

TOXIC TOUR: WHAT'S IN MY PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Ingredients to watch out for	Where it is found	Uses	Effects	In your products y/n
AHAs – Alpha-hydroxy acids (or 'fruit acids'; incl. Glycolic acid and lactic acid)	Cleansers and exfoliants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - used to smooth fine lines and wrinkles. - improve skin texture and tone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can penetrate the skin -Adverse skin reaction reported. -May increase sensitivity to sunlight therefore increase photoaging and risk of sun-related skin cancers. 	
BHT & BHA Butylated hydroxytoluene & butylated hydroxy anisole	Baby products, toothpaste and other personal care products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preservative - antioxidant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible allergen - Suspected endocrine disruptor* - Under evaluation by the EU because of explicit concerns about safety - Levels of BHT and BHA recently reduced in products due to safety concerns - Has been linked to possible behavioural effects, reproductive failures - not allowed in baby food 	
Dimethicone (polydimethylsiloxane)	Many skin care products	Silicone based Liquid Polymer mostly used as an antifoaming and skin-conditioning agent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identified as a Carcinogen, Mutagen, and Reproductive Toxicant (CMR). Potential Endocrine Disruptor 	
Fragrance (Parfum, or Aroma)	Perfumes, aftershaves, deodorants, anti-perspirant, body sprays and many personal care products.	To add 'fragrance' or mask smells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Can exacerbate asthmatic symptoms. -May contain chemicals linked to cancer, damaging to the liver and kidneys and toxic to the nervous system. -One 'fragrance' can contain up to 300 different chemicals 	

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			-Up to 30% of the population report adverse health effects or irritation from fragranced products.	
Hair products Lye	Hair relaxers		-Study found up to 30% increase in breast cancer among black women who used lye-containing products for at least 7/yr for 15 or more yrs	
Hydroquinone	used in skin lightening or bleaching creams	Reduces natural production of melanin (pigment) in the skin - lightens skin tone.	-Can cause erythema (skin redness), infections, and hirsutism (excessive hair growth) -Can cause impaired vision and permanent eye damage for workers a mutagen – linked to cancer.	
Microplastics		Variety of uses such as exfoliation, cleansing, to give a smooth finish to coat hair or skin, or to encapsulate synthetic fragrances for fabric softeners or detergents.	-Can be up to 90% of added product ingredients -Been found in human blood, lungs, faeces and the placenta. -Microplastics have been found on the earth's highest mountains and in the deepest oceans. -Linked to inflammation, can leach toxic additives and act as magnet for harmful bacteria	
Parabens (Alkyl parahydroxy benzoates, or propyl/butyl/methyl/ethyl)	Many creams and personal care products.	Preservatives	- Endocrine Disruptor (EDC) (interfere with body's natural hormones) -Can penetrate the skin	

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			-Several parabens have already been banned by the EU due to safety concerns.	
Phthalates di-ethyl phthalate (DEP), butyl benzyl phthalate (BBP))	Perfumes, aftershaves, body sprays and lotion, and most synthetically fragranced cosmetics and personal care products such as nail varnish.	- to carry fragrance or denature alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Risk to pregnant women and others and to developing fetus - Linked to reproductive, developmental and other health impacts such as damage to sperm, infertility and miscarriage. - May disrupt hormones endocrine disruptors and cause birth defects - Linked to asthma and allergic disease - Some phthalates have been banned in personal care products due to safety concerns, but some remain 	
P-Phenylenediamine (PPD, or Para-phenylene-diamine)	Hair dye and black henna skin tattoos	- used in permanent dye to fix colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skin irritant - Increase in cancer especially among black women who use hair dye. - Linked to asthma and allergic diseases - Skin irritant 	
Propylene glycol (propane-1,2-diol)	Used in a wide range of personal care products	Humectant – used to maintain moisture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can cause contact dermatitis - Linked to depression of the Central Nervous System (CNS) 	

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Talc	Used as a filler in many colour cosmetics, and as a loose powder.	- Used to absorb moisture - Used as a filler and to improve the feel of a products	-Can be contaminated with asbestos during mining -Linked to cancer ie ovarian -Advisable not to use near genitals.	
Petrolatum or mineral oil	Found in products like petroleum jelly, baby cream.	Used as moisturiser.	-Derived from fossil fuel -Can be contaminated with other toxic ingredients derived from petroleum unless highly refined	
Paraffinum Liquidum or mineral oil	Found in products like baby lotion, milk and oil, stretch mark oil, face cream and body lotion.	Used as emollient and moisturisers in many skin creams.	-Derived from fossil fuel -Can block pores as heavy mineral oil -Can be contaminated with other toxic ingredients derived from petroleum unless highly refined	

*Endocrine Disruptors – synthetic chemicals, substances or pesticides which can interfere with the endocrine system (the body's messenger system for our hormones). Called endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) or sometimes hormone disruptors or oestrogen mimics they can affect every stage of our life and development. They can block hormones from doing their job, or mimic our body's own natural hormones. Basically, bad news for humans, wildlife, and our environment.

A hormone is a chemical substance that acts like little molecular messengers travelling all over the body to help control how our cells and organs work. Examples of hormones include oestrogen, testosterone, and insulin.

[Click here for Bibliography](#)

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