trying to use this item on the trail :)

**The “Pee Rag”:** The pee-rag is a simple but essential piece of women’s backpacking gear. Its lightweight, effective, cost efficient and ecological. The “pee rag” is simply a cotton cloth bandana used for wiping after urination. Tied to the back of your pack, it will dry air dry in the sunshine, and does not generally smell until after a few days of use (which is why we keep it on the outside of the pack) Rinse your pee rag in water 200 feet away from water sources after a few days of use. When you get home make sure to place it in the laundry.

**Why a pee rag:** “Drip drying” can cause unpleasant odors, wetness and chafing in your underwear after a few days on the trail. You also risk urinary tract infections. Wiping with toilet paper causes “toilet paper flowers” in the wilderness unless you pack it out. Packing out used toilet paper requires you to bring more plastic bags to pack the used paper in. [HERE https://thetrek.co/pee-rag/](https://thetrek.co/pee-rag/) is an informative article written by an avid female backpacker.

## **Menstrual Products:**

A Myth around women in the backcountry is that wild animals will chase you if you are menstruating. Animals do not notice you are menstruating and you are at no greater risk for animal curiosity or aggression. These encounters are relatively rare and involve food--mainly the improper storage of it.

There are many options for you to take care of your menstrual cycle when backpacking. Remember: [LEAVE NO TRACE](https://www.leave-notrace.org/) Int.org. **All menstrual products need to be packed out.**

## **Here are some options for menstrual products:**

- Menstrual Cups like the “Diva Cup” which is a favorite of many women backpackers. There are several options, and if you want to give this option a try, you should thoroughly research the different products on the market before purchasing. Using a menstrual cup takes practice. Many women backpackers prefer this to other options. Leave No Trace suggests digging a cathole for disposal of menstrual blood from emptying your cup. You will

need to bring hand sanitizer and soap and water with you when emptying the cup, in order to wash your hands **before and after** removing and inserting your cup.

- Tampons/Pads are still an option in the wilderness. Women backpackers often choose the O.B. Tampon which has no applicator with it. Women often choose this option because there is less waste with the no applicator design. Again, you must bring soap and water/hand-sanitizer with you when changing your tampon to wash your hands **before and after**. Un-wrapping pads and tampons and storing them in a plastic zip-tight bag resolves your plastic wrap waste issues.
- Sanitary wipes: There are a variety of products on the market today to help keep women clean on the trail. Sea to Summit offers a Full Body disposable washcloth called “Wilderness Wipes.” There are also a variety of “feminine wipes” available at most pharmacy and grocery stores which can be useful for keeping yourself clean and fresh. Keep in mind that all of these items need to be stored in a ziptight “waste bag” and stored in the bear canister to keep animals away from them. When you are packing it is wise to decide how many you will use per-day, count them out, and label your plastic baggie with a sharpie marker. Keep in mind that ounces make pounds and you must justify the importance of hygiene products when weighing your pack.

## Take Away:

Thank you so much for picking up [The Pink Folder](#)!

We hope your take away from this information is that your cycle should never keep you from enjoying the great outdoors or saying “YES” to that awesome camping or backpacking trip! There are many ways to keep yourself clean, dry, comfortable and discreet. These are just a few! Check out Backpacking blogs, youtube videos, articles and more from other lady backpackers to keep yourself informed!

We also hope that you have taken away with you the best practices for Leave No Trace, and that you have learned ways to pack out all of your toilet items, and reduce how many you may have to bring in with you in the first place!

HAPPY TRAILS! :)