

# Menstruation & Feminine Hygiene Care for Youth With Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Scoping Review

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**PURPOSE:** The menstruation needs of youth with autism are largely unaddressed in the healthcare literature (Cridland et al., 2014). The aim of this scoping review was to identify educational programs, interventions, and resources that have been developed and used to support feminine hygiene care for youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The literature was mapped to identify the extent to which programs and interventions fall within the scope of occupational therapy (OT) practice.

**DESIGN:** The six step scoping review methodology of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and Levac (2010) was followed.

**METHODS:** Peer-reviewed and non-referred material from professional journals were searched through electronic databases and by hand. English language publications focused on feminine hygiene care for youth with ASD from youth and parent perspectives were included. A specific data extraction form was developed and used.

**RESULTS:** Nine publications, external to OT, met the inclusion criteria. They highlighted educational resources, programs, and interventions for menstruation and feminine hygiene care specific to the ASD population. Social stories and chaining were identified as the the most common approach to address feminine hygiene training in two of the nine publications (22.2%). Over half of the publications identified activities of daily living of toileting and toilet hygiene, dressing, and personal hygiene and grooming as interventions.

**CONCLUSION:** Owing to the central role OT has in the promotion of self-care and healthy living (AOTA, 2015), it is important to understand how the profession is supporting youth with ASD in preparation for and in the management of menses. There is a lack of research on menstruation for individuals with ASD, which indicates a strong and urgent need for future studies. This is a clear opportunity to demonstrate the district value of OT, to pave the way for future research, and to advocate for youth with autism in the area of menstruation.

## References

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