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PETITION TO STOP SALE OF TOXIC TAMPONS AND DIAPERS REACHES 20,000 IN 8 WEEKS

More than 20,000 people have signed a petition calling for a ban on the sale of toxic personal hygiene products such as tampons and baby diapers.

The online [petition](#), organised by social media campaign #MyClosestEnemy, launched in May and is currently attracting an average rate of 2,000 signatures a week.

The petition is demanding that supermarkets stop selling personal hygiene products that have been bleached with chlorine dioxide, as they may contain chemicals that are harmful to human health^{1,2}. These products include well-known tampon and diaper brands, as well as incontinence pads and other tissue products such as napkins.

The chlorine dioxide bleaching process used to make these products releases dioxins - a group of carcinogenic compounds that have been linked to cancer and infertility as well as other health disorders. The World Health Organisation has classified dioxin as one of the world's most dangerous chemicals³. Recent studies have revealed alarming levels of dioxin in these products, fuelling concern that these products represent a public health risk^{4,5}.

Shockingly, there is no legal requirement for dioxin and other chemical 'ingredients' to be listed on the packaging of these products. This lack of disclosure makes it impossible for consumers to avoid any potential toxins when purchasing such items. The #MyClosestEnemy campaign is looking to raise public awareness on what it calls a 'hidden issue' by demanding supermarkets and manufacturers take action.

Rune Leithe, founder of the #MyClosestEnemy campaign, says supermarkets need to understand the dangers associated with stocking such products on their shelves, and start specifying that their suppliers - the manufacturers of these products - offer safer, totally chlorine-free alternatives and free of other toxic compounds.

"We are calling on Europe's biggest retail chains - Tesco, Carrefour, Aldi, Lidl, ICA, Axfood and others - to stop selling these products. The manufacturers of these products can offer non-toxic alternatives by switching to a safer, totally chlorine-free bleaching process, but the vast majority of them have chosen not to - this has to change," Leithe says.

France is already calling for new laws to make disposable diaper products safer following a two-year investigation by the Agency for Food, Environment & Occupational Health & Safety (Anses), which found unsafe levels of dioxins and other toxic compounds in various nappy brands being sold across the EU⁴.

As a result of these findings, French authorities have asked diaper manufacturers to review their production processes and impose stronger controls on the raw materials used to make their products.

"I urge other governments to follow the recommendation of French authorities to eliminate these toxic substances in disposable diapers - but also to go one step further and include other personal hygiene products such as tampons," Leithe says.

“We only launched our petition in May, and already it has attracted a huge level of interest. It’s clear that people don’t want these products in their homes, let alone in their bodies or next to their skin. Many of those who have signed the petition are shocked that the sale of these products is even legal.”

As the petition continues to grow, the #MyClosestEnemy campaign is considering writing an open letter to the bosses of Europe’s major supermarkets to demand change with specific calls to action, backed by various signatories.

More information about the #MyClosestEnemy campaign can be found at <https://www.myclosestenemy.com>

[1 & 5]: <http://balanga.tv/film/tampon-our-closest-enemy/>

[2]: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46972330>

[3]: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dioxins-and-their-effects-on-human-health>

[4]: <https://www.anses.fr/en/content/anses-recommends-improving-baby-diaper-safety>

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The petition can be found at: <https://www.change.org/p/stop-selling-toxic-diapers-and-tampons> and on the #MyClosestEnemy website <https://www.myclosestenemy.com>
https://twitter.com/MCE_campaign
- Follow #MyClosestEnemy campaign on Instagram and Facebook @myclosestenemy
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