

10 Toxic Chemicals

Found in Most
Cosmetics



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		Risk Factors	Used In	Look Out For
1	<p>Parabens Parabens are a growing concern in the skin care industry. While parabens are used as a preservative to keep products from growing mold and bacteria, they are also linked to significant health risks.</p> <p>Because of their ability to imitate estrogen, parabens are thought to possibly be endocrine disrupting chemicals. Parabens are also known to contribute to UV damage of the skin. Both of these side effects of parabens, along with past research, suggest that they may potentially cause cancer.</p>	Cancer, infertility, disruption of skin cell growth	Shampoos, conditioners, deodorants, mascara, shaving gels, toothpaste, lotions	Any chemical ending with “-paraben” (ex. methylparaben, propylparaben).
2	<p>Phenoxyethanol Since consumers are more aware of the potential effects of parabens, the skin care industry has turned to another product preservative: phenoxyethanol.</p> <p>The FDA warned consumers using the product Mommy’s Bliss Nipple Cream in 2008 because of the presence of phenoxyethanol. The phenoxyethanol in the cream was reported to cause vomiting and diarrhea in breastfeeding infants.</p> <p>Phenoxyethanol is heavily regulated in Japan and is classified as an irritant by the EU.</p>	Moderate to severe skin irritation, anaphylaxis, central nervous system (CNS) depression in infants	Lotions, blush, eyeshadow, nail polish, mascara, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo	Phenoxyethanol, 2-Phenoxyethanol, PhE, Euxyl K
3	<p>Tetrasodium edta (ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid) Tetrasodium edta is a potential carcinogen that may also contain dangerous levels of dioxane, another suspected carcinogen. It is a product preservative that prevents the growth of microorganisms and preserves the fragrance.</p>	Cancer	Shampoos, moisturizers, soaps	Edetate sodium, Tetrasodium edetate, Tetrasodium salt, TEA-EDTA
4	<p>Phthalates In beauty products, phthalates are most commonly used to make fragrances longer lasting. Phthalates are often not even listed in the ingredients - and it’s legal. They’re included under the umbrella of “fragrance” or “parfum” in the ingredients list. Even though phthalates are used in many products in the United States, they’ve been banned from beauty products in the EU.</p> <p>Look out for products that have a “Phthalate-Free” label -- plenty of brands have them.</p>	Endocrine disruption in pregnant women, infertility (predominantly in men), cancer, liver damage	Lotions and creams with fragrance, nail polish	Fragrance, DEP, DBP
5	<p>Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES) Sodium laureth sulfate is used in many products that create foam, like shampoo and body wash. Because of its chemical composition, it can sometimes become contaminated by ethylene oxide (a known carcinogen) and 1,4 dioxane (#7 in the list).</p> <p>Though SLES has been declared a potential health concern in Canada, it remains to be present in many beauty products in the United States.</p>	Cancer, reproductive defects, endocrine disruption, neurotoxicity	Shampoo, body wash, liquid soap, products that create foam	Sodium laureth sulfate, sodium lauryl sulfate

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<p>6</p> <p>Toluene</p> <p>Toluene is a known toxic chemical -- we just aren't in direct contact with it enough for it to harm us. It is most commonly used in nail polish, so the population most at risk is nail technicians.</p> <p>If you want to know how good toluene is for you, just know that it's found naturally in crude oil and it's used in gasoline.</p>		Hearing and vision damage, reduced cognitive function from chronic exposure	Hair dyes, nail polish	Toluene
<p>7</p> <p>1,4-dioxane</p> <p>Even though 1,4 dioxane is a known carcinogen, the FDA doesn't require it to be listed in a product's ingredients. Why? Well, it's technically not an ingredient. It's a contaminant created by the interaction of chemicals commonly used in beauty products.</p> <p>Luckily, we know which chemicals are likely to be contaminated by 1,4 dioxane. Try to avoid those.</p>		Cancer	Body wash, shampoo, hair relaxers, products that create a lather	PEGs, sodium laureth sulfate, any chemical ending in "xynol", "oleth", or "cetareth"
<p>8</p> <p>Triclosan</p> <p>Triclosan is used for antibacterial purposes in personal grooming products like hand sanitizer and toothpaste. It can seriously disrupt thyroid and endocrine functions. But the kicker is that the FDA found no evidence that products with triclosan is any more effective at protecting against bacteria than those without. It is heavily regulated in cosmetics in Canada and Japan.</p>			Hand sanitizer, deodorant, toothpaste, shaving cream	Triclosan, triclocarban
<p>9</p> <p>DEA/TEA/MEA</p> <p>Diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and monoethanolamine. All three are mouthfuls, but they're important to know.</p> <p>DEA/TEA/MEA are often used to enhance the creaminess of beauty products. Because they absorb into the skin so well, they can easily cause inflammation and irritation. But what's even more scary is that NDEA (a DEA compound) was listed by the National Toxicity Program Report as a carcinogen. And DEA is banned for cosmetics in the EU completely.</p>		Inflammation, cancer (especially of the liver)	Shaving cream, conditioner, shampoo, sunscreen, lotion, foundation, eyeshadow, blush, mascara, dyes, fragrances, and household cleaning products	Diethanolamine, DEA, NDEA, cocamide DEA, DEA-cetyl phosphate, DEA-oleth-3 sulfate, lauramide DEA, myristamide DEA, oleamide DEA, triethanolamine, TEA, TEA-lauryl sulfate, cocamide MEA, linoleamide MEA, stearamide MEA
<p>10</p> <p>Benzophenone</p> <p>Benzophenone is used in cosmetics to protect the product for harmful UV light, so it is most commonly used in sunscreens. It is also bioaccumulating, meaning that our bodies tend to hang on to the chemical for a long time.</p>		Cancer, skin irritation, endocrine disruption, bioaccumulation	Sunscreen, lip balm, shampoo, conditioner, foundation, moisturizers	Benzophenone, oxybenzone, sulisobenzone, sulisobenzone sodium, chemicals with the word "benzophenone"