COSMETICS INGREDIENTS TO AVOID

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The cosmetic industry is self-regulating (meaning there is no independent objective regulatory organization).

Many of the ingredients below can be found in the majority of bath products, lotions, shaving creams, shampoos, and soaps.

PARABENS: most common preservative, in 75-90% of cosmetic products

- Included in many "natural" or "organic" products
- Labelled as a "paraben" or ethyl-, methyl-, butyl-, propyl-, para- hydroxybenzoate
- Mimics estrogen thereby disrupting hormones in the body

IMIDAZOLIDINYL/DIAZOLIDINYL UREA : 2nd most common preservative

- Endocrine disruption; may trigger contact dermatitis
- Converts to formaldehyde in the body

SODIUM LAURYL/LAURETH SULFATE: ubiquitous foaming agent

- Industrial engine degreaser, industrial detergent
- Skin irritant; also converts to nitrosamines (a known carcinogen)
- In 90% of foaming soaps, toothpastes & some supplements (eg. Materna)

PETROLEUM JELLY: additive to prevent moisture loss

- Hydrocarbon derived from oil
- Inexpensive ingredient
- Links to organ toxicity, allergen

PROPYLENE GLYCOL: surfactant, wetting agent, solvent

- Used in industry as a protein and cellular disrupter
- Organ toxicity: brain, liver, kidneys

ETHANOLAMINE/DIETHANOLAMINE: emulsifying & foaming agent

- Cancer link in animal studies

ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL: solvent/denaturant

- Systemic, neurological toxicity
- Fatal if 1 oz is ingested

GRAPEFRUIT SEED EXTRACT (GSE): `natural`preservative

- Some cosmetic-grade GSE shown to contain triclosan (antimicrobial), methyl-paraben (preservative) or benzethonium-chloride (antiseptic)
- References: *Sakamoto S et al, Bull Natl Inst Health Sci, 114, 38-42, 1996* & *von Woedtke T et al, Pharmazie, 54, 452-456, 1999*

DYES (FD&C or D&C): synthetic colours

- Derived from coal tar
- Studies have shown links to cancer

FRAGRANCES: synthetic perfumes

- Hundreds available, not required to be specified on ingredient list; completely unregulated
- Systemic toxicities, however, most toxicities are unknown due to lack of regulation

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