

CIRCLE CONVERSATIONS

CAUTION - this article is about a topic few people, even women, like to talk about with others. Some might say “menstruation,” “menses,” “on my period,” “that time of the month” or even “Aunt Flo is visiting” and regardless of what you call it, approximately 1.8 billion females worldwide menstruate each month as part of a normal, healthy life. These females are then faced with the choice of products to use and this can be limited to what’s available on the supply shelf or what one can afford. There is already a stigma attached to talking about menstruation and when this is combined with having to tell someone that you can’t afford the supplies needed, it can be even more difficult and uncomfortable for those in need.

Thanks to a grant from Women’s Giving Circle of the Rita J. Bicknell Women’s Health Fund, the Cherokee County Health Department now has a viable option to provide help to menstruating females of all ages. The menstrual cup is not new as it was first patented in the 1930s but thanks to modern technology the design of the silicon cup has improved its functionality and safety.

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Coming Up

- **May:** Coffee and Conversations for Women’s Health Month (see back)
- **July:** *New Circle Conversations*
- **September:** Coffee and Conversations for Breast Cancer Awareness Month + WHF Grant Applications Available
- **October:** Grant Review Meeting
- **November:** Grant Celebration + *New Circle Conversations*



Pixie Cup

These are the cups that Cherokee County Health Department was able to purchase thanks to the grant they received from the Women’s Health Fund!

According to Women's Reproductive Nurse Melody Nelson with the Cherokee County Health Department, she is seeing popularity for the menstrual cup among females in their early teens – 24 years old. Although the product can be used and is used by older women, there is often a little more hesitation to try something new among this group.

Without going into extreme details, the menstrual cup is a silicon disc that is inserted into the cervix and creates a vacuum to catch the menstrual discharge. It can be worn for 10 – 12 hours before contents need to be emptied into the toilet and the cup cleaned before reinserting. Since the cups are reusable, those using no longer have the costs for tampons or pads and this is especially advantageous to women of lower socio-economic groups. There are also health benefits as there are fewer infections from other products or risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome. Teenagers and college women who are very active or play sports experience more freedom in their movements when using the menstrual cups.

Melody shared "The menstrual cup program has the potential to assist numerous girls and women if they will participate. The Cherokee County Health Department is very appreciative of the grant funding for the program and the great opportunity it provides for their patrons." They are interested in partnering with schools in Southeast Kansas and other health care providers to get the menstrual cups into the hands of girls and women who need them.

Frances Mitchelson

Join Us!

The RJB Women's Health Fund May meeting is Wednesday, May 7th at 8:30 am at Toast in Pittsburg.

All members are welcome and encouraged to bring a guest! Angels Among Us will be speaking about their organization.

Please **register** by May 2nd!

[Click Here to Join](#)

(or renew)

or scan with your smartphone:



The Rita J. Bicknell Women's Health Fund is a part of the
Community Foundation of Southeast Kansas

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