



In 2020, Scotland became the first country in the world to sign free universal access to period products in [public buildings](#) into law.

Starting from this week, 15,000 disadvantaged girls and women in Vienna can each get a free packet of sanitary pads or tampons at a drugstore chain for their monthly period needs.

"Access to period products is a basic need," said Vienna's Social Democrats deputy mayor Kathrin Gaal. "They should under no circumstances be a question of money."

Vouchers for the packets will be distributed in the city's approximately 80 youth centers and [food banks](#) "to target those really in need," Kristina Hametner, head of the Vienna office for women's health, told AFP.

The "Red Box" program follows a successful pilot scheme in the capital's underprivileged Brigittenau district in 2021.

Under the three-month scheme, 80,000 tampons and 95,000 sanitary pads were made available in Brigittenau, where about 20 percent of women are at risk of poverty.

Period poverty occurs when [women](#) and girls lack the money for tampons, pads or other sanitary products.

Studies suggest that a woman needs approximately 17,000 tampons or pads on average throughout her life, with costs amounting to about 3,000 euros.

Globally, campaigners say the issue has a direct effect on girls' education, with a knock-on impact on [work opportunities](#), thus deepening gender inequality.

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Citation: Vienna drugstores offer free period products for women in need (2023, October 11) retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-vienna-drugstores-free-period-products.html>

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