

Average Pack of Period Pads Contains as much Plastic as Five Carrier Bags

New study has found that there is, on average, 36g of plastic in mainstream packs of period pads – this is the equivalent of 5 plastic carrier bags.

A study conducted this week has shown that three leading brands of period pads each contain much more plastic than previously thought. When the same study was conducted eight years ago, the figure was 4 plastic carrier bags per pack.

Natracare, the plastic free personal care brand, found that when the individual components of three mainstream brands of period pads were pulled apart and weighed, the pads contained on average 2.4g of plastic each – which equals as much as 5 plastic carrier bags worth of plastic per pack of pads*.

The average pad-user will get through as many as 11,000 pads in a lifetime¹. Based on this new evidence, that's the equivalent of 4,125 plastic carrier bags entering the environment per person.

Susie Hewson, founder and owner of Natracare, the Bristol-based company who developed the world's first organic and plastic-free menstrual products has said:

“Most people who use pads don't realise that they contain plastic – why would they? Plastic isn't an absorbent material so you don't expect it to appear in menstrual products. But there is actually a lot of plastic in most disposable menstrual products.

Not only will these plastic filled pads remain forever in the natural environment – but they aren't breathable, so there's risk of irritation. Air flow is essential when you're wearing something against such an intimate and sensitive area of the body for hours.”

Natalie Fee, is the founder of City to Sea; a not-for-profit organisation campaigning against plastic pollution. She commented on this new figure:

“These figures are shocking – they really highlight the need for our Plastic Free Periods campaign. Studies have shown that three quarters of Brits think 'society should move towards single-use plastic being socially unacceptable'². When people realise that using conventional pads means they're using

the equivalent of over 4,000 plastic bags in their lifetime, hopefully it will be a massive wake-up call. A staggering 1.4 million pads are flushed into UK sewers every day³ – but we'd never flush a plastic bag! It's easy to have a plastic free period by switching to reusables or choosing brands like Natracare. We hope Natracare's study will also help spread the word that only pee, paper and poo goes down the loo – not plastic!"

Natracare have been at the forefront of removing plastic from menstrual products since they developed the world's first organic, plastic free tampon in 1989.

Their most recent move to reduce global plastic pollution was to develop the new Safe to Flush Moist Tissue – which is Europe's first truly flushable moist toilet tissue. Made entirely from reinforced paper, this product is plastic-free, compostable and made with natural and organic ingredients.

In a world where 14,000 wipes are used every second⁴, Natracare's Safe to Flush Moist Tissue is the first and only product to be certified to Water UK's Fine to Flush specification, which tests for the extent of break up in the drain and sewer system. These tests also look for residues which could contaminate rivers, estuaries and the sea.

-ENDS-

For more information, product samples and high-res images, please contact:

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References:

- 1 '11,000 pads used in a lifetime' - www.wen.org.uk/aboutenvironmenstrual
- 2 'Three quarters of Brits think 'society should move towards single-use plastic being socially unacceptable' – www.theecologist.org/2019/jun/19/national-refill-day
- 3 'A staggering 1.4 million pads are flushed into UK sewers every day' - https://www.the-ies.org/sites/default/files/journals/water_security_oct_14.pdf
- 4 'In a world where 14,000 wipes are used every second' - www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/11/from-babies-bums-to-fatbergs-how-we-fell-out-of-love-with-wet-wipes

Notes to editors:

*The pads tested were two leading brands and one supermarket-owned brand. The calculations were made by tearing the pads apart and weighing the individual plastic components on very accurate scales. The average was the mean of the plastic content of all three brands.

Natracare is the first company in the world to provide plastic-free, certified organic cotton tampons and totally chlorine-free sanitary pads and panty liners. Natracare products are biodegradable and can even be composted. Susie Hewson created the brand in 1989 in response to the growing danger to human health and the environment from dioxin pollution in the pulping industries with the chlorine bleaching of paper products.

City to Sea is a not-for-profit organisation campaigning against plastic pollution. Their mission is to connect our actions to the oceans, by giving people and businesses from all backgrounds simple ways to make a significant difference.

Natracare Safe to Flush Moist Tissues are a Water UK certified flushable product. They are the very first to be tested and approved for disposal in a toilet in accordance with UK Water Industry Standards (WIS 4-02-06).

Water UK is a membership organisation which represents all major statutory water and wastewater service providers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They launched a new 'Fine to Flush' industry standard in January 2019.