

Toxic Beauty, the Ugly Truth Behind Beauty Products

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Top 8 ingredients/products to avoid:

1. **Parabens.** Parabens such as ethyl-, methyl-, butyl-, or propylparaben, are used as preservatives in many products such as shampoos, moisturizers, soaps, exfoliants, cleansers, and deodorants. They are excellent preservatives, but this class of chemicals are endocrine disruptors. Endocrine disruptors are chemicals that mimic your own hormones. Parabens mimic estrogen and have been found in breast cancer tumors. Parabens have also been shown to stimulate breast cancer cells to grow.
2. **Phthalates.** Numerous news stories about the toxicity of Bisphenol A, a toxic plasticizer contaminant in drinking water bottles and canned food liners, has increased consumer awareness about phthalates. Unfortunately, the cosmetic industry uses phthalates in hair spray, nail polish and numerous other products. Phthalates are hormone disruptors and have been shown to negatively affect genital development in baby boys and reduce testosterone levels in males in general.
3. **Triclosan.** This antimicrobial product is found in antibacterial soap, detergent, toothpaste, fabric, facial tissue and even toys. It affects endocrine systems and thyroid metabolism. Unfortunately, many of us already carry a body burden of this chemical as revealed from random urine samples.
4. **Formaldehyde Releasers.** Some ingredients are formulated to release formaldehyde over time as a preservative. Formaldehyde may be a carcinogen. Ingredients designed to release formaldehyde include: Quaternium-15, dimethyl-dimethyl (DMDM), midazolidinyl urea, Diazolidinyl urea, 2-bromo-2-nitropropane-1,3-diol (bronopol), hydantoin,
5. **1,4 Dioxane.** According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease registry ([ATSDR dioxane profile](#)) dioxane is a probable human carcinogen and can be found in shampoo, cosmetics, and detergents. Dioxane is a manufacturing by-product of ethoxylation process to make chemical less harsh. Although it will not be listed on the label, this readily absorbed carcinogen has been detected in common personal care products containing PEG, polyethylene, polyethylene glycol, polyoxyethylene, sodium laureth sulfate, and polysorbate. It is interesting to note that many of these contaminated ingredients are also ingredients found in nutritional supplements.
6. **Nail polish.** The big bad three ingredients in nail polish include formaldehyde, toluene, and dibutyl phthalate. These three items have been removed from numerous brands thanks to the Campaign for Safe cosmetics (www.safecosmetics.org). These ingredients disrupt the endocrine system, nervous system, and immune system.
7. **Fragrance.** Fragrance may contain numerous hidden ingredients, including phthalates. Even a scent free may indicate the use of a fragrance to cover up another smell. Before you buy something, read the label.
8. **Lipstick.** A 2009 FDA study showed that lead is present in lipstick. There is no known safe level of lead. Lead is linked to learning difficulties, cardiovascular disease, and other chronic diseases such as osteoporosis and cataracts. You can see the FDA results and brands of lipstick tested at: <http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductandIngredientSafety/ProductInformation/ucm137224.htm>

Useful Websites

1. **Skin Deep** is a consumer safety guide and database to cosmetics and personal care products. www.cosmeticsdatabase.org

2. **The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics** works to protect the health of consumers and workers by securing the corporate, regulatory and legislative reforms necessary to eliminate dangerous chemicals from cosmetics and personal care products. www.safecosmetics.org
3. **The Environmental Working Group** provides information on numerous issues from how to choose the vegetables with the least pesticide residue, the most non toxic sunscreens, and cell phones which emit the least radiation. www.ewg.org
4. **The Breast Cancer Fund** identifies and advocates for elimination of environmental and preventable causes of breast cancer. www.breastcancerfund.org
5. **Cancer Prevention Coalition**'s goal is to reduce escalating cancer rates through a comprehensive strategy of outreach, public education, advocacy, and public policy initiatives to establish prevention as the nation's foremost cancer policy. www.preventcancer.com
6. **Score Card**. Plug in your zip code and get an in-depth pollution report for your county, covering air, water, chemicals, and more. www.scorecard.org
7. **Environmental Health Perspectives**. EHP is a monthly journal of peer-reviewed research and news published by the U.S. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services. The best part of is that any article on the internet is free! www.ehp03.niehs.nih.gov

Suggested Reading

1. **Toxic Beauty How Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Endanger Your Health . . . And What You Can Do about It** by Samuel Epstein, MD
2. **Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry** by Stacy Malkan
3. **2008 State of Evidence: The connection between breast cancer and the environment.** (Breast Cancer Fund, www.breastcancerfund.org)
4. **Clean, Green, and Lean** by Walter Crinnion, ND

Local Resources

- Visit the Boise Co-op's Health and Beauty department for a wide range of non toxic personal care and beauty products. 888 W Fort St, Boise, ID 83702, (208) 472-4500. Contact Cathy Anderson for more information: cathy@boisecoop.com