



## PRODUCT TESTING RESULTS: ALWAYS PADS

In August 2014 Women's Voices for the Earth commissioned testing of four types of Always menstrual pads, manufactured by Procter & Gamble. The certified laboratory STAT Analysis Corporation analyzed the products for volatile organic compound. These data represent the first publicly available test results of this kind for these products. Both scented and unscented Always Ultra Thin pads were tested, as well as scented and unscented Always Infinity.

The results of the testing indicate that both scented and unscented Always pads emit toxic chemicals, including chemicals identified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Toxicology Program, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the State of California Environmental Protection Agency as carcinogens, and reproductive and developmental toxins. None of these chemicals are disclosed on the product by the manufacturer.

Procter & Gamble does not disclose the identity of the materials used to manufacture its menstrual pads. Thus it remains unclear which components of the pad may be the source of the volatile toxic emissions. The testing results demonstrate the need for more testing of these products to better characterize the chemical exposures and to better understand the potential health impacts of those exposures.

### PRODUCTS TESTED

- Always Ultra Thin unscented
- Always Ultra Thin Clean Scents
- Always Infinity unscented
- Always Radiant Infinity Light Clean Scents

### METHODOLOGY

Analysis of the samples for volatile organic compounds was conducted by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry with EPA Method TO-15 using headspace containers.

### RESULTS

The Always menstrual pads were found to contain several chemicals of concern, including the following:

- **Styrene:** carcinogen
- **Chloromethane:** reproductive toxicant
- **Chloroethane:** carcinogen
- **Chloroform:** carcinogen, reproductive toxicant, neurotoxin
- **Acetone:** irritant

For more detailed results, see the results chart on the back of this page.



# VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS DETECTED IN THE HEADSPACE OF MENSTRUAL PADS

Product	Clean Scent Always Ultra Thin	Unscented Always Ultra Thin	Clean Scent Always Radiant	Unscented Always Infinity
Chemical Name	ppbv	ppbv	ppbv	ppbv
1,2,4-Trimethylbenzene	0.64	0.54	ND	1.20
1,3,5-Trimethylbenzene	ND	ND	ND	0.54
2-Butanone	7.50	7.70	ND	4.20
4-Ethyltoluene	ND	ND	ND	0.46
Acetone	480.00	340.00	92.00	93.00
Chloroethane	ND	ND	4.40	6.10
Chloroform	1.20	1.50	ND	ND
Chloromethane	ND	ND	ND	16.00
Cyclohexane	0.50	0.78	ND	1.10
Ethyl acetate	8.00	5.50	ND	2.30
Ethylbenzene	ND	0.52	ND	0.84
Heptane	1.10	1.50	ND	0.86
Isopropyl Alcohol	170.00	39.00	ND	17.00
m,p-Xylene	1.40	2.00	ND	2.80
o-Xylene	0.54	0.68	ND	1.50
Styrene	0.44	ND	ND	1.10
Toluene	3.20	6.20	ND	7.00
trans-1,2-Dichloroethene	ND	0.50	26.00	ND
Vinyl acetate	14.00	ND	ND	6.60
Xylenes, Total	2.00	2.70	ND	4.30

ND = Not detected

## CONCLUSIONS

While the levels of the toxic chemicals emitted by Always pads were relatively low, their presence warrants health concerns for women. Menstrual pads are designed to have direct contact with highly absorptive and sensitive vulvar tissue for extended periods of time. Toxic volatile chemicals emitted from menstrual pads could be absorbed into women's bodies. This is especially concerning because the chemicals in question are linked to cancer, as well as reproductive and developmental harm. More research and testing is clearly needed to better characterize the chemicals menstrual pads contain, and to better understand the potential health effects of exposures.

Unfortunately, because menstrual pads are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration as medical devices, manufacturers are not required to disclose the product ingredients. Thus, one cannot determine which components of the pads may be responsible for the toxic chemical emissions. There is also no public disclosure about safety testing of these products.

These test results raise questions and concerns about the safe use of these products and demonstrate the need for additional research, as well as increased transparency from manufacturers, in order to further assess safety.

For more information, go to [www.womensvoices.org](http://www.womensvoices.org).



**WOMEN'S VOICES  
FOR THE EARTH**  
OUR HEALTH. OUR FUTURE. TOXIC FREE.

114 W. Pine Street, P.O. Box 8743, Missoula, MT 59807  
Phone: 406/543-3747  
[www.womensvoices.org](http://www.womensvoices.org)  
[womensvoices@womensvoices.org](mailto:womensvoices@womensvoices.org)