

International Health

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You Have the Right To Know!

Read Your Labels

List of Dangerous Ingredients

DEA (Diethanolamine), MEA (Monoethanolamine), TEA (Triethanolamine)

As if the long names are not frightening enough . . . these three are hormone-disrupting chemicals and form cancer-causing agents. They are commonly found in bubble baths (in which we relax and soak for long periods), shampoos, soaps and facial cleansers. They are easily absorbed by the skin, and research indicates a strong link to liver and kidney cancer. There is also evidence that carcinogens form when Cocamide DEA (a cleanser, thickener and foam booster) is applied to the skin.

FD&C Color Pigments

You see these at the end of every ingredient list, but not because they are inconsequential. Many cause skin sensitivity and irritation, or even oxygen depletion in the blood. Most are made from coal tar and studies show that almost all of them are carcinogenic (cancer causing). For example, FD&C Red #4 is no longer available for use in foods because of a known threat to the adrenal glands and urinary bladder. It is considered a carcinogen but is still used in non-food products.

Fragrance

The term "fragrance" appearing on a product label indicates the presence of any number of up to 4,000 different ingredients. The majority of these are synthetic and are either cancer-causing or otherwise toxic. Exposure to fragrances has been shown to affect the central nervous system. Fragrance is found in most deodorants (and the underarm is too close to the breast area), shampoos, sunscreens, skincare and body care products.

Imidazolidinyl Urea and DMDM Hydantoin

These are two of many preservatives that are formaldehyde donors. While other less dangerous preservatives exist and are necessary, formaldehyde-based chemicals are best left to morticians, as they can cause joint pain, allergies, depression, headaches, chest pain, ear infections, chronic fatigue, dizziness, loss of sleep, or even function as asthma triggers. Serious side effects include the weakening of the immune system, and, as usual, cancer. These chemicals are commonly found in skincare, body care and hair care products, antiperspirants and nail polish.

Quaternium-15

Quaternium-15 is also used as a preservative in cosmetics and toiletry items, as well as skin moisturizers and hair care products. It commonly causes allergic reactions and dermatitis, and breaks down into formaldehyde (see above).

Isopropyl Alcohol

Isopropyl Alcohol is petroleum derived, and is used in antifreeze and shellac. Side effects are headache, dizziness, mental depression, nausea, vomiting, and coma. It is commonly found in hair color rinses, body rubs, hand lotion and aftershave lotions. It penetrates the skin easily and is thought to destroy intestinal flora, leaving your body's major organs open to parasites, and thus to cancers. The sad fact is that isopropyl alcohol simply isn't needed, but the petroleum industry makes a killing off of this industrial byproduct (read: industrial waste).

Mineral Oil

Mineral oil sounds nice, doesn't it? It isn't. It is a petroleum derivative that coats the skin like plastic wrap, which stands in the way of the skin's natural function of releasing toxins from the body. It slows the skin's natural cell development, causing the skin to age prematurely. Baby oil is 100% mineral oil!!!

PEG (Polyethylene Glycol)

PEG's are used to dissolve oil and grease, and to thicken products. They strip the skin of its natural moisture factor, leaving the skin and hence the immune system vulnerable. They are also potentially cancer causing. They are used in spray-on oven cleaners and, not surprisingly, in many hair care and skincare products.

Propylene Glycol

Propylene Glycol is a very beneficial product -- for your car's radiator. It is, after all, the active ingredient in antifreeze. Used as a surfactant (or wetting agent), it also breaks down protein and cellular structure, yet it is still found in bodycare products, including toothpaste, makeup and deodorants. The EPA requires workers to wear protective gloves, clothing and goggles when working with it. Direct contact can cause brain, liver and kidney abnormalities. Stick deodorants are higher in concentration of PG than is allowed for most industrial use! Also beware of Butylene Glycol, a petroleum plastic like PG.

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate and Sodium Laureth Sulfate

Both are used as detergents and surfactants in car wash soaps, garage floor cleaners, and engine degreasers. Yet these two are most widely used in cosmetics, toothpaste, hair conditioner, shampoo and other foaming products. Exposure causes eye damage, depression, diarrhea and many other ailments. This is perhaps the MOST DANGEROUS of all ingredients, and when used in combination with other chemicals, can form nitrosamines, a potent class of carcinogen. It also hurts the eyes.

Triclosan

Triclosan is a synthetic antibacterial ingredient with a chemical structure similar to that of Agent Orange. And it behaves the same way: The Environmental Protection Agency registers it as a pesticide, highly toxic to any living organism. It is also classified as a chlorophenol, a chemical class suspected of causing cancer in humans. It is a hormone disrupter, which means it affects sexual function and fertility and may foster birth defects. Its manufacturing process produces Dioxin (need we say more?), a powerful hormone-disrupting chemical with toxic effects in quantities as small as parts per trillion (that's one drop in 300 Olympic-size swimming pools). Triclosan stores away in body fat and can accumulate to toxic levels in the liver, kidneys and lungs. It can cause paralysis, suppression of the immune system, brain hemorrhages, and heart problems. It is widely used in antibacterial cleansers, toothpaste, and household products. Synthetic antibacterials such as Triclosan have been banned in Europe, but Anti-Bacterial is still available in the United States.

Talc

Talc has been around for a long time, which isn't reason enough to use it. It is widely used in makeup, baby and adult powders and foundation. It conveniently provides slip and covering, with the inconvenience of being strongly linked to ovarian and testicular cancer.

Retinyl Palmitate

A topical form of Vitamin A derivative. It is listed on the Health Canada Product Safety Bureau's Hit List as: TOXIC.

Petrolatum

Petrolatum is a petrochemical that contains two well-known carcinogens: Benzo-A-Pyrene and Benzo-B-Fluroanthene. It prevents the skin from taking in oxygen or respiring waste. It is used in hand and skincare products to form an occlusive barrier on the skin (again, preventing the skin from doing what it is meant to do, detoxify).