



# UK Code of Practice for Tampon Manufacturers and Distributors

Version No.8 dated May 2019. Replaces Version No.7 dated March 17

## UK Code of Practice for Tampon Manufacturers and Distributors

This code is specific to the UK tampon market. There is a separate code for products sold elsewhere in Europe, published by EDANA. The codes have slightly different requirements, and manufacturers and distributors should seek the advice of national regulatory authorities to ensure they have the correct information. The EU code can be found at <http://www.edana.org>

The UK Code of Practice is voluntary, however it is stringently adhered to by AHPMA members and is reviewed regularly. This code is available to any company who provides tampons to the UK market.

## Product Safety

AHPMA members take their responsibilities as manufacturers and distributors of menstrual tampons extremely seriously. The safety in use of AHPMA member's products is their number one priority.

In the UK tampons are regulated by the General Product Safety Directive (EEC Directive 2001/95/EC). In order to meet the requirements of the Directive all AHPMA members have procedures and processes in place to:

- Evaluate the safety of both the raw materials and the finished tampons
- Include provision for traceability
- Ensure that the user is provided with comprehensive instructions for use

Documentation relating to the safety of menstrual tampons is held by each AHPMA member and can be made available to Trading Standards, and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as necessary.

## 1. Tampon Categories

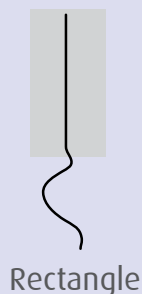
The tampon is used for internally absorbing menstrual flow during the period. A range of absorbencies are available (please refer to section 4). These are designed to manage various menstrual flows which differ not only from woman to woman, but also during a woman's menstrual life and during each period.

Tampon usage is divided between applicator and non-applicator tampons with limited crossover by consumers between the two.

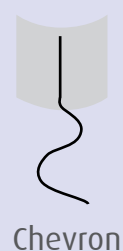


## 2. Construction

There are several different constructions (see diagram) which are currently being used for tampons throughout the world, including the U.K:



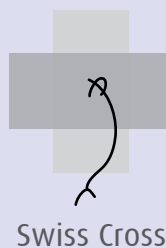
**1. Rectangle:** The absorbent material is in the form of a rectangular or square pad which is compressed in both length and width directions. This tampon expands in both length and width, but predominantly in the lengthways direction.



**2. Chevron:** The absorbent material is in the form of a chevron shaped pad which is compressed primarily in the width direction. The tampon expands in both length and width, but predominantly widthways, mostly in one lateral plane.



**3. Swiss Roll:** The absorbent material is rolled up like a Swiss roll and then compressed to produce a tampon which predominantly expands radially in the widthways direction.



**4. Swiss Cross:** The absorbent material is in the form of two rectangular pads placed on top of each other at a 90-degree angle. A cord is centrally placed between the pads and the tampon is folded from the centre and compressed radially. Upon expansion the tampon opens in a similar way to that of a flower opening.

Most tampon brands have an additional nonwoven layer or perforated film covering the tampon, which can aid insertion and removal.

The absorbent material in a tampon is formed from viscose rayon or cotton fibres or a mixture of the two.

ECF or TCF (elemental chlorine free

or totally chlorine free) bleaching methods are used in tampon production. Chlorine bleaching is never used for fibres used for making tampons.

Tampons should include provision for withdrawal with a suitably attached withdrawal cord to ensure safe and complete tampon removal.

### 3. Types of Tampons

There are two types of tampon:

1. Digital or non-applicator: These tampons are inserted by using a finger to insert the tampon into the vagina. The finished tampon is usually packaged in a wrapper.
2. Applicator: These tampons are inserted by using an applicator. The applicators are made from an outer and inner tube with the latter fitting inside the outer tube. Applicators are made from cardboard/paper or plastic, sometimes in a compact form. The combined applicator and tampon are usually packaged in a wrapper.

Some tampons may also contain a lubricant or fragrance/scent. Where this is the case it should be stated on pack.








## 4. Absorbency Classification and Droplet Scheme

Absorbency classifications are required on both the pack and in the leaflet - please refer to section 5 & 6.

Each set of droplet symbols represent a range of 3g of Syngina absorbency and there are six classes in total.

Tampons are designed to absorb menstrual fluid and the in-vitro measure of this absorption is through the Syngina test method. The apparatus and test method is detailed in the EDANA test method:  
[www.edana.org/discover-nonwovens/standard-procedures](http://www.edana.org/discover-nonwovens/standard-procedures).

The categories and classification of absorbency are divided into primary and secondary descriptors:

Syngina Absorbency	Droplet	Primary Descriptor	Secondary Descriptor
<6g		Lite(s)/Light(s)	"very light to light flow"
6-9g		Regular/Slender/Mini/Normal	"light to medium flow"
9-12g		Super	"medium to heavy flow"
12-15g		Super Plus	"heavy flow"
15-18g		Super Plus Extra	"very heavy flow"
18-21g		Ultra	"extremely heavy flow"



## 5. Instruction Leaflet

Each tampon pack must enclose an instruction leaflet which gives clear advice and guidance on the use of tampons. The leaflet must include the following:

1. To inform consumers about Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS.) Optional to include weblink to further information on TSS such as [www.tssis.com](http://www.tssis.com).
2. To inform the user in the TSS statement that the illness can be fatal.
3. To provide a full description of the symptoms of TSS to include the following; a sudden high fever usually over 39°C, vomiting, diarrhoea, muscle aches, a sun burn like rash, sore throat, dizziness and/or fainting. Optional to include severe flu-like feeling.
4. To inform the user that not all the symptoms of TSS may occur simultaneously.
5. To instruct the user that if symptoms of TSS occur, to remove the tampon, consult a doctor urgently and inform him or her that a tampon has been used.
6. To provide a frequency of use statement e.g. in the case of night time use, advise the user to insert a fresh tampon before going to sleep and to replace the tampon first thing in the morning. Regardless of when used, day or night, advise the user to change their tampon every 4 to 8 hours or more often if needed.
7. To instruct the user to use the lowest absorbency for their flow as it changes throughout their period.
8. To provide a full description of absorbencies available within a brand's product range (or sub range), including Syngina absorbency in grams e.g. 6 – 9g, 9-12g etc. and linking to menstrual flow via the primary and secondary descriptors and droplets.
9. To advise the user to alternate between tampons and towels/pads, liners from time to time during their period.
10. To emphasise the importance of personal hygiene, particularly the washing of hands before and after inserting a tampon.
11. To inform the user to only use tampons during menstruation, use only one tampon at any time, and to ensure the removal of the last tampon once menstruation has finished.
12. To instruct the user on the method for insertion and withdrawal.
13. To include brief details of the absorbent materials in the product.
14. To advise the user to correctly dispose of tampons, applicator tubes and wrappers in a waste bin. To advise the user not to flush tampons, applicator tubes or wrappers.

## 6. Tampon Pack

Each tampon pack must display the following:

1. Clear wording to notify the consumer that tampons are associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). The notice should advise the user to read and retain the instruction leaflet within the pack.  
  
An example of the TSS wording on pack is as follows, "Tampons are associated with Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS). TSS is a rare but serious illness that may be fatal." This statement should be prominent on pack and should have at least a minimum font size equivalent to 'Arial 7'. Optional to include weblink to further information on TSS such as [www.tssis.com](http://www.tssis.com).
2. The appropriate number of droplets to denote the range of Syngina absorbency for the pack contents. The Syngina absorbency of the six classes is given in section 4.
3. Droplets and primary descriptors should be displayed in a prominent position either on the front or top of the pack. The droplets will have a minimum size of 3mm for the smallest packs and will be scaled up as appropriate for larger packs.
4. The full range of absorbencies available within a brand's product range (or sub-range), including primary and secondary descriptors and the appropriate droplets.
5. Advice for the user to use the lowest absorbency for their flow and to change the tampon every 4-8 hours.
6. Display the agreed 'Do Not Flush' symbol. Optional to include additional symbols and wording.





## Packaging and Leaflet Checklist



Ensure the agreed 'Do Not Flush' symbol is displayed on pack ideally in a prominent position, such as front or top of pack.

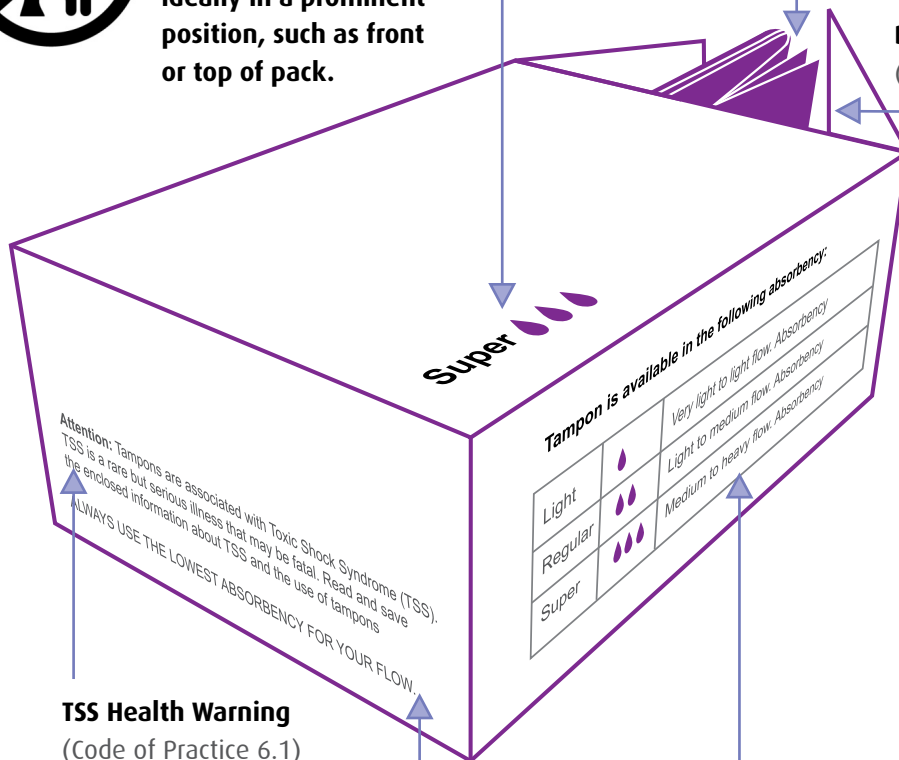
**Droplets (min 3mm) and primary descriptor**  
(Code of Practice 6.2-4)  
Prominently displayed front or top of pack

**Cross reference leaflet**  
(Code of Practice 6.1)  
To be "read and retained"

**Leaflet TSS information**  
(Code of Practice 5.1-5)

**Guidelines for use and disposal**  
(Code of Practice 5.6-14)

**Brief details of absorbent materials**  
(Code of Practice 5.13)



**TSS Health Warning**  
(Code of Practice 6.1)  
Minimum font size equivalent to Arial 7.  
Optional to include weblink to further information on TSS such as [www.tssis.com](http://www.tssis.com).

**Absorbency advice**  
(Code of Practice 6.5)  
i.e. use lowest absorbency necessary and change your tampon every 4-8 hours

**Display full brand range or subrange of absorbencies with droplets and primary and secondary descriptors**  
(Code of Practice 6.4)

This document may be subject to change from time to time in accordance with product innovation and will be reviewed as standard on a regular basis.

The Absorbent Hygiene Products Manufacturers Association (AHPMA) is the UK trade association for the UK manufacturers of feminine hygiene products, disposable infant nappies and continence care products.

**AHPMA**

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