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Ten Synthetic Cosmetic Ingredients to Avoid



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Making healthy eating choices is essential for bringing nutrition to our vital organs and cells. But have you considered that your derma (skin) is your largest organ, and yet we often don't think about what we are putting on our faces and bodies? Just as it's important to watch what we eat, it's important to consider what we put on our bodies in the way of makeup and products such as cream, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, and even toothpaste and mouthwash.

If we are avoiding pesticides in foods, for example, why not in body care? I am sure you'll be surprised to learn that even products that claim to be healthy may include harmful ingredients. So beware of words like "natural" or "fragrance," behind which companies can hide many toxins.

Aubrey Organics and Acure are two companies I have purchased some nice body oils and creams from. As for makeup, I have used Red Apple Lipstick and Jane Iredale. Red Apple makes luscious, gluten-free lip-glosses, eye shadows and mascaras. Jane Iredale has an entire line of makeup and face creams, and Jane was one of the

forerunners in striving to be as toxin free as possible, but please do your homework and read labels thoroughly. By permission, I have this list in my book *Breast Cancer: The Notebook* from www.AubreyOrganics.com.

Imidazolidinyl Urea and Diazolidinyl Urea. These are the most commonly used preservatives after the parabens. They are well established as a primary cause of contact dermatitis. Two trade names for these chemicals are Germall II and Germall 115. They are usually combined with other preservatives. Germall 115 releases formaldehyde at just over 10 degrees. These chemicals are toxic.

Methyl and Propyl and Butyl and Ethyl Paraben. Used as inhibitors of microbial growth and to extend shelf life of products. Widely used even though they are known to be toxic. They have caused allergic reactions and skin rashes. Methyl paraben combines benzoic acid with the methyl group of chemicals. Highly toxic.

Petrolatum. You will find this in many lip products claiming to aid in sunburn and chapping. Petrolatum is a mineral oil jelly, and mineral oil causes a lot of problems when used on the skin. It increases photosensitivity (i.e., promotes sun damage) and tends to interfere with the body's own natural moisturizing mechanism, leading to dry skin and chapping. Using products with petrolatum will create the very conditions it claims to alleviate. Manufacturers use petrolatum because it is unbelievably cheap.

Propylene Glycol. Ideally, this is a vegetable glycerin mixed with grain alcohol, both of which are

natural. Usually it is a synthetic petrochemical mix used as a humectant. Has been known to cause allergic and toxic reactions.

PVP/VA Copolymer. A petroleum-derived chemical used in hair sprays, wave sets and other cosmetics.

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate. This synthetic substance is used in shampoos for its detergent and foam-building abilities. It causes eye irritations, skin rashes, hair loss, scalp scurf similar to dandruff and allergic reactions. It is frequently disguised in pseudo-natural cosmetics with the parenthetical explanation "comes from coconut."

Stearalkonium Chloride. A chemical used in hair conditioners and creams. Causes allergic reactions. Stearalkonium chloride was developed by the fabric industry as a fabric softener, and is a lot cheaper and easier to use in hair conditioning formulas than proteins or herbals, which do help hair health.

Synthetic Colors. The synthetic colors used to make a cosmetic "pretty" should be avoided at all costs, along with hair dyes. They will be labeled as FD&C or D&C, followed by a color and a number. Example: FD&C Red No.6, or D&C Green No. 6.

Synthetic Fragrances. The Synthetic fragrances used in cosmetics can have as many as 200 ingredients. There is no way to know what the chemicals are, since on the label it will simply say "Fragrance." Some of the problems caused by these chemicals are headaches, dizziness, rash, hyper-pigmentation and violent coughing, vomiting, skin irritation. Do not buy a cosmetic

that has the word "Fragrance" on the ingredients label.

Triethanolamine. Often used in cosmetics to adjust the pH level, and used with many fatty acids to convert acid to salt (stearate), which then becomes the base, for a cleanser. TEA causes allergic reactions including eye problems, dryness of hair and skin and could be toxic if absorbed into the body over a long period of time.

The bottom line is to read and understand the ingredients in products that you purchase. Please avoid cosmetics that are artificially colored. If the shampoo is bright green or blue, chances are that it contains a coal tar color, which you are applying directly to your scalp. You may find that some of your allergy problems will suddenly disappear when you no longer use body products and cosmetics formulated with petrochemicals and other synthetics.

Remember that each day counts; therefore what we put on our bodies and in our bodies makes all the difference. As for me: I approach each day with prayer to set the tone, and then I go to what I call my Office of Health & Wellness to decide how to find my balance. This includes what I will eat to provide nutrition, what I will put on my skin to nourish it, how to make time for fitness, balance my work schedule and find ways to give back. In striving for these things, I find peace and joy. Some days I fail, but as I strive for this, it allows me to honor my body and be thankful for it.

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