

Fire Down Below!



WHAT SOME
TAMPONS
DO TO OUR
BODIES

This is referring to the frenzy of anger and aggravation I felt after learning the stuff I'm about to tell you: 'twas like a fire in my loins! I realize that the information here is not new or even entirely thorough. It's more of a very general introduction to how the corporate "feminine hygiene" industry works and why it's important for you to look into these issues with research of your own. Let's spread the word and help each other. FOR REAL.


Love,

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Tamppons

o All the environmental- and health-conscious literature I've found seems to say the same thing: tampons produced by major corporations (Tampax, Playtex, etc) are created using a process that creates an unacceptable level of chemicals that you definitely shouldn't be putting into your body or the environment. In order to make tampons white, they are bleached using chlorine. This bleaching process creates, as a by-product, dioxin, one of the DEADLIEST SUBSTANCES KNOWN. Dioxin is a chemical that humans are exposed to all the time (mostly through eating chemically-treated foods, esp. meat & dairy products). This can be found in tampons and in the waste that these factories eject into the environment. Dioxin builds up in the body and, over time, can result in very serious reproductive and immunological problems, including Cancer. There is no medical reason for bleaching tampons - they're not sterile. The reasons are purely ideological.

 Also, all major tampon brands are made entirely or partially from rayon, a fibre that comes from wood pulp. The Bloodsisters say that rayon can only be made using a chlorine or chlorinated compound bleaching process. Rayon is also much more likely to facilitate TSS because of its abrasive nature, and its fibres have been known to get loose and become lodged in the birth canal! No, thanks!



 terrible! Though all this stuff about bleaching is true of maxi pads also, the fact that they don't go inside your body considerably lessens the risk. All the same, they are very wasteful. Think about how many you go through on a heavy day. When I was in junior high, I wore two at once and put a third on top at midday! Tampons are wasteful, too, especially major brand ones with fancy plastic applicators that are way overpackaged.

TSS

a.k.a. Toxic Shock Syndrome is another piece of bad news associated with tampon use. It has to do with bacteria growing in the vagina. Though very rare, TSS is fatal in 6% of cases. Women who survive may suffer from severe organ damage, loss of hair, limbs and fingertips, reduced lung capacity, and other serious injuries. TSS is apparently encouraged greatly by bleaching chemicals and rayon fibre. Alternative methods of menses collection have shown in tests that they reduce the risk of TSS significantly (look at individual websites or literature for specifics... thekeeper.com and so on).


SYMPTOMS:

- sudden fever • diarrhea • puking • dizziness
- muscle pain or weakness • fainting • disorientation
- skin rash resembling sunburn esp. on hands & feet
- headache • sore throat • bloodshot eyes

If you experience high fever, vomiting and diarrhea together or otherwise suspect TSS, take out your tampon right away! Call the doctor! Keep the tampon in case doc wants to test it later!

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES:

- use only all-cotton tampons • refrain from using tampons between periods • use lowest absorbency necessary • change tampons every 3-6 hours • wash hands well before inserting tampon

In general, the major tampon industry is up to no good, for these reasons and ideologically because they make women feel they need to conceal their periods and that "sanitary products" need to be ultrawhite and super-packaged. They have taken menstruation and made it something inaccessibly medical that we need to rely on experts for to control. Make no mistake: they care about \$\$\$ and not your .

Alternatives

→ NatraCare Tampons - Made with 100% organic cotton. These are usually available in health food stores. I use these most often and have always been happy with them. ☆ www.natracare.com

🍷 The Keeper & Diva Cup - Menstrual cups that you can use over and over. They both go for about \$30, but can potentially last a lifetime, I think. We sell Keepers at Boxcar Books in Bloomington, if you're in the neighborhood! ☆ www.thekeeper.com & www.divacup.com

🍷 Instead Softcup - This is kind of like a disposable Keeper. I used to use these and found them more effective for my body than the Keeper, but ultimately decided that they are too wasteful. Also their ideology is a little questionable. You should check it out. ☆ www.softcup.com

🍷 Gladrag5 - Reusable cotton undie pads. You can also order Keepers, Organic Essentials tampons, sponges & cotton diapers from them. ☆ www.gladrag5.com

Resources

→ urban-armor.org - Alternative menstrual gear that you can order, including handmade pads, sponges, Keepers, zines and lots of other helpful stuff.

→ www.bloodsisters.org - A DIY menstrual activist group from Montreal. Lots of info and further resources.

→ Doris fanzine - Instrumental in helping me feel okay about my body. Thank you, Cindy. PO Box 1734, Asheville, NC 28802 ... microcosm Publishing is about to put out an anthology - microcosmpublishing.com

→ Hot Pantz zine - DIY gynecology. This is a tried-and-true classic resource for diagnosis and treatment of various health concerns, plus info about herbal remedies. Available from microcosm. ✕