

FACT SHEET MENSTRUAL TAMPONS

The Products and Their Development

The function of tampons is to absorb the menstrual fluid while inside the body, thus offering very discreet and effective protection. Tampons can be used by women throughout their reproductive age (between 12 and 50 on average) and come in different absorbent capacities and with or without an applicator.

Industrially manufactured tampons were first introduced in the US in 1936 and in Europe in 1938. Since then, billions of tampons have been sold all over the world.

Societal Benefits:

Tampons are:

- **Discreet:** by their inherent design, tampons offer the utmost in discretion during menstruation.
- **Comfortable and Convenient:** a tampon is neither felt during wearing nor does it restrict movement or hinder a woman from engaging in any sporting or leisure activities (including swimming).

Improvements in the performance and comfort of absorbent feminine hygiene products in general have led to significant benefits to the individual user and to society as a whole not least through less lost time or discomfort during work or study and increased mobility during the menstruation period including increased freedom to pursue leisure and sporting activities.

What Are They Made Of

Figure 5 Schematic View of an Applicator (Insertion Aid) Tampon

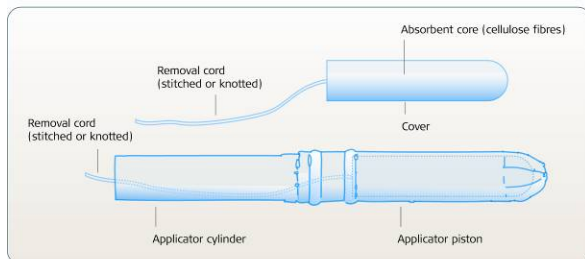
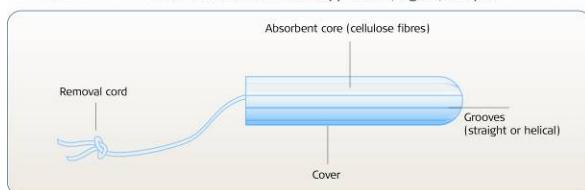


Figure 6 Schematic View of a Non-Applicator (Digital) Tampon



Modern tampons are mainly composed (over 90% of the tampon) of a natural cellulosic absorbent material (rayon or cotton or a mixture of both).

In most instances, the absorbent-core of the tampon is covered by a thin, smooth layer of nonwoven or perforated film which helps to reduce the loss of fibres and makes the tampon easy to insert and remove. The withdrawal cord that is necessary to remove the tampon is usually made of cotton or other fibres and can be coloured. Applicators can be made of either coated paper or plastic or a combination of both.

How They Are Made

Today there are two main types of tampons:

- The coiled tampon type starts with a rectangular fibre pad around which a withdrawal cord is looped. The fibre pad is then folded, rolled and compressed to a cylindrical shape.
- The applicator tampon type starts from a rectangular fibre pad. A withdrawal cord is sewn across the length of the tampon fibre pad, which is then compressed into a cylindrical shape.

Both tampon types are usually covered with a nonwoven or perforated film and are individually wrapped to provide cleanliness and hygiene until usage.

Did You Know?

- Before the development of disposable feminine care products women would use rags and scraps of fabric to absorb menstrual fluids. Ancient tribes would have used materials such as papyrus leaves, grasses and moss to absorb bodily fluids.
- A study in the US has established that the expected value of lost wages associated with heavy bleeding is \$1692 annually per woman complaining of increased menstrual loss.
- Inadequate access to menstruation protection materials has a negative impact on the participation of girls and women in education and training in the developing world.
- While the monthly bleeding usually lasts between 4 to 7 days, in total a woman will menstruate for an equivalent average of 6 to 7 years during her life.

The Industry

The members of EDANA who manufacture absorbent hygiene products and wet wipes employ some 100,000 people in Europe; making a substantial contribution to the economic wellbeing of families and communities in the countries of Europe. In 2006 some 20,000 of those were directly employed in the manufacture of absorbent hygiene products in Europe. This is matched by a similar number upstream within raw materials supplier industries; not to mention those employed downstream in logistics and commercial operations.

The industry invests widely in its European product development and manufacturing facilities, with over 50 facilities spread across some 20 countries in the region.

Safety Assurance

Tampons have a long history of safe use that spans over 60 years worldwide, with millions of products in safe daily use. Tampons are made of well-proven materials that are used in a variety of other everyday products. These materials have proven safety profiles. The raw materials are carefully selected for highest quality and undergo extensive safety evaluation before they are approved and used during manufacturing.

Within the European Union tampons must comply with the General Product Safety Directive that holds manufacturers responsible for providing consumers with products that are safe to use. In addition, tampon manufacturers in Europe follow the EU Tampon Code of Practice, or a national equivalent, which originated from a voluntary industry (EDANA) initiative to harmonise relevant consumer information in all EU countries, irrespective of the tampon brand used. A key element of the code of practice is a droplet system that categorises the absorbency of tampons into six classes.

Tampons are made under high quality production control standards including a series of checks and tests based on company quality assurance systems and user monitoring programmes.

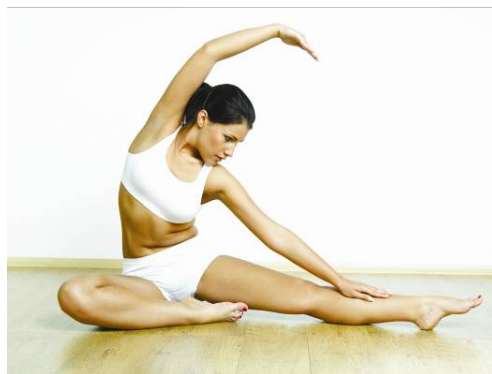
Sustainability through Innovation

Tampons require very low amounts of materials (approximately 2-5 grams) to guarantee reliable protection similar to sanitary napkins. This means that tampons generate a very low volume of waste.

Tampon materials are compatible with current waste management systems for household waste such as controlled landfill, incineration with energy recovery, or common wastewater treatment operations for flushable tampons. Tampons disposed of via the wastewater system will disintegrate and degrade. Any residual materials will be removed from the wastewater treatment plant for disposal via landfill or incineration.

The viscose used in the manufacture of tampons is made from wood pulp which does not come from virgin tropical rainforests.

The vast majority of tampon products available today consist mainly of materials which are biodegradable.



Summary

Tampons are an essential feature of modern day life in Europe and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. Through innovation and the application of state of the art technology, industry will continue to provide consumers with safe and high performance products, guaranteeing ever greater benefits in the hygiene, lifestyle and convenience attributes they have come to expect and rely on.