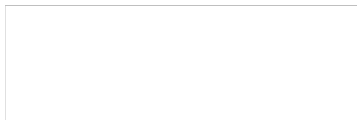


Typical composition names for absorbent hygiene products — guidance document

Disclaimer: This document has been developed by manufacturers of AHPs, members of EDANA. Please note this guidance is for informational and educational purposes only and in no way limits or replaces the responsibility of individual manufacturers of Absorbent Hygiene Products to place safe products on the market and to comply with any laws, regulations or official requirements on product labelling.



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Introduction

These guidelines are intended to provide information and guidance on the voluntary labelling of absorbent hygiene products (AHPs) composition.

In particular this document aims to provide information on typical materials used in the production of AHPs and what you could expect to find in the composition of a menstrual product or a diaper.

This EDANA guidance is voluntary and non-exhaustive. Manufacturers of AHPs are totally free in their choice of what they disclose in terms of product composition.

The document also provides examples of composition names intentionally added and with a function in AHPs and provides suggested names meaningful for consumers.

General overview

Legal framework

In the EU, absorbent hygiene products (AHPs, i.e., baby diapers, menstrual products) are subject to the requirements defined in the **General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) 2001/95/EC** (under revision) which lays down rules on product safety.

Under the Directive, manufacturers must:

- only place products which are safe on the market
- inform consumers of any risks associated with the products they supply
- make sure any dangerous products present on the market can be traced so they can be removed to avoid any risks to consumers.

A safe product is one which, under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, does not present any risk or only the minimum risks compatible to the product's use, considered to be acceptable and consistent with a high level of protection for the safety and health of persons, taking into account the following points in particular:

- The characteristics of the product, including its composition, packaging, instructions for use;
- The effect of other products, where it is reasonably foreseeable that it will be issued with other products
- The presentation of the product, the labelling, any warnings and instructions for its use and disposal and any other indication or information regarding the product
- The categories of consumers at risk when using the product, in particular children and the elderly."

Producers have to **provide consumers with applicable and relevant information** that enables them to evaluate the potential risks (obvious or not) of a product during use or foreseeable use and specify information allowing for traceability (their identity and contact information, product reference or batch to which the product belongs).

For tampons in specific, EDANA has issued a voluntary code of practice (EDANA Code of practice for tampons¹) that establishes state of the art guidelines for consumer information, providing advice and guidance for the safe use of these products.

When absorbent hygiene products like wipes may be the carrier to release a cosmetic substance or mixture and fulfill the purpose of the cosmetic regulation (EU) 1223/2009, the information that must be printed on the packaging is regulated under Article 19 of the **Cosmetics Regulation** (EU) 1223/2009.

Composition of AHPs

Construction

Absorbent hygiene products are complex products made by assembling various components that have different functions resulting in products with the desired properties. They are not made of ingredients but rather of layers of materials, components, put together similar to a garment.

The product design is based on efficient absorption capacity of body fluids aiming to store and keep wetness away from the skin and, at the same time, providing ease of use and comfort.

Tampons usually consist of a surface material/cover, the absorbent core, a withdrawal string and some tampons come along with an applicator to help to insert the product. Individual tampons and pads are wrapped in a plastic wrapper and then, subsequently, packaged in a larger box or wrapping.

AHPs that are worn externally (outside the body) like diapers, napkins, panty liners and pads have a multilayer structure, i.e.:

- a fluid permeable surface layer (topsheet),
- an acquisition / distribution layer,
- an absorbent core,
- a fluid impermeable backsheet,

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2015-013116-ASW_EN.html

Additionally, there might be adhesives to either fix the product in the underwear or to ensure the integrity of the product, release paper that protects the adhesive layer on the back of the product prior to use and various elastics (e.g., to optimize fit). For baby diapers a mechanical fastening system is being used.

Pigments and dyes may be used in small amounts for improved aesthetics and user friendliness, to indicate wetness status of a product or to print lot code numbers to facilitate consumer feedback on products they have purchased. Printed or colored areas are usually sandwiched between the outer layer of the products.

AHPs might have primary packaging (e.g., individual wrapper for pantyliners and napkins or the tampon wrapper) which is removed prior to product usage. Secondary packaging (either a pouch made of flexible packaging material or a carton) protects the products during the transportation pathways.

Composition

AHPs are made from common materials that have a long history of safe use in a variety of everyday consumer products.

The outer components are usually made from polyester, polyethylene, polypropylene, rayon or cotton. The core components usually feature polyethylene, polyacrylate, cellulosic fibres such as rayon, viscose, pulp or cotton.

Tampons are made from viscose/rayon, a blend of viscose/rayon with cotton, or only cotton fibres.

Cosmetic ingredients may be added (e.g. lotions, to protect the skin from overhydration and help reduce irritation). In such cases, the cosmetic ingredients are labelled according to article 9 of the Regulation (EC) N° 1223/2009, using their INCI names.

The wrapper is usually a film made of cellophane, polypropylene or polyethylene.

Industry nomenclature

EDANA members companies have put together common lists with all the main components and materials typically present in baby diapers, and menstrual products. Criteria used to list the composition of AHPs considered intentionally added materials/ chemicals during the manufacturing process of the final product. The lists are available on EDANA website².

Below we provide examples of labelling menstrual and baby diaper products composition:

Example 1: Cellulose, Polypropylene, Polyethylene, Glue, Ink

Example 2: Polyacrylate, Cellulose, Polypropylene, Polyethylene, Polyester, Adhesives, Elastics, Pigments

Example 3: Rayon, cotton, polypropylene, polyethylene and polyester. (Tampon),

Example 4: Synthetic materials, Cellulose, Absorbent gelling material, Scent, Adhesive.

Example 5: Top and back layer made from synthetic materials. Core from cellulose and absorbent gel pearls. Glue/ Adhesive. Cellulose

² <https://www.edana.org/how-we-take-action/edana-stewardship-programme-for-absorbent-hygiene-products/the-edana-absorbent-hygiene-product-stewardship-programme-components>

Table below provides options for composition names:

Recommended nomenclature	Commonly used industry terms
Cellulose (TCF, ECF)	Cellulose
Rayon Viscose	Rayon (may also be listed as: Regenerated cellulose Viscose Lyocell
Cotton Organic Cotton	Cotton "Organic Cotton" or "Cotton"
Superabsorber/ SAP	Absorbent Gelling Material Super absorbent gel pearls Super absorbent polymer (SAP) Superabsorber Polyacrylate
Lotion*	Natural plant extract / Perfume / Emollient / Moisturizer
Polyethylene (PE)	PE Polyethylene, Synthetic material
Bio-Polyethylene (PE)	Plant-based Polyethylene Bio-(based) Polyethylene Polyethylene from renewable source PLA
Polyester (PET)	PET Polyester, Synthetic material
Polypropylene (PP)	PP Polypropylene, Synthetic material
PE/PP	Synthetic material
Elastics	Elastics, Elasthane ESP-Elastic Side Panels Side elastic Back elastics Spandex
Adhesives	Adhesives Glue Fastening
Odour Neutralizing Material	Odour neutralizing material Odour control Odor Control technology with a light scent Light scent
Perfume	Perfume Scent Aroma Fragrance
Colorants	Pigments Colorants Ink Color
Natural Plant Extract	Natural Plant Extracts

* If a cosmetic lotion is added to the product, it shall be labelled according to EU Cosmetic Regulation or

* Lotions here are in the sense of cosmetic preparation/mixture (as defined by Cosmetic Regulation (EU) 1223/2009) if they have a cosmetic function.

On their side, manufacturers provide detailed information about the specific composition of their individual product on the brand website.

It is recommended to only use the English reference terms.

Informing the consumer via e.g., QR code / brand website is seen as appropriate / equally suitable as on pack labelling information.