



Product Description

Formulated products used to treat common external health issues. Includes, but is not limited to, antibiotic ointment, hand sanitizer, topical pain relief, iodine, witch hazel, and hydrogen peroxide. Does not include bandages or gauze.

Mission

The mission of The Sustainability Consortium (TSC) is to improve the sustainability of products when they are made, purchased, and used, with a focus on manufacturers and the retail buyers who decide what products to carry in stores. The information in this document is drawn from our detailed research on known and potential social and environmental impacts across product life cycles. TSC acknowledges that other issues exist, but we have included here those that are most relevant to the decision making of retail buying teams and manufacturers. The topics are listed alphabetically for ease of reading; the order does not represent prioritization or other criteria.



Animals

Animal Welfare

Depending on local, legal, and regulatory requirements, animal testing may be required to substantiate the safety of ingredients and final formulations of personal care products. Manufacturers should continue to support the development and validation of alternative testing methods, to prevent unnecessary animal testing of personal care products.



Consumers

Consumer Health and Safety

Manufacturers should list ingredients in accordance with, and beyond, regulatory requirements and communicate proper usage instructions to consumers in a clear and accessible fashion.



Managing the Supply Chain

Palm Oil

Many products contain palm oil, palm kernel oil, or ingredients that have been chemically derived from these oils. Palm oil production is one of the leading causes of deforestation, which is a significant contributor to climate change. The cultivation of palm oil also impacts climate, land and water. Improper palm oil production and management may also lead to worker exploitation and threats to the health and safety of workers. Manufacturers should select suppliers that are working to improve sustainability and adopt standard guidelines from the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) or other certifications.



Use of Resources

Climate and Energy

Ingredient processing consumes significant amounts of electricity and energy, leading to greenhouse gas emissions. Manufacturers should procure from suppliers that help abate these impacts by measuring, tracking, and reporting energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, with a focus on reduction. They should also perform preventative maintenance on equipment, replace inefficient equipment, and encourage efficient energy behaviors throughout their operations.

Disposal and End-of-Life

Personal care products should be formulated with end-use in mind, because these products go down the drain and pass through wastewater treatment plants where biodegradation occurs. Manufacturers should obtain full chemical disclosure of raw materials from suppliers, perform assessments of ingredients, and replace non-biodegradable chemicals or biodegradable chemicals that break down into unacceptable compounds with better alternatives.

Packaging

Packaging design should be optimized to ensure that packaging performs its essential functions of containment and protection while minimizing use of materials, energy resources and environmental impacts across the life cycle of the packaged product. Under-packaging and over-packaging can both lead to increased impacts. These impacts may be mitigated by using more energy-efficient manufacturing, selecting recyclable and sustainably managed renewable materials, and encouraging consumer recycling.



Workers and Communities

Workers

Workers may be exposed to chemicals or other industrial hazards during production. To help ensure worker health and safety, manufacturers should procure ingredients from suppliers that transparently address worker health and safety and perform audits when needed.