

Statement on Tampons as a Source of Exposure to Metal(loid)s

Menstrual products such as tampons and pads have been used safely worldwide for decades. They contribute to the well-being, hygiene, quality of life, and self-confidence of their users.

Our members, who produce most of the products sold in Europe, the UK and the U.S., are committed to upholding the highest safety and compliance standards. All their products adhere to regional and national regulatory frameworks¹ and are safe for their intended use, providing consumers with a sense of security and confidence. Furthermore, our members comply with the European² and UK³ codes of practice for tampon manufacturers and distributors. Recognised by the relevant authorities, these codes play an important self-regulatory role in reinforcing manufacturers' commitment to safety.

We note the study by Shearston and co-authors ([Tampons as a source of exposure to metal\(loid\)s—ScienceDirect](#)). While we do not believe it is the article's primary intent, we are concerned that it may raise unnecessary concerns about tampon safety, as the study's scope did not extend to assessing the risk posed to consumers during tampon use. Over 100 million people in more than 120 countries safely use tampons for at least some of their menstrual protection. Their safety and performance are of paramount importance to their manufacturers.

It's crucial to understand that heavy metals and trace chemicals are not intentionally added to tampons and are not a part of modern absorbent hygiene products. Still, they can sometimes be found in products as residuals of the manufacturing process and/or because they are present in the environment. These naturally occurring traces do not pose a risk to human health.

Heavy metals occur naturally in the Earth's crust and can be found in various elements of nature, including water, soil, and the air. Similarly, they are present – at higher levels than those detected in the study – in our drinking water and daily foods, such as vegetables, fruits, meat, fish, and seafood.

The components⁴ used in menstrual products undergo thorough safety assessments based on evaluations of the risk they pose. The levels of these trace metals detected by the study are significantly below the safe intake levels recommended for food and drinking water in the European Union, UK, and the U.S..

¹ For example, the [European Union's General Product Safety Regulation](#), the [UK's General Product Safety Regulation \(2005\)](#), and [EU/UK REACH](#).

² [EDANA Code of Practice for Tampons](#) for tampons sold in the European market.

³ [AHPMA UK Code of Practice for Tampon Manufacturers and Distributors](#)

⁴ For more information on how tampons are constructed, please see the [EDANA Tampon composition infographic](#).

In cooperation with independent academia, EDANA and its members crafted scientifically sound methods for testing menstrual products ([EDANA Guidelines for Testing Feminine Hygiene Products](#) and the [EDANA Stewardship Programme for Absorbent Hygiene Products \(AHPs\)](#)), including screening for trace substances in tampons due to their ubiquitous presence. The nonwovens industry has also made a strong effort to reduce residuals from the manufacturing process to an absolute minimum.

The EDANA Stewardship Programme was launched in 2020 to ensure product safety and increase transparency. The Programme focuses on controlling trace substances that may be present in a product. At its core lies the Codex⁵, which features an industry-wide list of chemicals that must be below the agreed guidance values when tested using a harmonised consumer-relevant test method adopted by the European Committee for Standardization as one of its standards⁶.

The study authors, instead, chose to use a harsh test method that involved shredding the tampon and dissolving it in nitric acid, an aggressive chemical solvent. Their test does not represent the realistic use of tampons. Other non-industry labelling schemes – including the [EU Ecolabel](#)⁷ – are more consumer-relevant, as they are designed to evaluate products under genuine use conditions.

There are no indications nor reports that today's menstrual products contribute to safety-related complaints or adverse health effects, which is confirmed by in-depth post-market surveillance performed by manufacturers at a European level. Furthermore, studies performed by various authorities have also confirmed that AHPs are safe. EDANA, AHPMA, INDA, and their members remain supportive of continued research and innovation to ensure tampon safety and will continue to strive to deliver safe products to consumers.



For EU enquiries, please contact EDANA

Comprising over 310 members, EDANA is the leading global association advocating the benefits of nonwovens for society, including absorbent hygiene products (AHPs), such as tampons. Since 1971, EDANA has been providing a comprehensive range of services to enhance the industry's goals and performance, including supporting sustainability ambitions, responsible product stewardship, and addressing common technical, regulatory and market challenges.

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⁵ A compilation of key facts on AHPs with a focus on the Analysis and Risk Assessment of CODEX-listed trace chemicals can be found at https://www.edana.org/docs/default-source/edana-product-stewardship-for-absorbent-hygiene-products/edana_2022_absorbent-hygiene-products.pdf?sfvrsn=207ed00d_4

⁶ [CEN CWA 18062](#)

⁷ The EU Ecolabel is a voluntary scheme focused on sustainability, but it also has strict parameters to ensure safety as it guarantees restricted use of hazardous substances.

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AHPMA is the UK Trade Association representing manufacturers of disposable absorbent hygiene products which includes menstrual products, nappies and incontinence pads.

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INDA, the Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry, serves hundreds of member companies in the nonwovens/engineered fabrics industry to achieve business growth. Since 1968, INDA has helped members convene, connect, innovate, and develop their businesses.

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