



Ten Toxic Ingredients to Avoid

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Do you know what's in your beauty and body care products?



Knowing how to choose body-safe, environmentally-friendly body care products can be very *confusing*. We should know, we've been working on detoxing our body care regime for nearly a decade!

There are hundreds if not thousands of different compounds used in these kinds of products and it can sometimes feel like you need to have a Ph.D. in chemistry to decipher a product's ingredient list.

That's why we wanted to put together this easy reference info sheet. We've chosen the top ten ingredients we think you should avoid – both because they tend to be in products we use every day (think: toothpaste or shampoo) and because they have research linking them to known health effects and environmental consequences. We hope it makes your shopping a little easier! For suggestions on specific brands of body products and make-up, check out [this blog post](#). Or if you want to see how your favourite brands and products stack up, you can enter them into the [Skin Deep website](#) to view their rating. This list was adapted from [David Suzuki](#) and the [Skin Deep Website](#).

Parabens

There are a number of different parabens – **butylparaben**, **propylparaben** and **methylparaben** - so you want to look at the end of the word to find the “paraben” part. Parabens are a preservative, so you’ll find them in most mainstream body care products. Parabens are a suspected endocrine disruptor (meaning they disrupt the hormonal balance of the body) and since the issue seems to be around the cumulative effect it’s best to minimize exposure when you can.



Sodium Laureth Sulphate (SLS)

Used to create a “foaming” action, you’ll find SLS in products like shampoos and toothpastes. There’s conflicting research regarding a link between SLS and cancer, however there are extensive reports of SLS causing skin irritations. There’s also some concern that SLS can be contaminated with 1,4-dioxane, a suspected carcinogen.

Propylene Glycol

Used to maintain moisture, propylene glycol is found in a number of body care products including **personal lubricants**. It’s known to cause skin irritations (and your vulva is definitely not an area where you want that!)

Triclosan

Triclosan is found in most mainstream toothpastes and mouthwashes, as well as some other body care products. Health Canada has set limits on the concentration of triclosan allowed in individual items, but (like parabens) it's a common ingredient which means it can build up in our body. Risks include skin irritation and endocrine disruption, as well as potentially long-term adverse effects to aquatic environments.



Parfum (a.k.a. fragrance)

This is the one that really gets us riled up because it's basically a catch-all term that can mask any number of ingredients, meaning that companies aren't really disclosing what's in their products. Research

from the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics found an average of 14 chemicals in 17 name brand fragrance products, none of them listed on the label. Since parfum is an umbrella term, the health concerns can range from skin allergies to neurotoxicity, as well as damage to fish and other wildlife.

BHA and BHT

BHA and BHT are found mainly in moisturizers and makeup. The European Commission on Endocrine Disruption found evidence that BHA is a human endocrine disruptor and banned its use in cosmetics. There's also a concern that it is harmful to fish and other wildlife, and some indication that it can lead to cancer.

p-Phenylenediamine

Found in hair products (especially hair dye), concerns with p-Phenylenediamine include skin irritation and some evidence linking it to cancer.

Diethanolamine (DEA)

Used mostly in moisturizers and shampoos, DEA doesn't wash off easily which can lead to skin irritation. Some research suggests a link to cancer, as well as harm to fish and other wildlife.

Formaldehyde releasers (Diazolidinyl urea, DMDM Hydantoin, Bronopol, Quaternium-15, Imidzaolidinyl urea)

A known human carcinogen, exposure to formaldehyde can cause dizziness, joint pain, depression, headaches, immune dysfunction and chronic fatigue. In the U.S. approximately 20% of cosmetics and personal care products contain a formaldehyde-releaser.

PEGs/Ceteareth/Polyethylene compounds

Found in cosmetic creams, these compounds are frequently contaminated with 1,4-dioxane, which the U.S. government considers a probable human carcinogen. Although companies could easily remove 1,4-dioxane from ingredients, that's often not the case.

Interested in Learning More?

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about how to protect your beautiful body from harmful chemicals! We are passionate about this topic and believe this knowledge should be available to everyone. It is especially important for [those trying to conceive](#), and [those with hormonal imbalances](#) and skin sensitivities. However, given all the potential risks, why not do everything you can to reduce your exposure (especially when there are so many great alternatives)? Let's take a proactive approach to health and wellness! That's what we're all about here at Red Tent Sisters.

If you'd like to learn more about how we can help you with making your life even greener and more eco-friendly, read through [our blog posts](#), check out [our programs](#) or email us at thesisters@redtentsisters.com.

Love,
Kim & Amy