

Generations of STEM: Earle Haas

Physician & Inventor

Dr. Haas was a busy man. He was a general medical practitioner, president of an antiseptics company, real estate agent, and philanthropic organization board member as well as an inventor.

He was interested in helping his wife have something better than rags for her menstrual flow.

After visiting a friend in California and seeing the unconventional sponges she used, he came up with the idea for the tampon. He used a cotton plug and cardboard, eliminating the need for women to touch the cotton. Calling it a “catamenial device,” (Greek for monthly) he obtained a patent in 1931.

After failing to get any interest from businesses, including Johnson and Johnson, he sold his patent to Gertrude Tenderich in 1934 for \$32,000. She started the Tampax company and was its first president. Haas also invented a contraceptive diaphragm.

Dr. Haas later came to regret selling the patent, but he was glad the product became successful and used by many. He continued to try to improve the tampon design until his death in 1981.

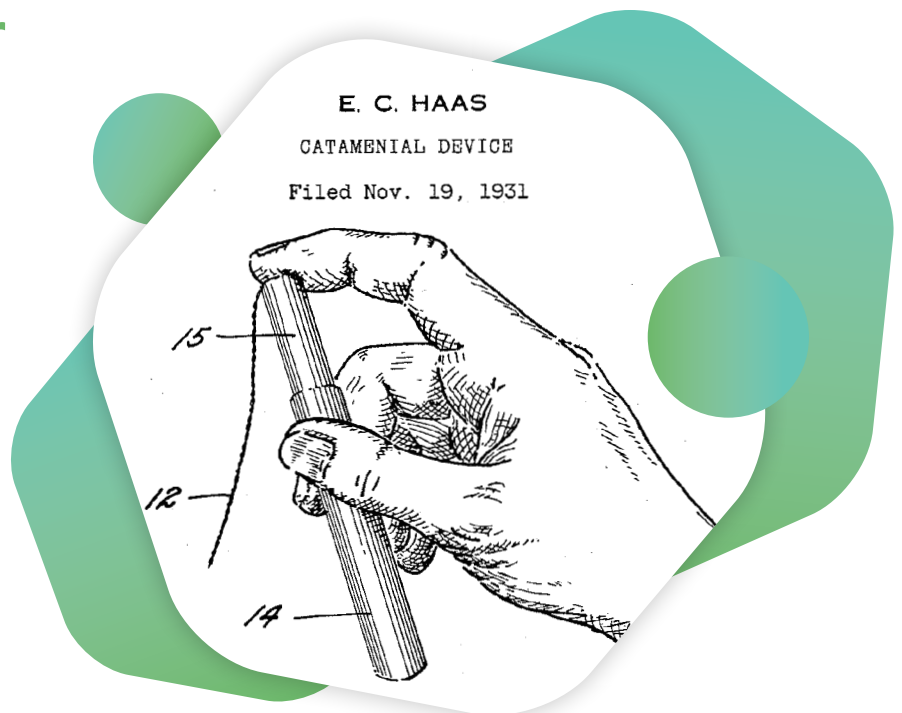


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