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"These 'Whiter than White', Pristine-Looking Items May be a Ticking Time Bomb..."

These soft, cottony items look so innocuous, but they're often laced with dioxin… And you unwittingly place them against your skin repeatedly for decades on end. It's the risk no one talks about. Shun its hidden dangers today, and demand the level of protection you deserve…

The average American woman uses up to 16,800 tampons in her lifetime – or as many as 24,360 if she's on estrogen replacement therapy.

And that's just tampons…

Many women use countless sanitary pads in place of, or in addition to tampons. When this same 'average' woman has a baby, she might also use maternity and nursing pads.

Something you wear so intimately and with such regularity, wouldn't you want to know for sure it's safe? You may be thinking, what could possibly not be safe with feminine hygiene products?

They're whiter-than-white pure and clean, right?

This is an area that I admittedly haven't previously been very involved with until recently. After thoroughly investigating the topic, I have to admit I was shocked.

In my opinion, the realm of feminine hygiene is like a "ticking time bomb."

And for you men out there, don't go away just yet.

The women in your life – your partner, your sister, your mother, your daughter – they may need this information, too. It's up to you to pass it on to them.

Why Feminine Hygiene Products May NOT Be "Protecting" In All Respects

 Are there potential, unsuspected risks from feminine hygiene products?
For decades, women have trusted their favorite feminine hygiene products to protect them from leaks.

And certainly, when you scan feminine hygiene product ads, "protection" does seem to be today's buzzword.

No doubt, you receive absorbency protection. In fact, that's something the FDA ensures.

However, could it be that in the process of "protecting" you from leaks, your feminine hygiene products may potentially be subjecting you to an unexpected risk?

A risk that you never bargained for – or haven't been warned about.

The good news is… it's a potential risk that you can avoid, if you so choose.

I bet that after you discover what I've learned, you'll never think about "protection" the same way again.

Let's get started…

The Largest – and Most Absorbent Organ in Your Body

Your skin is the largest organ in your body. And it happens to be the most absorbent.

A substance you place on your skin may be able to pass right through it, straight into your bloodstream.

Take hormonal or seasickness patches for example. They work because your skin absorbs most of what it comes in contact with.

Vaginal tissue — an exceptionally absorbent area – is no exception.

Because of your vagina's ability to absorb substances, healthy or otherwise, it is a sound health practice to give your skin – and your most intimate areas – the same thoughtful care you give your internal organs. You certainly wouldn't deliberately eat toxins that might harm you.

How Today's Feminine Hygiene Products May Be Jeopardizing Your Health

When asked what their tampons and sanitary pads are made from, I'm guessing most women would respond "cotton."

In my opinion, the feminine hygiene industry has done a terrific job deceiving and misinforming women, freely using words such as "cotton-soft" and "cottony feel" in slick advertising campaigns.

The truth is, today's feminine hygiene products are made mostly from rayon, vicose, and cellulose wood fluff pulp… and not from cotton.

And that just may be the source of the problem…

- Rayon is made from cellulose fibers derived from bleached wood pulp.
- Viscose is a form of wood cellulose acetate that's fabricated to have a pleasing cotton-like touch.
- Fluff pulp is manufactured from tree wood and is the major filler used in conventional sanitary pads.

Don't be fooled. None of these tree-derived substances come close to natural cotton.

Rayon and viscose present a potential danger in part because of their highly absorbent fibers. When used in tampons, these fibers can stick to your vaginal wall, and when you remove the tampon, the loosened fibers stay behind inside your body.

Take a moment and try this quick experiment. Grab one of your tampons and remove it from its wrapper and applicator. Pull it open flat. Give the inside fibers a tug with your fingers.

Notice how the fibers begin to break apart? Do this over a dark piece of cloth or paper, and you'll notice lint and dusty fiber particles falling from the tampon.

These are the fibers that may stay behind in your body when you remove a tampon.

How the Toxic Bleaching Process Could Affect Your Health

Rayon is most commonly bleached with chlorine.

And whenever you bleach something with chlorine, there is a possibility of creating the toxic carcinogens, dioxin and disinfection-by-products (DBPs) such as trihalomethane.

Dioxin, in the same family as Agent Orange, is found in the air, water, and ground, thanks to decades of pollution.

It's a by-product of pesticide spraying, pollution from incinerators, and the production of paper and rayon products such as coffee filters, toilet paper, disposable diapers, and even possibly, feminine hygiene products.

Studies show that dioxin collects in the fatty tissues of animals and humans. And published reports show that even low or trace levels of dioxins may be linked to:

- Abnormal tissue growth in the abdomen and reproductive organs
- Abnormal cell growth throughout the body
- Immune system suppression
- Hormonal and endocrine system disruption

Do YOUR Tampons and Pads Contain Dioxin and Chlorine Disinfection By-Products?

A recently released draft report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) labels dioxin a serious public health threat. The EPA report states there is no "safe" level of exposure to dioxin – even trace amounts are a risk as they accumulate in tissue.

And dioxin has an "extremely long half-life" in that it may remain in your body for as long as 7 to 11 years. There's no consensus on the exact number as it may vary depending

upon your percentage of body fat.

The FDA's official stand regarding trace amounts of dioxins is this: There's no health risk expected from any trace amount of dioxins in tampons.

I don't fully agree with this. In my opinion, the mere possibility of any trace levels of dioxin in pads and tampons may be a concern, considering the repeated contact with delicate and absorbent vaginal tissue.

In fact, a leading doctor of microbiology and immunology at a major university medical center has stated "dioxins, though they exist in the environment, have a worse effect when they contact mucous surfaces like the vagina."

However, you will likely not hear much about this issue as surprisingly the FDA has concluded that there is no health risk expected from dioxins in tampons and pads. According to the FDA…

"State-of-the-art testing of tampons and tampon materials that can detect even trace amounts of dioxin has shown that dioxin levels are at or below the detectable limit."
The FDA Statement on Tampons and Asbestos, Dioxin and Toxic Shock Syndrome further states:

"While there may have been a problem in the past with chlorine bleaching, rayon raw material used in U.S. tampons is now produced using elemental chlorine-free or totally chlorine-free bleaching processes."
What exactly are these "chlorine-free bleaching processes" that they use today? Let's take a closer look…

The FDA goes on to explain…

*"**Elemental chlorine-free bleaching** refers to methods that do not use elemental chlorine gas to purify the wood pulp. These methods include the use of **chlorine dioxide** as the bleaching agent as well as totally chlorine-free processes. **Some elemental chlorine-free bleaching processes can theoretically generate dioxins** at extremely low levels, and **dioxins are occasionally detected** in trace amounts in mill effluents and pulp."* (Emphasis added)

More Than Just Potential Dioxin and Disinfection By-Products… You May Find Petrochemicals in Tampons, too

Consider the applicator used in your favorite brand of tampon. If it's plastic, you're exposing your body to plastic material every time you insert a tampon, and that plastic could potentially be dangerous.

If it's cardboard, take a moment to notice the nice glossy finish that makes it smooth to the touch.

That shiny finish comes from phthalates – chemical plasticizers used in many items, including pills, children's toys, medical devices and personal care products, such as

perfumes, liquid soap, nail polish and hair spray.

Phthalates, along with many plastics, are known "endocrine disruptors" because they interfere with normal endocrine system function – potentially leading to obesity and birth defects.

The NEW Generation of Potentially Toxic Sanitary Pads

As for sanitary pads, today we're seeing a whole new generation of products made from petrochemicals.

Conventional sanitary pads are made from over 90 percent plastic derived from crude oil, including superabsorbent polyacrylates, polypropylene and polyethylene.

Synthetics and plastic restrict the free flow of air and can trap heat and dampness, potentially promoting the growth of yeast and bacteria in your vaginal area.

Labels such as "non-woven" are just fancy-talk for petrochemicals. These types of pads likely don't allow air to pass through.

The use of synthetic fibers, plastic-backed panty liners, and contact with toxic chemicals can lead to burning and soreness of delicate tissue in certain individuals, especially if you are susceptible to allergies.

Why Feminine Hygiene Manufacturers Haven't Told You About This

Many of these products have been used for decades. Why haven't you heard of these potential dangers before now?

First off, logically, the manufacturers are unlikely to tell you given their interest in selling their product. And, the sanitary pad industry is not required to disclose ingredients, including chemicals used in the manufacturing process.

Manufacturers frequently hire their own researchers to conduct research. And, sadly, those research results are all that the FDA sees, regardless of outcome.

In fact, the FDA's reassurances to the public are based on the data given to them by the product manufactures themselves.

Just as it's documented in the drug industry, the feminine hygiene industry can, in theory, spin the results of their "research" to whatever they want.

Incidentally, the Tampon Safety and Research Act of 1999 called upon the U.S. Congress to require independent testing of feminine hygiene products and a disclosure of ingredients used in the manufacturing process.

To date, no tests have been conducted and there's still no public disclosure of all the ingredients used.

Another Potential Problem with Tampons You Need to Know About…

KNOW These Warning Signs of TSS!

T*oxic* ***S****hock* ***S****yndrome* can be a potentially life-threatening condition.
Seek medical help if these symptoms arise while using tampons during your period:

- Sudden high fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Low blood pressure
- Seizures
- Rash on palms or soles
- Muscle aches
- Redness of your eyes, mouth and throat

The fibers left behind by from rayon, viscose, and fluff pulp in tampons may contribute to another hazard as well.

Tampons can create a favorable environment for bacteria growth.

Micro tears in the vaginal wall from tampons allow bacteria to enter and accumulate.

Super absorbent tampons are especially dangerous, as they can expand so much they may actually stick to the vaginal wall.

When the tampon is removed, a layer of the vaginal lining may be scraped or peeled off.

One recognized risk from tampon use is Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS).

TSS may be caused by poisonous toxins from either Staphylococcus aureus (staph) or group A streptococcus (strep) bacteria.

Reducing your risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS)

Any tampon can create a friendly environment in your vagina to the growth of these two types of bacteria. However, there are several steps you can take to minimize your risk of this potentially life-threatening condition:

- Avoid super absorbent tampons - choose the lowest absorbency rate to handle your flow
- Alternate the use of tampons with sanitary napkins or mini-pads during your period

- Never leave a tampon inserted overnight; use overnight pads instead
- Change tampons at least every 4-6 hours
- When inserting a tampon, be extremely careful not to scratch your vaginal lining (avoid plastic applicators)
- Do not use a tampon between periods

Why Naturally Grown Cotton May Become Your New Best Friend

"Natural" cotton is cotton without dioxins and chlorine by-products. Hydrogen peroxide replaces any chlorine-containing substances used in the bleaching process.

Natural cotton has many benefits…

- Soft and fluffy, natural cotton feels comfortable against your skin.
- Unlike synthetic materials, natural cotton allows your skin to breathe while air flows easily through the cotton fibers.
- Compatible with your body's pH.
- Hypoallergenic
- Natural absorbency may replace the need for super-absorbent fluff wood pulp found in conventional pads

I have to warn you, however… Once you experience the feel of natural cotton, you may never want to go back to synthetics.

When you step up to natural cotton, you may be lending the environment a hand, too.

Instead of tree farmed wood fluff pulp to make the absorbent cores of sanitary pads, natural cotton pads use sustainable natural cotton, saving countless trees from destruction.

Cotton can be harvested once a year, whereas trees take 6 to 12 years to grow.

Taking It One Step Further for Intimate Use – Why ORGANIC Cotton Matters

 Organic cotton is grown without the use of pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers.
There may be times when you want the extra assurance of organic cotton.

Especially when you're using a product for intimate use – that is, inside your body – or anywhere else you don't want potentially toxic ingredients.

All cotton sold as organic in the United States must meet strict federal regulations regarding how the cotton is grown, including the type of seeds used.

The organic cotton industry strictly forbids the use of genetically modified (GM) seeds.

Another important benefit of organic cotton is its impact on the environment.

According to the USDA, cotton is the third most heavily insecticide/herbicide treated U.S. crop (behind corn and soy), making it very detrimental to the environment.

In fact, the conventional, non-organic cotton industry uses a full fourth of the world's insecticides.

Consider this…

According to the Sustainable Cotton Project in California, nearly a third of a pound of chemicals is required to make ONE t-shirt from typically treated cotton!

What's more, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies nine of the most common pesticides used on cotton as highly toxic and five are considered probable carcinogens by the U.S. EPA.

And it's these types of pesticides, along with synthetic fertilizers, that are often linked to groundwater contamination, a primary source of drinking water for many U.S. households.

To be fair, we really don't know how much of these toxic residues end up on the finished products you and I use. However, in my opinion, I believe in reducing potential exposure whenever – and wherever possible.

Why Organic Cotton is NOT Big Business Cotton

Organic cotton is grown without the use of toxic fungicides, pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation or genetic engineering.

Rather, organic farming production systems replenish and help maintain soil fertility while enhancing biodiversity that helps protect air and water.

Organic cotton is not "Big Business". When you support organic cotton, you're helping to support small independently owned and operated family farms.

Naturally, you can expect to pay a little more for organic cotton. But, I think you'll agree a few extra cents is worth it when it comes to protecting your health against potential toxins.

In the chart below, you can see some of the crucial differences between "Big Business" conventionally grown and organically grown cotton, and what that may mean for your and your family's health.

Conventional Cotton vs. Organic Cotton		
SEEDS	) Seeds treated with pesticides and/or fungicides) About 70% of U.S. Cotton uses GMO (genetically modified) seeds	) Seeds untreated) Federal regulations prohibit the use of GMO seeds for organic farming
GROWING CONDITIONS	) Synthetic fertilizers used) "Mono-cropping" or the lack of rotation of crops, depletes soil of nutrients, requiring more irrigation and	) Only natural fertilizing methods used) Crop rotation helps replenish soil and increased organic matter helps retain water.

	pesticides and synthetic fertilizers	
WEED CONTROL	⁾ Synthetic herbicides used to prevent and kill weeds; typically leave behind harmful residues in soil	⁾ Physical cultivation and hand weeding to control and remove weeds instead of using chemicals ⁾ Mixed crops leads to natural weed resistance
PEST CONTROL	⁾ Uses 25% of the world's insecticides ⁾ Uses multiple pesticides ⁾ Aerial spraying used, which can threaten people, animals and wildlife	⁾ Uses beneficial insects, biological and culture-honored practices to control pests ⁾ Healthier soil allows natural predators to flourish and maintain balance ⁾ Trap crops may be used to lure insects away from cotton crop
CROP HARVESTING	⁾ Toxic chemicals used for defoliating and harvesting cotton	⁾ Plants are allowed to wither naturally or be expose