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## Bleaching of tampons

**To the Editor:** Cottons and rayons used in tampon-manufacture are washed in a very clean environment, the tampon itself remaining hygienically sealed until use. The Tampon Advisory Association has come across circulars on the web, recently, that seem to deliberately confuse hygienic cleaning of cotton and rayons with the word 'bleaching' - suggesting that a 'bleaching' process is used which somehow leaves traces of dioxins in the tampon fabric.

Some tampons, depending upon where they are produced, may be a blend of cotton and rayon. The type of blend makes no difference to the performance of the tampon.

To sow further confusion, the writers of such circulars tend to confuse dioxins with toxins. Here's the scientific bit:

**Dioxin** is an extremely toxic substance that causes chloracne symptoms and genetic mutations, formed as a by-product in the manufacture of the herbicide 2,4,5-T, also called tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (abbreviated to TCDD). However, minute traces of dioxins are present in parts per trillion in everything, even

breast milk, but are no more present in tampons than the very air we breathe.

A **Toxin** is something completely different - It is a poisonous substance secreted by certain organisms and capable of inducing a counteragent or an antidote.

Poles apart and continents away from tampon manufacture. No tampon manufacturer in their right mind would consider using a process of manufacture that generated 'toxins' or 'dioxins'.

Another point to remember is that the majority of leading tampon brands are manufactured by companies that also manufacture various surgical dressings and the hygienic conditions in which they are produced are similar, if not identical.

The Tampon Advisory Association is a not-for-gain organisation dedicated to communicating the facts about tampons, tampon usage and related subjects and to set the record straight. It was founded at a time when the worldwide burgeoning of the internet introduced opportunities for unscrupulous people to spread false rumours - either with hidden agendas of their own or out of just plain mischievousness. Spamming is a growing problem with 40 percent of all email messages now falling into this category.

If you do receive any alarming messages about tampons or tampon use please forward them to the TAA to deal with, at . Telephone 011-403-5699 Fax: 011-403-4445.

The TAA is guided by a professional panel comprising:

**Emeritus Professor, David Abramovich**  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology,  
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**Professor Basil van Idekkinge**  
Associate Professor, Department O&G, Wits  
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