

Don't Get "Bamboozled" By False Bamboo Fiber Advertising

As you know by now, around here we talk a lot about "[Knowing Your Fibers](#)." When it comes to bamboo fiber this can be even trickier. Over the last few years, there have been many false claims about consumer products being made of 100% bamboo. If you keep your eye on the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) policing efforts, you already know that 100% just isn't true for some companies.

You Think You're Going Green, But...

As many consumers look to make "greener" choices, bamboo has become a popular option. Aside from being able to manufacture clothing and textile products in an environmentally friendly manner, bamboo also is highly regarded for being biodegradable, needing little or no pesticides for growth, and having inherent antimicrobial properties.

However, [as we've cautioned before](#), labels often—and unfortunately—don't tell the full story. Luckily the FTC stands behind their tagline of "protecting America's consumers"—especially in this case. In 2009 the FTC charged four companies with [false product claims you can find on their official site](#). Those companies were using rayon instead of bamboo.

With Rayon, What Starts As One Lie Becomes Many

This starts with another labeling falsehood, and at the time

David Vladeck, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, said it best: "When companies sell products woven from man-made fibers, such as rayon, it is important that they accurately label and advertise those products – both with respect to the fibers they use and to the qualities those fibers possess." On the surface, a lie is always a lie. What makes this one more disturbing is how it completely sabotages all of bamboo's green claims.

During manufacturing, rayon—a manmade fiber—releases hazardous air pollutants, and since bamboo fibers are manufactured using the same process the case for an environmentally friendly process for these "100% bamboo" products goes right out the window. While clothing and textile products can be manufactured using bamboo as the cellulose resource, it doesn't change that fact that the consumer goods still have no antimicrobial properties. Again, with bamboo's appeal being in large part due to its eco-friendliness, this "label lie" has a serious domino effect.

That's How "All Natural" Leads To "Zero Trust"

In the end, three of the four companies settled the FTC's complaints immediately—and the fourth [settled only months later, as the FTC reports here](#). While the damage was done, at least these businesses won't be able to mislead consumers again, and will hopefully abide by the FTC's Textile Fiber Products Identification Act (Textile Act) and Rules.

In the end, these "label lies" hurt natural fibers as well. Like [cotton fiber](#), bamboo fiber has many qualities that consumers appreciate, often due to the fact that it's derived directly from nature, and possesses those [eco-friendly traits](#). That's why it's so frustrating when companies "bamboozle" consumers (which the Bureau of Consumer Protection Business Center tells companies [how to avoid here](#)). While consumers

suffer, the fibers at the heart of the broken promise—through
no fault of their own—suffer, too.