



European  
Commission

# The EU Ecolabel for absorbent hygiene products



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#EUGreenDeal #EUEcolabel

The EU Ecolabel is the official European Union voluntary label for environmental excellence, awarded to sustainably designed products. The EU Ecolabel encourages innovation and contributes to the EU goal of **climate neutrality** by **2050**, a **clean** and **circular economy**, and the **zero-pollution** ambition for a **toxic-free environment**.

Consumers are increasingly looking for sustainable products. Through the EU Ecolabel, industry can offer reliable and truly eco-friendly alternatives to conventional absorbent hygiene products, empowering consumers to make informed choices and play an active role in the ecological transition.

## Which absorbent hygiene products can be awarded the EU Ecolabel?

- Baby nappies.
- Feminine sanitary protection (sanitary pads or towels, panty liners and tampons).
- Nursing pads (also known as breast pads).
- Absorbing sheets (for example, for changing baby nappies).
- Disposable absorbent components in some reusable products.
- Adult incontinence products (unless registered as medical devices).

## Which products are excluded?

- Wet wipes.
- Cotton swabs.
- Make-up remover wipes.
- Absorbent hygiene products registered as medical devices.

Ambitious criteria, which focus on the main environmental impact throughout the life cycle of a product, ensure that EU Ecolabel absorbent hygiene products are of **good quality** and among **the best on the market in terms of environmental performance**.



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The EU Ecolabel criteria aim to reduce the environmental impact of absorbent hygiene products on air, water, soil and biodiversity, and to reduce the environmental damage or risks related to the use of certain chemicals (particularly relevant for products that come in direct contact with the skin). In addition, the criteria encourage circular economy practices, including waste reduction and the use of recycled material in packaging.

Specifically, the EU Ecolabel guarantees:

- use and promotion of sustainably managed forests;
- low water and air emissions;
- low energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions;
- use and promotion of organic cotton;
- less waste;
- restricted use of hazardous substances and strict control of contaminants;
- no fragrances or lotions;
- use and promotion of biobased and recycled materials;
- good performance;
- protection of human and labour rights.

## Overview of the EU Ecolabel criteria for absorbent hygiene products

To be awarded the EU Ecolabel, absorbent hygiene products must comply with stringent criteria. The table shows how these criteria guarantee excellent environmental performance. For the full list of requirements, please refer to the official [EU Ecolabel criteria for absorbent hygiene products](#).

<b>The EU Ecolabel guarantees the following.</b>	<b>The EU Ecolabel requires the following.</b>
<b>Use and promotion of sustainably managed forests</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Minimum 70 % of fibres used in absorbent hygiene products come from certified sustainable forests.</li> <li>✓ No use of genetically modified plants.</li> </ul>
<b>Low water and air emissions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Restrictions on phosphorus and on chlorine, sulphur and nitrogen compounds from the pulp used in the product.</li> <li>✓ Restrictions on zinc and on chlorine and sulphur compounds from the viscose and modal fibres used in the product.</li> <li>✓ Restrictions on chlorine in the cotton used in the product.</li> </ul>
<b>Low energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pulp to be produced with limited energy consumption and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.</li> <li>✓ Viscose to be produced with reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.</li> <li>✓ Plastic to be produced with limited energy consumption.</li> </ul>
<b>Use and promotion of organic cotton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ All cotton is organic.</li> <li>✓ All cotton is traceable.</li> </ul>
<b>Less waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Restrictions on the maximum quantity of waste generated during production.</li> <li>✓ Prioritised recycling of scraps in the production of plastic.</li> </ul>
<b>Restricted use of hazardous substances and strict control on contaminants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ban on substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction; substances that may cause allergic skin reactions; substances of very high concern; and many more.</li> <li>✓ Ban on antibacterial agents, formaldehyde, parabens, endocrine disruptors and phthalates.</li> <li>✓ Strict limits for contaminants such as dioxins, furans, polychlorinated biphenyls, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, phenols, pesticides and heavy metals (test required on the final product).</li> </ul>
<b>No fragrances or lotions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ban on fragrances in the product and its packaging.</li> <li>✓ Ban on lotions in the product.</li> </ul>
<b>Use and promotion of biobased and recycled materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promotion of the inclusion of sustainable biobased plastic materials in the product and its packaging.</li> <li>✓ Promotion of the use of paper/cardboard packaging, as an alternative to plastic packaging.</li> <li>✓ Minimum mandatory content of recycled materials in the packaging.</li> <li>✓ Recyclable packaging.</li> </ul>
<b>Good performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stringent requirements on absorption and leakage, skin dryness, fit and comfort, and overall performance (to be verified by accredited laboratories).</li> </ul>
<b>Protection of human and labour rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Third-party verification on corporate social responsibility of the manufacturing site, with regard to labour aspects.</li> </ul>

