

Your Hygiene – Your Health! Female Hygiene – Part I

Basic hygiene and hygienic behaviour are the cornerstone of health prevention for a large list of 'everyday' diseases and could considerably cut the need for healthcare intervention in most developing countries. Proper basic hygienic behaviour cannot only prevent a simple illness such as a cold, or the more severe influenza (including the H1N1 swine flu), it can also prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, several forms of (sometimes fatal) liver infections (hepatitis A, B,C,D and E), HIV/AIDS, and other viral diseases.

In particular, the subject of female hygiene, including the proper observation and hygienic behaviour during a woman's menstrual period ('menstrual hygiene'), adequate cleaning of the genital area following sexual intercourse, and appropriate usage of contraceptive devices, can prevent a large number of the average gynecological visits at local healthcare facilities.

This workshop on Female Hygiene will teach young women on how to lead a healthy hygienic life, including proper pre- and post-sexual hygienic procedures; it will educate them about menstruation and menstrual hygiene, as well as proper behaviour throughout her menstrual cycle and during her menstrual period. Specific emphasis will be put on educating participants on the validity of (pre-)existing prejudicial attitudes and social misinterpretations regarding a woman's natural menstrual cycle and its accompanying pains, problems and performance limitations. And, it will explain and hopefully eliminate existing myths, misconceptions and superstitions, regarding the 'impurity' of a menstruating woman, including the often cultural and sometimes religious taboos of menstrual blood and menstrual hygiene.

MKI's course on menstrual hygiene will be delivered in a new and unique format – by telling relevant 'stories' on stage – in form of a Puppet Show. This format will bridge any potential unease and/or cultural barriers that often exist in talking about this sensitive subject. Thus, the overall goal of our course 'Female Hygiene – Your Hygiene – Your Health' is to teach (young) women and pregnant women potential ways of observing and/or increasing existing hygienic conditions for a healthier life for themselves, their partners and their children:

Female Hygiene – Part I is specifically designed to educate teenage girls hygienic behaviour patterns in regard to their upcoming hormonal changes and first experiences on their path to becoming a 'woman':

1. Menarche – a woman's first menstrual period – what to expect, what to do;
2. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene, as well as proper hygienic behaviour throughout her menstrual cycle and during her menstrual period;
3. Prejudicial attitudes and social misinterpretations regarding a woman's natural menstrual cycle and its accompanying pains, problems and performance limitations;
4. Explaining existing myths, misconceptions and superstitions, regarding the 'impurity' of a menstruating woman, including the often cultural and sometimes religious taboos of menstrual blood and menstrual hygiene;