HAPCO STATEMENT
Untrue Internet rumours on sanitary pads and tampons

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Consumers can be reassured that feminine hygiene products are entirely safe

Allegations on the Internet and emails spreading untrue and alarmist stories about tampons and sanitary napkins have been circulating for many years and they revive repetitively. Such stories are known as Urban Myths in some countries. They are usually designed to cause alarm and sometimes to market an alternative product.

The stories relating to feminine hygiene products are diverse and can include mis-information on such aspects as promoting non-usage of tampons or preference of certain types of tampons or sanitary products.

EDANA members, manufacturers of tampons, pantyliners and napkins, refute these Internet rumours and confirm that their products are entirely safe for their intended use.

Consumers can be reassured that:

- Tampons do not contain asbestos, have never included asbestos and never will include asbestos as a raw material constituent. Any claims to the contrary are misleading for the millions of women using them and create an unnecessary alarmist situation for them.

- Dioxins are not added to tampons and current bleaching methods of the tampon fibres are not a source of dioxins.

- The US FDA (Food and Drug Agency), one of the most stringent regulatory bodies in the world, also strongly refuted these allegations. The link to the FDA rebuttal is: http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/consumer/tamponsabs.html.

- Pantyliners, napkins and tampons are offered in different sizes and absorbencies. The wearing time is determined by the needs and habits of the individual woman. The statement, that a wearing time of more than 3 hours leads to a change of the natural flora in the vaginal area, and even causes cervical cancer, is completely unfounded. Strict safety standards are applied to sanitary protection products (tampons, napkins and pantyliners) and the materials used to make them. The products have proven to be hygienic and medically safe in clinical tests and in billions of usages worldwide."

- Proven risk factors for cervical cancer include genital infection with certain strains of the papilloma virus, as shown by the recent development of a papilloma virus vaccine for prevention of cervical cancer, the initiation of sexual intercourse at an early age, promiscuous sexual partnering, and smoking. There are no studies linking the use of tampons or sanitary napkins/pads to cervical cancer.

- Cellulose gel’ as quoted in these emails is in fact a super absorbent material made of a polymer (sodium poly-acrylate) that is used in personal hygiene products to absorb fluids. They are used in baby nappies, incontinence care products and some feminine liners and towels, though not in tampons. They are able to absorb many times their own weight in fluids, and offer comfort and security to the wearer. Super absorbent polymers have undergone extensive testing and have a proven safety profile. Experts in toxicology, general medicine, nursing and paediatrics attest to the safety of personal hygiene products containing them. Absorbent hygiene products have a long history of safe use by millions of people.

It is misleading to women if they are told that tampons, pantyliners and sanitary pads may be unsuitable for their intended purpose and EDANA members, manufacturers of tampons, pantyliners and sanitary pads, reassure consumers that they can continue to use feminine hygiene products safely and enjoy the benefits of using them as have millions of women all over the world for decades.