

U by Kotex Period Poverty Awareness Week – Survey Results

Objective: Through an online survey of those who regularly experience a period in the U.S., our goal is to understand access to period products across different income levels and the impact that access has on their lives. This data was compared to the results of the 2018 version of this survey in order to note any shifts in behaviors, experiences and perceptions surrounding the issue.

Methodology: The following results are from an online survey conducted by YouGov on behalf of U by Kotex of people ages 18+ who regularly experience a period. The survey was originally conducted in 2018 and repeated in 2021. The margin of error for each study is +/-3%

- 2018 study – 1,024 U.S. Americans 18+ who regularly experience a period, fielded January 10-16, 2018
- 2021 study - 1,036 U.S. Americans 18+ who regularly experience a period, fielded April 22-28, 2021

Headlines:

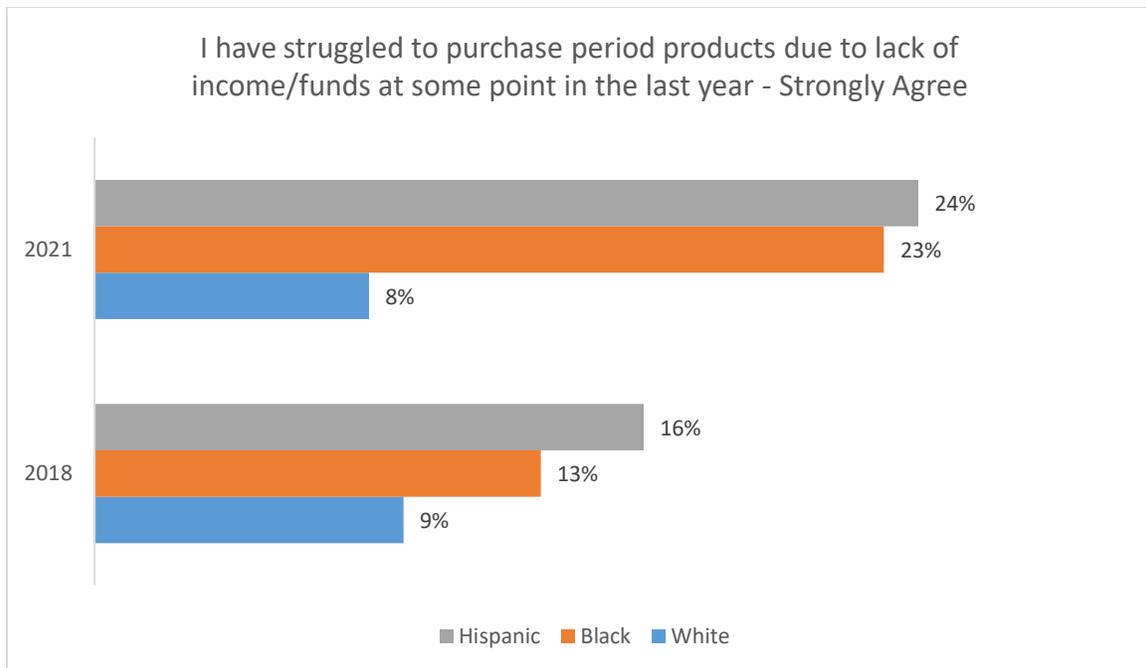
- More than two in five people with periods say they have struggled to purchase period products due to lack of income at some point in their life.
 - Between 2018 and 2021, that number increased by 35%.
- Black and Hispanic people who menstruate are more likely to agree they've struggled to afford period products in the past year (35% and 36%, respectively vs. 23% of White respondents)
- The Covid-19 pandemic was a driver of this increase, with 27% of individuals who menstruate saying it made it difficult for them to afford or access period products.
- Between 2018 and 2021, there was a 75% increase in percent of people who menstruate who say they used a substitute product (toilet paper, paper towels, socks, etc.) for a period product.
- The majority of people who menstruate (68%) recognize that period poverty is a public health issue in the United States.

Key Findings:

The effects of COVID-19 have made it more difficult for lower income and minority women to afford period products when compared to 2018.

- In 2021 four out of ten (42%) respondents say they have at some point in their life struggled to purchase period products due to lack of income, compared to three out of ten (31%) respondents in 2018.
 - This represents a 35% increase.
- A quarter of Black (23%) and Hispanic (24%) people who menstruate strongly agree that they've struggled to afford period products in the past year in 2021 compared to just one in ten (13%) Black respondents and nearly two out of five (16%) Hispanic respondents in 2018.
 - Compared to 8% of white respondents in 2021 and 9% of white respondents in 2018.
- Over a quarter (27%) of respondents claim the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult for them to access period products with two thirds (65%) of those who have struggled stating that it's because they were unable to afford them.
- One-third (38%) of people who menstruate have had to miss events or activities in the last year – such as work, school or an appointment – due to a lack of access to period products.

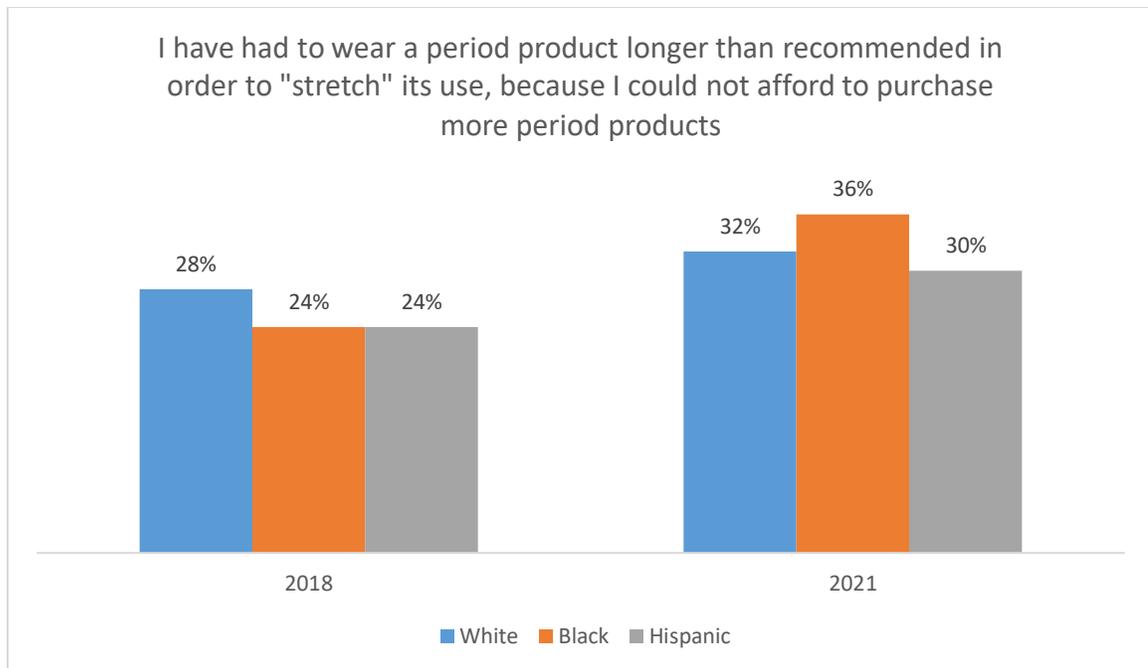
U by Kotex Period Poverty Awareness Week – Survey Results



Lack of access to period supplies led more individuals who menstruate to use substitute products in 2021 than in the past across all income brackets, however Black respondents in particular, saw a major increase in these problem-solving practices.

- In 2021, over one-third (35%) of people who menstruate reported having to use a substitute period product compared to one in five (20%) in 2018, a 75% increase in three years.
 - Notably, more people who menstruate from both lower income and higher income households reported using substitute products in 2021 than in 2018 (38% of those with a HHI under \$30K in 2021 vs. 27% in 2018, 32% of those with a HHI above \$30K in 2021 vs. 17% in 2018).
- Among Black people who menstruate, more respondents reported having to wear a period product for longer than its intended use or having to use a substitute, like paper towels, due to a lack of affordable products in 2021 as compared to 2018.
 - Two in five (36%) Black respondents in 2021 claim they have had to stretch a period product beyond its intended use compared to one in five (24%) in 2018.
 - Two in five (40%) Black respondents claim they've had to use a substitute item as a period product in 2021 compared to one in five (22%) in 2018.

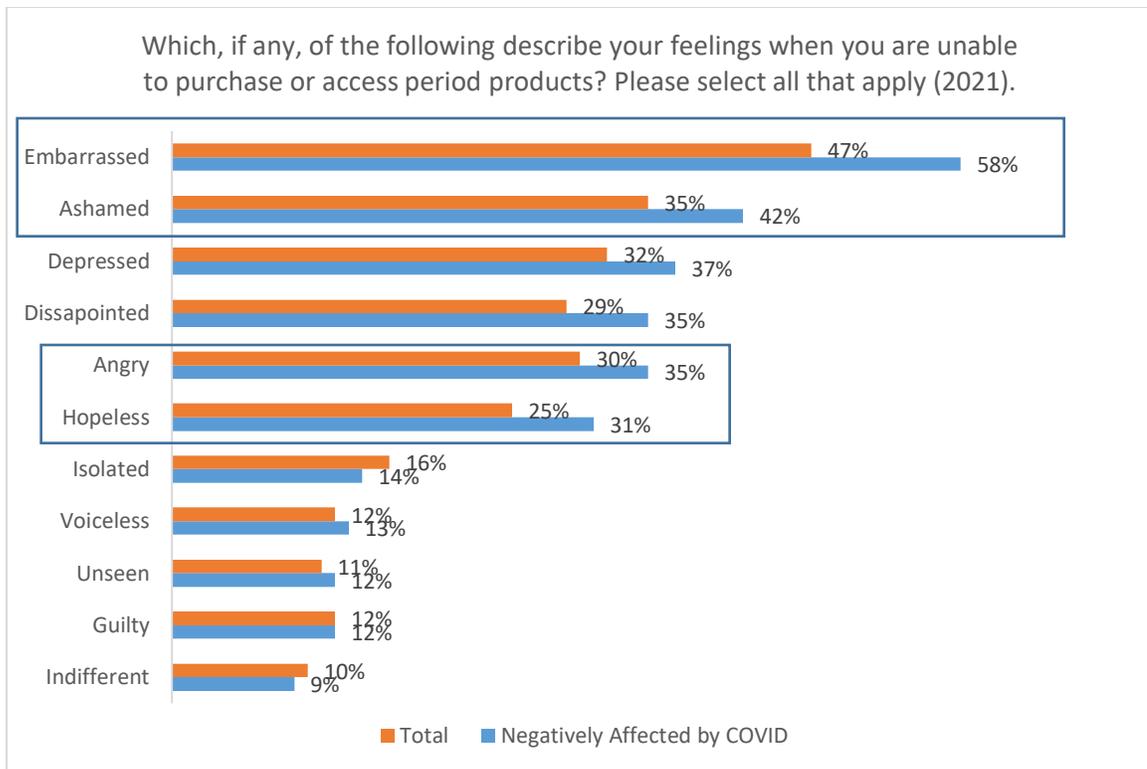
U by Kotex Period Poverty Awareness Week – Survey Results



Feelings of embarrassment and shame, closely aligned with period stigma, follow the inability to afford or access period products.

- Those who struggled to purchase, or access period products felt strong negative emotions, saying they felt embarrassed (47%), ashamed (35%) or depressed (32%).
- There was a decrease from 2018 in nearly all negative emotions experienced as a result of not being able to access period products.
 - “Guilt” held steady with 12% of menstruators in 2021 reporting a feeling of guilt compared to 10% in 2018.
- However, in 2021 menstruators who were negatively impacted by COVID-19 were much more likely to report feeling embarrassed, ashamed, angry, and hopeless when unable to access period products.
 - Of those negatively affected by COVID-19; 58% report feeling embarrassed compared to 47% overall, 42% report feeling ashamed compared to 35%, 35% reported feeling angry compared to 30%, and 31% reported feeling hopeless compared to 25% overall.
- Older people who menstruate (those over 34) were significantly more likely than younger counterparts to report negative emotions caused by not being able to access period products.
 - Those 35-54 reported feeling embarrassed (61%), ashamed (43%), depressed (39%), and isolated (21%) by a lack of access to period products.
 - Those 18-34 reported feeling embarrassed (39%), ashamed (31%), depressed (29%), and isolated (13%), by a lack of access to period products. [each of these figures are down significantly compared to 2018]

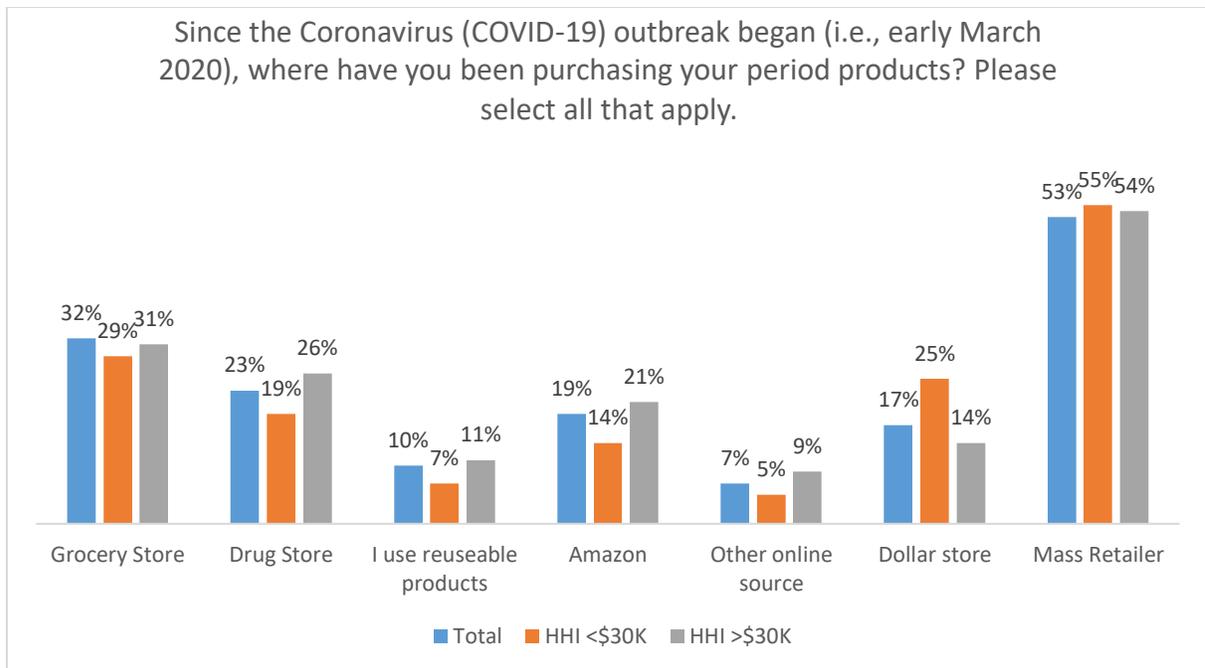
U by Kotex Period Poverty Awareness Week – Survey Results



Low income people with periods are less likely to know where to go to for information about their periods/period products

- Three in five (57%) respondents with a HHI over \$30K said they trust medical professional to provide information about their periods compared to just under half (47%) of those with a HHI under \$30K.
 - Meanwhile, 16% of those with a HHI under \$30K don't know where to find information about periods/period products (vs. just 8% of those with a HHI over \$30K).
- While more than half (53%) of all menstruators purchase their period products from mass retailers, nearly a third (29%) of menstruators with HHI over \$30K buy their period products online from Amazon or another online retailer; compared to a quarter (25%) of those with a HHI under \$30K who get their period products from dollar stores.

U by Kotex Period Poverty Awareness Week – Survey Results



Awareness of period poverty in the U.S. rose since 2018 as did the percent of respondents who want to see support offered by companies and the government to address this issue.

- Nearly seven in ten (68%) respondents in 2021 agree that period poverty is a public health issue in the U.S.
- In 2021, seven out of ten menstruators (70%) claimed they would be more likely to purchase period products from a brand that provided products for those in need compared to two-thirds (66%) of those in 2018.
- In 2021, seven out of ten respondents (69%) agreed that there should be government assistance for those who struggle to afford period products compared to a little less than two-thirds (61%) in 2018.

However, despite the increase of awareness surrounding the issue of period poverty there has been little change in public awareness of local resources that offer period products to people who need help.

- In both 2021 and 2018 only 4% of respondents said to know of a local resource that provides period products at a reduced cost or no cost.
- Also, half of all respondents in 2021 (50%) and 2018 (48%) still believe that period poverty is more of an issue internationally than domestically, suggesting education on the issue is still needed.