

# Tampon Industry and FDA Wage Massive War on Women with Revisionist History to Memory Hole Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS)

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*As usual, those who want to continue making money off of sick individuals will find a way to omit crucial details and dance through loopholes, trying to pull the wool over people's eyes. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the tampon industry is no different; although they're adamant that tampons are safe, women have died from their use and continue to destroy their bodies with them, as history and published studies repeatedly prove. Nevertheless, both industries do whatever it takes to keep the \$718 million market alive.*

In fact, the [FDA](#) went so far as to recently update their web site, addressing "allegations about tampons [that] are being spread over the Internet." They maintain that tampons are not contaminated by asbestos or dioxin during the manufacturing process and that it is simply not true that the rayon fibers can cause toxic shock syndrome (TSS). "The available scientific evidence does not support these rumors," their web site says.

Really?

The health hazards of making products look pretty

Not surprisingly, the FDA web site makes no mention of a vital statement left out of memos found in 1992 in which the FDA addressed the life-threatening chemical dioxin by stating, "It appear[s] that the most significant risks may occur in tampon products." Ah, it's what you don't say that can also cover up the truth, right?

Dioxin, by the way, is part of the process that makes products "whiter than white"; in this case, it's used on the wood pulp that becomes rayon fibers in tampons. During the process, chlorine gas bleaches the wood pulp, creating dioxin, which is part of a class of chemicals that are linked to horrific health problems such as cancer, endometriosis, birth defects and [TSS](#).

Instead, the FDA web site mentions that when tested, such chemicals are below the detectable limit, which apparently means women should cast their worries aside. Besides, new and improved tampons have been on the market that don't use "elemental chlorine gas to purify the wood pulp."

Does this mean that [women](#) everywhere can feel secure by the FDA's efforts to address tampon rumors?

Not so fast.

Chemicals from tampons can linger in your body for up to three decades

There's something else that's not on the FDA web site: an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study found that dioxin bioaccumulates; it has the ability to stay in the body upwards of 30 years after exposure. Furthermore, it's been found that repeated contact increases a woman's health dangers. Now, consider that the average woman uses about 16,800 tampons in her lifetime. Yikes.

Then there's another fact that is conveniently not mentioned on the FDA site: Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) cases surged in the 1980s, coinciding with the advent of Procter & Gamble's (P&G) super absorbent synthetic tampon, Rely. After 813 menstrual-related TSS cases that included 38 deaths, the FDA eventually urged P&G to issue a product recall for Rely. They did, and they also exited the market, only to re-enter the tampon production business later when they bought the makers of Tampax, Tambrands, in the late 90s.

What about the tampons that sound wonderful because of their use of cotton? They're not as good for you as their clever marketing and packaging suggest.

Don't fall for natural-sounding tampon options and marketing hype

You've certainly heard of Monsanto's cancer-causing [glyphosate](#). More than one billion tons of pesticides and herbicides are sprayed on cotton crops annually in the United States, elements of which could make their way to tampons.

The industry knows that sometimes playing on fears can sell products. A roommate finding out you have your period? How embarrassing! Noticing a different odor during your period? Terrible!

Through the decades, the tampon [industry](#) has lured women with perfumed tampons, pocket-sized ones in a selection of colors to conceal that it's actually a tampon, and various messaging to help resolve the awkwardness of experiencing a natural part of life.

Choose safer alternatives

Fortunately, many health-minded women are becoming more aware of tampon dangers while simultaneously embracing their bodies, menstrual blood and all.

For example, many turn to menstrual pads, which offer the benefit of resting on underwear without the risks that come from inserting chemicals and objects directly in the vagina. Then there is new-to-market THINX, which are "period-proof underwear" that, despite reactions over some of their ads being too risqué, are generating attention for their effectiveness.

Yet the madness continues.

The tampon industry continues to do its best to get women to feel shame about having their periods or suggests the annoyance of wearing pads, while the FDA is addressing rumors by omitting facts throughout history. The bottom line is that it's best to forego using tampons and instead turn to other alternatives that won't destroy your health.

Sources for this article include:

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