



# The Menstrual Practice Needs Scale (MPNS)

## ANNOTATED SURVEY

Annotations on the survey provide more information on each MPNS item, along with example responses highlighting reasons participants may give different responses.

These notes are for training purposes, and to understand more about the items. They should not be included in the survey used with participants.

For training on the MPNS-SF or MPNS-R simply select the relevant items for these scales. Contact us if you need a word version of the annotated survey for editing.

This resource is provided freely to support your training. Please see our [website](#) and [User Guide](#) (Link) for more information about the MPNS.



MPNS item	Notes
<p><b>MPNS-1</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were your menstrual materials comfortable?</p>	<p>A respondent may feel that her materials were not comfortable for many reasons. For example, if they irritate, itch or cause rashes, if materials feel bulky, full, wet or heavy.</p> <p>As with all MPNS questions, it is important to note, that what might be true for one respondent might be different for another.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> One respondent might answer MPNS-1 as <i>sometimes</i> - because she uses pads and cloths, but when she uses cloth it's uncomfortable. While another might answer <i>always</i> - as she finds both pads and cloth comfortable.</p>
<p><b>MPNS-2</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Did you have enough menstrual materials to change them as often as you wanted to?</p>	<p>There are different recommendations for different menstrual products, and how often they should be used for before changing or cleaning/laundrying. Menstrual flow and preferences will impact the frequency women and girls need or want to change their product. Respondents may or may not have enough menstrual materials to suit their preferences for frequency of changing.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent might have access to as much of her menstrual materials as she needs (eg: her mother keeps a reliable supply of pads in the house and she can easily take as many as she needs). Another respondent might only have a small number of pads available and so conserve them over her period by not changing them as often as she would have liked to.</p>
<p><b>MPNS-3</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you satisfied with the cleanliness of your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>Satisfaction with cleanliness will mean different things to different people. For respondents using reusable materials like cloth or reusable pads, answers may reflect how well they feel they are able to clean their materials. For others, cleanliness could be about how frequently they are able to change their menstrual materials.</p> <p>A respondent may answer <i>always</i> - as she uses pads and perceives them as clean and can change them whenever she feels they are unclean. While another respondent may answer <i>more than half the time</i>- as she can't always clean her cloths when at school. Another might answer <i>less than half the time</i> - as she did not have enough soap during her last period to wash her reusable pads.</p>
<p><b>MPNS-4</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Could you get more of your menstrual materials <u>when you needed to</u>?</p>	<p>MPNS-4 captures the accessibility of menstrual materials. This can include many ways of accessing, from retrieving materials or asking someone for them, to purchasing more.</p> <p>A respondent may answer <i>sometimes</i> because she ran out of pads during her last period and needed to ask her father to purchase more. In other cases, pads might not be available at the store when a respondent needs them.</p>
<p><b>MPNS- 5</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried that your menstrual materials would allow blood to pass through to your outer garments?</p>	<p>Many women and girls experience concerns about leaking and exposing menstrual blood. This question captures how often they were worried about this.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>sometimes</i> - as she is worried on days of heavy menstrual flow. Another may answer <i>often</i> because she worries whenever she uses cloth, which is most of the time for her. Another respondent may answer <i>always</i> - that no matter the day, she is always tense about it. A respondent may answer <i>never</i> as she is confident in her menstrual material and has never experienced a leak, or because she wears dark clothes so knows that it wouldn't be possible for someone else to see a leak.</p>

MPNS item	Note
<p>MPNS-6</p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried that your menstrual materials would move from place while you were wearing them?</p>	<p>There are lots of ways that a menstrual material may move out of place and cause worries.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may be worried that her materials may fall out when she moves or stands up. Another may be concerned that her materials will slide backwards or forwards from their place and be visible to others. Some respondents may feel confident that materials will stay in place, due to experience with the product, or having never experienced them moving. Others may be new to menstruating, using a new menstrual material or have had a bad experience where the material has moved.</p>
<p>MPNS-7</p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried about how you would get more of your menstrual material <u>if</u> you ran out? (eg., if you needed to purchase materials, retrieve materials from home, or ask someone for materials)</p>	<p>Women and girls may feel worried about how they will get more materials, even if they have not run out. This could be for many different reasons.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> The cost, a long distance to the shops, knowing there is limited supply available at the store, or even fear of asking parents for products. A respondent may also be worried if she gets her materials from an NGO or from school/work, and doesn't know if access will be consistent.</p>
<p>MPNS-8</p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Did you feel comfortable carrying spare menstrual materials with you outside of your home?</p>	<p>Some women or girls might feel shy or worried about carrying menstrual materials in their bag or pockets. Others may find that it is a hassle, while others may have no problem with carrying spare materials.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>more than half the time</i> - as she has a special pocket in her bag no one opens, but sometimes is worried that someone may find out. Another respondent may answer <i>less than half the time</i> - as she visits relatives many days of the week and worries that someone will find the menstrual materials in her bag.</p>
<p>MPNS-9</p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Did you feel comfortable carrying menstrual materials to the place where you changed them?</p>	<p>Some women and girls may feel uncomfortable carrying a menstrual materials from the place that it is stored (such as their bedroom, or their schoolbag) to places where they change them, such as the household or school/work sanitation facility. They may hide their menstrual material in their sleeves or scarves when going to change.</p>
<p>MPNS-10</p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Did you feel comfortable storing [keeping] your leftover or cleaned menstrual materials until your next period?</p>	<p>Women and girls have different experiences of storing their menstrual products. Some may have their own room and storage spaces, while some may share with others. Some women and girls may feel uncomfortable storing unused or cleaned menstrual materials in between periods as they are worried someone may see them.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>always</i> - as the menstrual supplies in her house are communal (shared) and stored in a safe location or <i>sometimes</i> - as she stores her unused pads at home, but keeps them hidden.</p>

MPNS item	Note	
MPNS-11	<p>During your most recent menstrual period... Were you able to wash your hands when you wanted to?</p>	<p>Being able to wash hands before or after handling menstruation or menstrual materials can be important for enacting hygiene practices, cleaning blood from hands, and for religious reasons. This question is specific to washing hands <i>during</i> menstruation. Women and girls may want to wash their hands privately when related to managing menstruation.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>less than half the time</i> as the school/work handwashing location is visible to others. Another may answer <i>always</i> as she doesn't feel the need to wash her hands before or after changing her menstrual materials at school/work, and has accessible water for washing hands at home.</p>
MPNS-12	<p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you able to immediately dispose of your used menstrual materials?</p>	<p>This question is relevant to those respondents who dispose of their menstrual materials. In qualitative research women and girls often highlight that they want to dispose of menstrual materials immediately to avoid them being seen, the inconvenience of carrying them, or finding an adequate disposal site.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>more than half the time</i> - as she throws her used materials immediately into the pit latrine. Another may answer <i>always</i> - as her home and her school/work sanitation facility has a bin, with a lid, that she places her used materials into. Another respondent may answer <i>always</i> - as her household has a specific bag to put the used materials, that her mother takes to the tip at the end of the cycle.</p>
MPNS-13	<p>During your most recent menstrual period... Were you able to dispose of your used materials in the <u>way that you wanted to</u>?</p>	<p>This question is relevant to those respondents who dispose of their menstrual materials. Women and girls may have different preferences for menstrual material disposal - some may prefer to place their used materials in a closed bin (but be dissatisfied if the bin is full or has no lid), to dispose of materials at home, or wash materials prior to disposal. Individual preferences may not align with what is seen as appropriate</p> <p><b>For example:</b> a respondent may be very satisfied disposing of her used pads into a pit latrine, but this causes problems for the school/workplace when having latrines emptied. Another may not want to dig a hold and bury her used menstrual materials, but worries that if she uses a bin others will see or animals will access her menstrual waste. The MPNS focuses on the experience of the respondent only.</p> <p>Girls may have to dispose of their menstrual materials in a way they do not wish to, or choose to delay changing or disposing their menstrual materials until they can dispose of them in their preferred way.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>never</i> - as she stores her used pads altogether (with her sisters/mothers) and throws them away when menstruation ends, when she would prefer to dispose of them immediately.</p>
MPNS-14	<p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried about where to dispose of your used menstrual materials?</p>	<p><b>This question is relevant to those respondents who dispose of their menstrual materials.</b></p> <p>Some women and girls may feel worried that there will not be suitable disposal facilities, such as a bin with a secure lid, available when needed.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent might answer <i>sometimes</i> - as she had visitors to their home, and didn't feel comfortable throwing her used materials in the bin. Another respondent might answer <i>most of the time</i> - as whenever she is outside of her home, she is concerned about where to dispose.</p>

**MPNS item****Note**

MPNS- home: The next questions will ask about menstrual experiences at home.

**MPNS- 15**

During your most recent menstrual period...  
Were you concerned that others would see your used menstrual materials in the place you disposed of them?

**This question is relevant to those respondents who dispose of their menstrual materials.**

- This refers to **after** women and girls have disposed of the material and **left** the place they disposed of it. If a respondent disposes of a used pad in a bin without a lid, she might be concerned that the next girl using the toilet will see it. Or she might be worried that her father would see her pad if she disposed of it with the other household waste.

**For example:** A respondent may answer this question as *never* - as her used menstrual pads are wrapped in paper or plastic, so that no one can see. Another girl may answer *always* - as she disposes at a waste site near her house, where neighbours can see the materials.

**MPNS-16**

When at home during your most recent period...  
Were you able to change your menstrual materials when you wanted to?

‘When you wanted to’ means the respondent was able to change their menstrual materials at the time they preferred to. Women and girls may not be able to change when they want to if they have inconsistent access to a location that meets their needs, or are waiting for others to be out of the house before they change.

**For example:** A respondent may answer *sometimes* - because she are worried that her male family members might bother her. So, when the male members are near she delays changing. Another may respond *always* - as she changes in her bedroom. She shares this room with her sister, but feels happy to do so whether or not her sister is around.

**MPNS-17**

When at home during your most recent period...  
Were you satisfied with the place you used to change your menstrual materials?

This question is asking about **general satisfaction**. Overall, is the respondent happy with the place where they can change materials. Each individual will have different standards for what is acceptable to them. Considerations for satisfaction may include the cleanliness of the space, privacy, safety, access to water, light, and bin for menstrual waste. For some women and girls, it could include other considerations such as a hook for holding a bag or mirror to check for leaks.

**Sensitive question!** It is important to keep in mind for this question, that respondents will be commenting on their *own home*. A respondent may want to answer that she is *never, or sometimes* satisfied as the space she uses to change is dirty, or feels unsafe. However, this may be a sensitive thing for a respondent to admit about her own home. Take care when delivering this question, and help to normalise answering truthfully about her home by relating it to your own experience.

**MPNS-18**

When at home during your most recent menstrual period...  
Did you have a clean place to change your menstrual materials?

Women and girls may or may not have access to a clean space or clean washroom to change their materials as:

- The space may be shared by multiple people
- there may be no water or cleaning materials at home to ensure washrooms are maintained

**Sensitive question!** As above, respondents may feel embarrassed and disrespectful to answer negativity about their own home.

MPNS item	Note
<p><b>MPNS-19</b></p> <p>When at home during your most recent menstrual period... Were you worried that you would not be able to change your menstrual materials <u>when</u> you needed to?</p>	<p>Women and girls may be worried that they will not be able to change their menstrual materials when they are full or when they require changing. Spaces they use to change their menstrual materials at home may be shared and sometimes occupied, or in an open location where male family members, or other community members such as neighbours or strangers may be present. Changing menstrual materials when needed may also involve retrieving clean menstrual materials to be able to change. In some contexts, women and girls prefer to wash each time they change their menstrual materials, so their answer may be influenced by the accessibility of water for changing. The MPNS-19 captures the individuals' experience of their worry, or what they need, which may be different to other respondents.</p>
<p><b>MPNS-20</b></p> <p>When at home during your most recent period... Were you worried that someone would see you while you were changing your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>This question captures if a respondent had a private space to change her menstrual materials. This space may be a sanitation facility/toilet, a bedroom, or another room or space at home. Or she may not have access to a space and need to change her materials outside. Privacy is judged by the respondent, and assessed by asking if she is worried that someone will see her. If this <i>worries</i> the respondent is important.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> It may be that someone can see her changing their materials (such as a husband, or a sister) but that this does not worry her and feels sufficiently private. This respondent would answer - <i>never</i>. For another respondent, gaps in doors, or the absence of a lock may mean she worries about being seen. This respondent may answer - <i>most of the time</i>.</p> <p><b>A respondent does not have to be seen, to be worried that she might be seen.</b></p>
<p><b>MPNS-21</b></p> <p>When at home during your most recent period... Were you worried that someone would harm you while you were changing your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>Women and girls may need to use a space that is shared, communal or outside of the house to change their materials. It is possible that some respondents may fear assault, either physical or verbal and they feel frightened. <b>This does not have to happen for a respondent to have experienced worry that it might.</b></p>
<p><b>MPNS-22</b></p> <p>When at home during your most recent period... Were you worried that something else would harm you while you were changing your menstrual materials (e.g., animals, insects, unsafe structures)</p>	<p>Some changing spaces may not feel safe to some women and girls, they may worry about the safety of the structure, ghosts, animals or insects. <b>This does not have to happen for a respondent to worry that it might.</b></p>

MPNS item	Note
<p><b>MPNS - School/Work/away from home:</b> The following questions relate to participants at school, work or away from home. NOTE: If attended school/work during most recent period then ask about the most recent period, otherwise if attended school/work during menstruation in past 6 months, then ask the respondent to answer for the most recent period she had at school/work.</p>	
<p><b>MPNS- 23</b> When at <b>school/work</b> during your most recent menstrual period, Were you able to change your menstrual materials <u>when you wanted to?</u></p>	<p>This question is asking if a women or girl <u>can</u> change her menstrual materials during the school/work day <u>when she wants to</u>. <b>It applies to every respondent even if they do not change materials at school/work</b>. She may delay changing until returning home (and so cannot change when needed), or have only a light flow or short duration of a school/work day and not need or want to change her materials during the day (this would mean she can always change when she wants to).</p> <p>There are many reasons a woman or girl may not be able to change when she wants to. This could include permission from a teacher or supervisor to use the sanitation facility or a space for changing, the availability or cost of using sanitation facilities, her comfort and willingness to use spaces outside the home to change her materials.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer with - <i>most of the time</i> - as she must ask permission to go to the bathroom and this is not often provided. Another respondent might respond with <i>less than half the time</i> - as she feels shy to ask permission from her male teachers to go to the bathroom and so at times delays changing.</p>
<p><b>MPNS-24</b> When at <b>school/work</b> during your most recent menstrual period, Were you satisfied with the places available at your school/work for changing your menstrual materials? (eg: it had what you needed)</p>	<p>This question asks if a respondent was satisfied with the places available at her school/work for changing. <b>It applies to every respondent even if she <u>does not</u> change at school/work</b>. As for MPNS-17 there are a wide range of considerations that different individuals may make in assessing if they are satisfied with the space.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> a girl may answer <i>never</i> - as she thinks that the toilets are dirty, or there are no bins available. Another girl may answer <i>sometimes</i> - as there is a bin, but often it is full and pads cannot be disposed there.</p>
<p><b>MPNS- 25</b> When at <b>school/work</b> during your most recent menstrual period, Did you have a clean place to change your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>This refers to places in or associated with the school/workplace, that is, it may be a place on site at the school/workplace or a location nearby. Some facilities may be cleaned and maintained regularly, whereas others may become dirty unclean after regular use. A respondent may consider a washroom unclean if there is litter or the garbage bin is full, an odour, dirt or mud, flooding, rodents or other vermin, insects or animals.</p>
<p><b>MPNS-26</b> When at <b>school/work</b> during your most recent menstrual period... Were you worried that you would not be able to change your menstrual materials when you needed to?</p>	<p>This question captures the extent to which the respondent was worried about not being able to change menstrual materials when needed, as their menstrual materials are getting full or uncomfortable. There are many reasons that may cause women or girl to worry about being able to change when needed.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> Some respondents may worry as they thought their materials might leak, or due to discomfort. They could also be concerned that an intermittently available location would close, or they would not receive permission to leave the school lesson or workspace to change. Sometimes a washroom might be unusable or unsafe and a women or girl has to delay changing her menstrual materials, she gets worried that her materials feel wet or worried she will leak because she can't change when she needs to.</p>

MPNS item	Note
<p>MPNS-27</p> <p>When at <b>school/work</b> during your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried that someone would see you while you were changing your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>This question captures if a respondent had a private space to change her menstrual materials at the school/workplace. This space may be a sanitation facility/toilet, another room or space. Privacy is judged by the respondent, and assessed by asking if she is worried that someone will see her. A lack of solid doors, locks, and the accessibility of the space for changing to others may all impact on a respondents' concern that someone would see them.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may report that she worries <i>more than half the time</i> since she can only use the school/work toilet during lunch breaks and there are many other girls around. Another respondent at the same school/workplace may answer that she <i>never</i> worries as the girls toilet is separate from the boys, and she would only be worried if a boy was aware she was changing.</p>
<p>MPNS-28</p> <p>When at <b>school/work</b> during your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried that someone would harm you while you were changing your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>Dependent on the safety features of the school/workplace, the accessibility of the spaces for changing to others, respondents may fear harm when changing materials. This could include assault, either physical or verbal and they feel frightened. <b>This does not have to happen for a respondent to worry that it might.</b></p>
<p><b>Reuse questions: the following questions relate to participants who reuse their menstrual materials.</b></p>	
<p>MPNS- 29</p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Did you have enough water to wash your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>This question captures if the respondent had enough water for laundering their reusable menstrual materials. A respondent may not have sufficient water if her access to water is unreliable, or if collecting and using water for menstrual materials is difficult (for example, because menstrual materials are expected to be washed separately and not with other household laundry, and needs to be done outside the household.</p>
<p>MPNS-30</p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Did you have access to a basin to soak or wash your menstrual materials <u>whenever you needed it</u>?</p>	<p>Washing menstrual materials requires a container, basin or sink for holding water. Women and girls may not always have access to a container, particularly for menstrual-related washing.</p> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may respond with <i>never</i> - as she doesn't have access to these items at all and washes her materials in a stream, while another respondent might answer <i>less than half the time</i>- as the buckets used for laundry are often in use.</p>
<p>MPNS- 31</p> <p>During most recent last menstrual period, Were you able to wash your menstrual materials <u>when</u> you wanted to?</p>	<p>Women and girls who use padding or reusable menstrual materials, such as cloth, may prefer to wash their materials at a certain time. This may be to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• materials are dry and available for use, or</li> <li>• that washing can be done privately.</li> </ul> <p><b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>sometimes</i> - as she has to wait for a time when her brothers and father are not home. Another may answer <i>most of the time</i> - as sometimes her menstrual cramps are bad and they cannot perform chores, such as laundering.</p>



MPNS item	Note
<p><b>MPNS-32</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Did you have enough soap (detergent, laundry powder, detol) to wash your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>This question captures whether the respondent had enough of the soap/laundry powder/detergent (or any cleaning agent that is considered acceptable in the context) for cleaning her menstrual materials. Having inadequate soap may be due to difficulties for the household in affording soap, or difficulty accessing it for use for menstrual-related washing.</p>
<p><b>MPNS- 33</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you able to dry your materials when you wanted to?</p>	<p>Women and girls who use and padding or reusable menstrual materials, such as cloth, may prefer to dry their materials at a certain time to ensure they dry sufficiently, are private, or are ready to be used on time.</p>
<p><b>MPNS-34</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried that someone would see you while you were washing your menstrual materials?</p>	<p>Different women and girls have different home environments. For some, being seen washing menstrual materials could be embarrassing or shameful.  <b>For example:</b> A respondent might answer - <i>always</i> as she lives in a household with many brothers and no sisters and is more worried about her materials being seen. For another respondent, she does her laundry together with her female relatives and there is no issue, even if her mother sees her washing, she may not be ‘worried’ about that, so she answers - <i>never</i>.</p>
<p><b>MPNS- 35</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried that your menstrual materials would not be dry when you needed them?</p>	<p>Women and girls may worry that menstrual materials won’t dry by the time they need them, and they may not have enough materials for use. They may prefer, or are required to dry items inside, or under other items of laundry, impacting the time it takes for materials to dry. This may be due to privacy concerns or embarrassment, a lack of space or, wet or windy weather. This may also change seasonally for contexts that experience intensive wet seasons.  <b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>sometimes</i> - as drying her cloths in the rainy season is difficult, or <i>most of the time</i> - as she usually uses pads, but when she uses cloth she hides this to dry under her bed and it is not dry when she needs it again. Other girls may answer <i>always</i> - as they can always have access to a fan and their materials dry quickly in front of this.</p>
<p><b>MPNS - 36</b></p> <p>During your most recent menstrual period, Were you worried that others would see your menstrual materials while they were drying?</p>	<p>Women and girls may or may not be worried if others see there menstrual materials drying, and this could be impacted by individual home environments, and who they share a living space with. <b>This does not have to happen for a women or girl to worry that it might.</b>  <b>For example:</b> A respondent may answer <i>always</i> - as she has brothers and would feel embarrassed if they saw. Another respondent might live with only women, and still answer <i>always</i>. Other respondents might respond <i>never</i> - as they do laundry together with the women in their family and there is no issue for menstrual materials to be seen.</p>