

Prevention is the Key

Our environment bombards us daily with chemicals that we absorb through our bodies whether inhaled, applied or taken orally. Even though healthy, we are affected. The sick keep getting sicker. We use products that we think are safe, but the truth is, products we use every day are not always safe – and manufacturers are not required to tell us so. This “Cosmetic Conspiracy” means that products can be marketed without government approval, regardless of test results.

What you put on your skin can affect your health and sense of well-being either negatively or positively. If given the facts, we, as individuals, have the intelligence to choose products that are safe. Protect yourself and loved ones by taking a few moments when shopping to read all product labels. Check out the meaning of the names and learn to avoid using products containing harmful, hazardous and dangerous ingredients.

In a typical day, you may be exposed to over two hundred chemicals, many of which are suspected of causing cancer or disrupting hormones. EPA tests conclude that ingredients in shampoos, dyes and other personal care products “may be wreaking havoc with hormones that control reproduction and development.”

Our skin, the body’s largest organ, is our most important immune defense barrier as well as our most efficient waste elimination mechanism. Commercial products with harmful petroleum ingredients can plasticize and “constipate” your skin, making germs more likely to get in and stay in and toxins less likely to get out.

With more than 25,000 new cosmetic chemicals being developed over the last several decades, it’s no wonder personal care products have been found to cause hormone disruption, skin constipation, protein, cellular and DNA denaturing, respiratory distress, infertility, birth defects, cold sweats, circulatory collapse, convulsions, headaches, chronic fatigue, allergies, joint pain, dizziness, skin abnormalities, hyperactivity, irritability, depression, cancer and even death.

Learn to read labels and make “healthy” choices.

Here is a list of twelve deadly substances topping the list of ingredients to avoid.

1. **Propylene Glycol (PG) and Butylene Glycol:** Found in Anti-freeze. Acts as a “surfactant” (wetting agent and solvent). Penetrates the skin and weakens protein and cellular structure. Strong enough to remove

barnacles from boats, factory workers are required by the FDA to wear protective clothing when producing products containing these chemicals and are required to dispose of PG as toxic waste. PG penetrates the skin so quickly, the EPA warns against contact to prevent brain, liver and kidney abnormalities. There are no warning labels on products such as deodorants, where the concentration is greater than in industrial applications.

Safe Alternatives: Herbs, Essential Oils

- 2. Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES):** Detergents pose serious health threats. Used in garage floor cleaners and engine degreasers and in 90% of all personal-care products that foam. Animals exposed to SLS experience eye damage, depression, labored breathing, diarrhea, severe skin irritation, and even death. Young eyes may not develop properly if exposed to SLS. SLS may damage the skin's immune system and can be transformed into nitrosamines, a potent class of carcinogens. SLS will remain in the body for up to five days and maintain residual levels in the heart, lungs, liver and brain.

Safe Alternative: Ammonium Cocoyl Isethionate

- 3. DEA (diethanolamine), MEA (monoethanolamine) & TEA (triethanolamine):** Hormone-disrupting chemicals that can form cancer-causing nitrates. Restricted in Europe due carcinogenic effects, yet are still used in the US...Americans may be exposed 10-20 times per day with shampoos, shaving creams and bubble baths. Dr. Samuel Epstein (Professor of Environmental Health at the University of Illinois) says that repeated applications of DEA-based detergents result in major increase in liver and kidney cancer. The FDA's John Bailey says "the risk is significantly increased for children."

No Alternative: Not Necessary to use this product at all.

- 4. Polyethylene Glycol (PEG):** Carcinogenic petroleum ingredient that reduces the skin's natural moisture. Increases the appearance of aging and leaves you vulnerable to bacteria. Used in spray-on oven cleaners and cleansers to dissolve oil and grease.

Safe Alternative: Planteren™

- 5. Sodium Hydroxide:** The most recent addition to personal care products. This is a poison (caustic lye) found in drain cleaners. The warning label on sodium hydroxide products reads "POISON, May be fatal or cause permanent damage if swallowed. May cause blindness. Avoid contact with skin, eyes, mouth and clothing." Yet the cosmetic industry is now putting it in our skin care and oral care products.

Safe Alternative: Grapefruit Seed Extract & Hydrated Silica

6. **Triclosan:** Synthetic “antibacterial” with a chemical structure similar to Agent Orange! The EPA registers Triclosan as a pesticide, giving it high scores as a risk to human health and the environment. It is in a class of chemicals suspected of causing cancer in humans. It may produce dioxin, a hormone-disrupting chemical with toxic effects measured in parts per trillion; that is one drop in 300 Olympic sized swimming pools! Hormone disruptors can change genetic material, decrease fertility and sexual function and foster birth defects. Internally, it can lead to cold sweats, circulatory collapse and convulsions. Stored in the body fat, it can accumulate to toxic levels, damaging the liver, kidneys and lungs and can cause paralysis, brain hemorrhages and heart problems. Tufts University, School of Medicine says Triclosan can force the emergence of “super bugs” that it cannot kill. It’s wide-spread use in antibacterial cleaners, tooth pastes and household products may have nightmarish implications on future generations, with a half life in our water supply of over 500 years.
Safe Alternative: Grapefruit Seed Extract
7. **DMDM and Urea (Imidazolidnyl):** Two of many preservatives that often release formaldehyde which cause joint pain, skin reactions, allergies, depression, headaches, chest pains, ear infections, chronic fatigue, dizziness, and loss of sleep. Exposure also irritates the respiratory system, triggers heart palpitations or asthma, and aggravates coughs and colds. Other side effects includes; weakening the immune system and cancer.
Safe Alternative: Japanese Honeysuckle
8. **Parabens:** A recent report is questioning the safety of the most common group of cosmetic preservatives called “parabens.” Studies show that parabens – alkyl hydroxy parabens – alpha hydroxy benzoate (methyl-, ethyl-, propyl- and butyl-parabens) are weakly estrogenic. In other words, these preservatives have the ability to mimic estrogen in the body with butyl-paraben being the most potent.
Safe Alternative:
9. **Alcohol, Isopropyl (SD-40):** Drying, irritating solvent that strips skin’s moisture and immune barrier, making you vulnerable to bacteria and viruses. Made from the same petroleum derivative used in shellac and antifreeze as well as personal care products. Promotes brown spots and premature aging. A Consumers Dictionary of Cosmetic Ingredients says it may cause headaches, flushing, dizziness, mental depression, nausea, vomiting, and coma. Fatal ingested dose is one ounce or less. **Safe Alternative:** Grapefruit Seed Extract

10. **Mineral Oil:** Petroleum by-product that coats the skin similar to plastic wrap, clogging the pores. Interferes with skin's ability to eliminate toxins, promoting acne and other disorders. Slows down skin function and cell development, resulting in premature aging. Baby oil is 100% mineral oil!
Safe Alternatives: Moisture Magnets (Saccharide Isomerate) from beets; Ceramides, Jojoba and other vegetable oils.
11. **FD&C Color Pigments:** Synthetic colors from coal tar that deposit toxins onto the skin, causing skin irritation. Absorption of certain colors can cause depletion of oxygen in the body and death. Animal studies have shown almost all of them to be carcinogenic.
No Alternative Necessary.
12. **Fragrances:** Can contain up to four thousand ingredients (including animal urine), many toxic or carcinogenic. Causes headaches, dizziness, allergic reactions, skin discoloration, violent coughing, vomiting, and skin irritation. Fragrances affect the nervous system, causing depression, hyperactivity, irritability, inability to cope and other behavioral changes.
Safe Alternatives: Aroma-therapeutic, organic essential oils

Now that you are aware of the twelve most notorious offenders in cosmetic ingredients, you are armed with the knowledge necessary to protect yourself and your loved ones from the "Cosmetic Conspiracy." The only way to force the cosmetic industry to clean up their act is to read labels and refuse to use toxic products.

Beware: One trick that the cosmetic industry has been using lately is to give the toxic ingredients alternative nomenclature that the general public will assume are non-toxic.