

13 Ingredients to Avoid when buying cosmetics

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Petrolatum

- What to look for on the label: petrolatum, petroleum jelly, mineral oil jelly, mineral oil
- Used in: lip balms, moisturizers, and hair shine products
- Petroleum product, petrolatum can be contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons which are carcinogenic
- Promotes sun damage
- Interferes with skin's ability to eliminate toxins

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PEG Compounds

- What to look for on the label: Polyethylene Glycol
 Used in: cosmetics as thickeners, solvents, softeners, and moisture-carriers
 Possible human carcinogen
 Harmful to the nervous system
 Can interfere with human development
 Increases permeability of skin (leaving you more vulnerable to bacteria and other chemicals in the environment)

Formaldehyde-releasing agents

- What to look for on the label: DMDM hydantoin, diazolidinyl urea, imidazolidinyl urea, methenamine, quaternium-15, and sodium hydroxymethylglycinate
- Used in: cosmetics as a preservative
- Known human carcinogen
- Can trigger allergies and weaken the immune system
- Linked to symptoms ranging from headaches to respiratory issues

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BHA and BHT

- What to look for on the label: butylated hydroxyanisole or butylated hydroxytoluene
- Used in: makeup and moisturizers as a preservative
- Possible human carcinogen
- Can induce allergic reactions in the skin
- Interferes with hormone function (endocrine disruptor)

Parabens

- What to look for on the label: paraben, methylparaben, butylparaben, and propylparaben, etc (with paraben included in chemical name), sometimes part of fragrances
- Used in: cosmetics as a preservative
- Interfere with hormone function (endocrine disruptor)
- Possible carcinogen and cause skin irritation and rashes

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Siloxanes

- What to look for on the label: Cyclomethicone and ingredients ending in "siloxane" (e.g., cyclotetrasiloxane)
- Used in: cosmetics to soften, smooth, or moisten
- Endocrine disrupter and can also harm neurotransmitters
- Bioaccumulates in the environment

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DEA, MEA, and TEA compounds

- What to look for on the label: diethanolamine, monoethanolamine, triethanolamine
- Used in: cosmetics as a pH adjuster and also to make cosmetics more creamy or sudsy
- Carcinogenic in high doses and endocrine disruptors

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At a glance:

- **Artificial Fragrances:** fragrance or parfum
- **BHA and BHT:** butylated hydroxyanisole or butylated hydroxytoluene
- **DBP and DEP:** Dibutyl phthalate and diethyl phthalate
- **DEA MEA TEA:** diethanolamine monoethanolamine, triethanolamine
- **Formaldehyde:** DMDM hydantoin, diazolidinyl urea, imidazolidinyl urea, methenamine, quaternium-15, and sodium hydroxymethylglycinate
- **Oxybenzone:** oxybenzone, phenylmethanone, or chemicals containing the word benzone
- **Parabens:** paraben, methylparaben, butylparaben, and propylparaben, etc (with paraben included in chemical name)
- **PEG Compounds:** Polyethylene Glycol
- **Siloxanes:** Cyclomethicone and ingredients ending in siloxane (e.g., cyclotetrasiloxane)
- **SLS and SLES:** Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) & Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES)
- **Synthetic colors:** labeled as FD&C or D&C, followed by a color and a number, or P-phenylenediamine
- **Triclosan**

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SLS and SLES

- What to look for on the label: Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) & Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES)- It is frequently disguised in pseudo-natural cosmetics with the parenthetic explanation "comes from coconut."
- Used in: foaming cosmetics, like shampoo and body wash
- Possible human carcinogen and can affect the nervous system
- Can irritate skin and eyes
- Stays in body for five days allowing it to accumulate in organs

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Synthetic colors

- What to look for on the label: They will be labeled as FD&C or D&C, followed by a color and a number, or P-phenylenediamine
- Used in: cosmetics that are colored, especially hair dyes
- Coal tar-derived colours are used extensively in cosmetics, derived from petroleum
- Potential carcinogen: correlated with increased occurrence of tumors and certain types of cancers

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Artificial fragrances

- What to look for on the label: fragrance or parfum
- Used in: most types of cosmetics (even some considered fragrance free), can indicate up to four thousand separate ingredients
- Fragrance recipes are considered trade secrets, so manufacturers are not required to disclose fragrance chemicals
- As fragrances can contain many other chemicals, they can be carcinogenic, endocrine disruptors, etc.
- Evidence suggesting that exposure to perfume can exacerbate asthma, and perhaps even contribute to its development in children
- Symptoms reported to the FDA include headaches, dizziness, allergic rashes, skin discoloration, vomiting, and skin irritation

DBP and DEP

- What to look for on the label: Dibutyl phthalate and diethyl phthalate
- Used in: nail polish as a solvent for dyes and to prevent polish from becoming brittle
- Can cause developmental defects
- Possible endocrine disruptor
- Can impair fertility

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Oxybenzone

- What to look for on the label: oxybenzone, phenylmethanone, or chemicals containing the word benzone
- Used in: sunscreen
- Endocrine disruptor
- Highly absorbed by skin and known to cause allergic reactions

Triclosan

- What to look for on the label: triclosan
- Used in: deodorants, cleansers, and hand sanitizers as a preservative and an anti-bacterial agent
- The EPA registers it as a pesticide
- Suspected carcinogen and endocrine disrupter
- Bioaccumulative and increases antibiotic resistance

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