



# spotlight on health

## Troubled by Menstrual Pain? Put the Heat On!

(NAPSA)—For the estimated 30 to 50 percent of women who suffer from menstrual pain, periods can seem like more than just an inconvenience. Although traditionally viewed as a “minor” female problem, recent surveys indicate that one in 10 women experience symptoms so severe they are unable to handle everyday activities. It’s not surprising that 140 million work hours are lost every year due to this debilitating condition.

Often described as a dull ache or pressure in the lower abdomen, menstrual pain is caused by complex chemical processes that occur during the normal menstrual cycle. Each month, the excess uterine tissue is built up and then sloughed off at the end of the cycle. During this “shedding,” the uterine wall releases hormone-like substances known as prostaglandins that cause contractions. While most contractions go unnoticed, an overproduction of prostaglandins causes strong and painful contractions (cramps) that temporarily cut off blood supply to the uterine muscle thereby depriving it of oxygen and thus causing pain.

Today, some oral pain relievers are aimed at decreasing prostaglandin production to block pain and reduce cramps. However, a new wave of research suggests that women may benefit from a novel therapeutic option: low-level heat.

### Why Heat?

People have been using heat to relieve pain for centuries, whether through a simple warm bath or hot water bag. Recently however, researchers have found that applying heat to the site of pain

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**Scientific studies reveal the benefits of heat therapy to relieve menstrual pain.** 

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not only relaxes muscles, but also stimulates the body’s heat sensors, which inhibit the transmission of pain signals to the brain.

These insights about heat led to the development of ThermaCare® Menstrual Patches, air-activated heat wraps designed to provide continuous low-level heat for powerful pain relief and deep muscle relaxation.

“ThermaCare Menstrual Patches provide a full day’s worth of heat right on the abdomen, where relief is most needed,” said Roger Smith, M.D., professor, vice chair and program director, Truman Medical Center, University of Missouri-Kansas City and member of the Heat Responsive Pain Council. “I recommend it to all my menstrual pain patients, especially teens, as an effective, non-drug option for relieving menstrual pain and reducing cramping.”

The ThermaCare Menstrual Patch has been demonstrated in a clinical trial to provide comparable pain relief when compared to ibuprofen, the active ingredient in Advil. In addition, ThermaCare recently earned the Good Housekeeping Seal, an American icon representing the Good Housekeeping Institute’s limited two-year satisfaction warranty.

To try ThermaCare, look in the pain reliever aisle of grocery stores, supermarkets, drug stores, club stores or mass merchandisers. For more information on the benefits of heat therapy and ThermaCare, visit [www.thermacare.com](http://www.thermacare.com).