**LEVANT SPONGE - Instructions for use and cleaning**

The sponge is a natural product and therefore may vary slightly in shape and size.

Unlike tampons, it does not dry out the vagina. You no longer have the difficulty of insertion or removal of a dry tampon when flow is light.

Before first use it is recommended to soak the sponge in some vinegar (gentle like apple cider) in water to neutralize the pH or to soak in water with 2 drops of tea tree added..

To use,you first dampen the sponge with water (warm is best) and then use two fingers to insert into the vagina. Pushing it with the middle finger up, like a tampon. It will mould to the shape of the vagina. The sponge may seem big but it compresses down hugely when wet. You can trim it if you really want but it is best to really try it out first as most folk are surprised how much it reduces in size. The sponge can not disappear as the only opening to the uterus is the cervix which is very small. A tip to remove it is to press the pelvic floor muscles such as if urinating , then slide the sponge a bit forward and you can remove it easily. You may feel the sponge moving down as it fills up -this is normal.

If the sponge is full, it is best to first wash under running cold water, then the blood does not clot. Then warm water can be used to wash away the more mucousy residues. How often the sponge must be washed, depends on how heavy your flow is. In the first 48 hours of your period you usually lose ¾ of your whole menstrual flow. At this time it may therefore be necessary to wash out the sponge every 2-3 hours.At lighter times it may be worn for 4-6 hours before being washed out. Change times are similar to those of menstrual pads. It is always more comfortable to warm the sponge before reinsertion.

To clean the sponge you have a choice of methods:

Every now and then soak a few hours (eg. overnight) in vinegar water (1:2).
Or in a solution of 1/4 cup water and Hydrogen Peroxide. This will bleach the sponge again, if it has darkened after use.
Or a few drops of tea tree oil in a cup of water . Tea tree oil is very effective against up to 60 strains of bacteria. It will also eliminate any odour on your sponge.
After cleaning,leave the sponge to air dry. You can store it in a cotton bag (eg washing or other bag or sock).

Never boil a natural sponge, as it will become hard and soon unusable.

IMPORTANT: For vaginal infections, you should not use the sponge, or use a new sponge after treatment.