

Holland and Barrett to start selling Reusable Sanitary Pads brand Bloom & Nora

Submitted by: Bloom and Nora

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Glasgow firm TotsBots are the first company in the UK to get reusable sanitary pads onto the High Street as Holland & Barrett take the step to offer their customers reusable sanitary alternatives by stocking their Bloom and Nora range in 113 of their UK stores. This comes after the recent decision by Holland & Barrett to stop selling disposable wet wipes after the health food firm announced it wanted to encourage their customers to be more sustainable.

Joanne Cooke, Head of Beauty at Holland & Barrett, commented, "We're thrilled to be listing Bloom & Noras reusable sanitary pads at Holland & Barrett. There is a growing appetite for more eco-friendly alternatives to personal care products so we're proud to be able to expand our customer offering in this area with some really exciting products such as these. At Holland & Barrett, we are committed to helping reduce plastic waste, having recently banned the sale of all wet wipes from our stores, as well as working with innovative brands like Bloom & Nora who share this eco-conscious vision."

The UK's leading health food store, Holland & Barrett have been "green" for years, well before it became fashionable. They launched the "Plan it Green" project in 2007 with the key aim to offer products that are not just good for the customer, but good for our planet as well. The project focused on four key areas; Care and Responsibility; Climate change; Waste and Staff Initiatives. The project is delivering too, not only were Holland & Barrett the first retailer to commit to having no plastic bags in store they are committed to sourcing 95% of their products within the UK to minimize their carbon footprint, and it's clear their customers like it as their sales continue to grow year on year.

TotsBots have been designing and manufacturing reusable nappies since 2000 but decided to expand their product range and create new brand Bloom & Nora in 2016. It's not a big leap for the company to move into sanitary products after successfully making award-winning washable nappies for so long, the tried-and-tested high-performance fabrics are similar but director Fiona Smyth's motivation to create the brand clicked in when her daughter started her periods. She explains:

"Even though disposable pads are a plastic waste issue and take hundreds of years to degrade, the chemicals in pads and tampons were actually my biggest trigger. It wasn't until I read an article mentioning dioxins and carcinogens in the same sentence as pads and tampons, that I decided it was time to get back to the design table and do something about it."

Constantly innovating, Fiona and her team at TotsBots have become experts in fabric technology, component quality and manufacturing methodology. They have taken everything they have learned over the years to create the new range. With the emphasis on comfort, performance and durability, they ensured the pads were Oekotex certified at the outset and therefore guaranteed not to contain any irritating chemicals next to skin. With a huge list of potential product testers (including her daughter and her friends and many loyal TotsBots mums) she created two core products:

- Bloom pads – Natural Bamboo next to skin, in a range of bold colours
- Nora pads – Stay dry, stain repellent core in simple bright white

- Each pad comes in 4 sizes/absorbency levels – Mini, Midi, Maxi, Mighty
- Accessories - Waterproof Bathroom storage bag & Waterproof Wet/dry out and about bag

Fiona explained “Holland & Barrett are testing the water with our stay-dry range as we felt this is the pad style that’s most likely to convince customers in store to give them a go, especially as the main concern that people have is “How do I wash them?” and “Will they wash up ok?” All that’s needed for them to come up bright and clean month after month is a quick rinse under the cold tap and stored in a waterproof bag until it’s time to wash with the rest of your knickers”

She added, “We are absolutely delighted to be supplying Holland & Barrett. This is exactly the right time for retailers to be getting on board with reusable sanitary pads. Today’s consumers are very eco savvy and health conscious, you just have to look on Instagram and type in the hashtag “cloth pads” to see. And with Campaigners like Ella Daish on the case to end period plastic, this is only going to continue grow in momentum.”

Bloom and Nora reusable sanitary pads will be available in store and online at Holland & Barrett from July 23rd.

Prices for a triple pack of pads start at 14.99 GBP

Some Background Facts & Stats

Quality and Manufacturing - Bloom & Nora products are all made in the UK and are of such high quality that they can be used as much as 150-200 times each over a period of 10 years. Reusable sanitary pads offer better absorbency than disposables and are more comfortable than paper pads.

Eco benefits - 90% of a menstrual pad is plastic*. Over her lifetime a woman will use on average 11,000 tampons (or pads), that's a lot of plastic waste that is preserved in landfill for hundreds of years, incinerated releasing toxins and greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and at times washed up on our beaches. A kit of 12 reusable pads, which should be enough for a whole period assuming they will be washed once during the cycle, will last for 10 years. 40-50 reusable pads will do the job of those 11,000 throwaways.

*Source: LONDON ASSEMBLY Environment Committee Singleuse plastics: Unflushables August 2018)

Financial Benefits - In addition to reducing waste and providing a safer alternative to disposable sanitary products, reusable pads are also cheaper to use than disposables, costing on average 3p per use compared to 10-12p per single use pad/tampon. It is estimated that people with periods will spend in the region of £120 to £150 per annum on disposable sanitary products. A kit that lasts 10 - years will cost £85

Health benefits

It is widely accepted that Toxic shock is a potential risk when using disposable tampons.

Disposable pads and tampons contain known irritants and carcinogens:

- *NGOs, the Danish Consumer council and in France a consumer association tested well known disposable sanitary products themselves and found levels of glyphosate, Chlorine, Dioxin, and various other Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs), potential carcinogens and toxic chemicals.
- *Traces of organochlorine pesticides and pyrethroids were also found in tampons.
- *Women's vaginas are highly absorbent places and there are no safe levels of carcinogens or EDCs, they have no place in menstrual products.
- *Disposable pad manufacturers do not have to disclose their contents
- Reusable pads carry none of these risks.

*Source LONDON ASSEMBLY Environment Committee Singleuse plastics: Unflushables August 2018

Market information:

- 15 million people menstruating annually in UK
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- 7% of women are using reusable and that figure is growing (Source: Mintel)
- 83% of women in a recent survey said they would try reusables. (Source: The Times – Survey of 5063 women –2016)
- UK Sanitary Product Market worth £310 m (2018)

-ENDS-

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