

Sanitary Protection

This Union Notes:

1. That every woman, unless pre-pubescent, post-menopausal, pregnant or suffering from secondary amenorrhoea, menstruates.¹
2. That sanitary protection is taxed at a Value Added Tax Reduced Rate of 5%²
3. That women at UEA can spend as much as £150 on disposable sanitary protection during her time at university.³
4. That a woman using tampons is likely to use more than 10,000 in her lifetime.⁴
5. That 95% of tampon manufacturers in the UK are, voluntarily, part of a self regulation scheme to account for the ingredients and processes they use⁵
6. That the discussion of menstruation remains taboo.
7. That the production and disposal of disposable sanitary protection causes a large amount of environmental damage.⁶
8. That disposable sanitary protection has on numerous occasions been linked to ill health.⁷
9. That organic disposable sanitary protection products and reusable products are available in the UFO and are selling.⁸

This Union Believes:

1. That all students' well being and comfort is an important concern for the Union.
2. That students should be informed of ways of saving money on cultural necessities.
3. That environment ally sustainable alternatives should be available and encouraged.

¹ <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Periods,absent/Pages/Introduction.aspx?url=Pages/What-is-it.aspx>

² <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmstand/deleg4/st001123/01123s01.htm>

³ Calculated for 3 years of study from a very small investigation conducted by the Women's Officer for her presentation to UEA Green Dragon's Den 2007

⁴ Estimates range from 11,400 (www.randomwalks.com) to 17,000(www.mooncup.co.uk)

⁵ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030624/text/30624w1.htm>

⁶ Used sanitary products are incinerated, put in a landfill site, or flushed down the toilet. Pollutants are released into the environment both through sewage waste and air pollution. In 1999 it was estimated over 4 million items were flushed everyday in the UK. (<http://www.wen.org.uk/sanpro/reports/sanpro.pdf>) Mainstream sanitary towels are primarily polythene, so mining, processing and production result in contributing to climate change and ozone layer depletion from emissions, and fossil fuels depletion. Acidification is also the result of sulfur and nitrogen oxides emissions. With tampons the greatest input is from the agricultural processes of cotton cultivation: especially fertilizing, washing etc. The main environmental impact is respiratory inorganics. Acidification and eutrophication caused by tampon production come from over - fertilizing. From a study by The Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm ([http://www.infra.kth.se/fms/utbildning/lca/projects%202006/Group%2006%20\(Sanitary%20pads%20vs%20tampons\).pdf](http://www.infra.kth.se/fms/utbildning/lca/projects%202006/Group%2006%20(Sanitary%20pads%20vs%20tampons).pdf))

⁷ Thrush and general soreness can be connected with the use of sanitary towels. Toxic Shock Syndrome, internal cuts and infections (particularly with plastic applicator tampons), the situation of fibres remaining in the body, thrush, cystitis and the non-discriminatory absorption of all moisture are potential health risks linked with tampon use. Synthetic fragrances and lubricants sometimes added to mainstream disposable products can cause allergic reactions and contribute to multiple chemical sensitivity and can contain parabens - a suspected oestrogen mimicking substance. (<http://www.wen.org.uk/sanpro/reports/sanpro.pdf>) Tampons are usually made from rayon, which is commonly chlorine - bleached. Dioxin, a toxic carcinogen, is a by- product of all chlorine bleaching methods. Dioxin collects in the fatty tissues of animals, including humans and published scientific reports have shown that even low levels of dioxins may be linked to cancer, endomet riosis, and immune system suppression. (<http://www.soorganic.com/home.php?cat=88>)

⁸ Figures available from the Retail Services Manager C/O the Women' s Officer

This Union Resolves:

1. To promote the discussion around safer and more sustainable (than mainstream disposable products) forms of sanitary protection.
2. To allow the Women's Officer to use her time to promote the discussion.
3. To allow the Women's Officer to use Union funds in the staging of events and production/ purchase of resources for the promotion of the discussion.
4. To support the Women's Officer in the co-ordination of events.
5. To campaign for the removal of VAT on sanitary protection products.
6. To publicise the free sanitary protection available from Nightline.
7. To work with Nightline towards providing free organic sanitary protection.