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Safer Eco-Friendly Cosmetics

The essentialism of beauty and personal care forms an important part to everyone's life. Humans are constantly concerned with their appearance which therefore creates a high demand for cosmetic products. In order to fulfill one's needs regarding personal appearance, one relies on cosmetics and personal care products. These same products that are meant to provide self-satisfaction have been harmful to the body. For a very long time cosmetic products have not only been harmful to humans but have also been affecting the environment and many animals. Nonetheless in the past years the cosmetic industry has focused more on combating these bad aspects of their products.

Unfortunately the regulation level at which cosmetics and personal care products are regulated would make most people feel very unsafe if they were aware of them. ("how to go green") Often people are not safe because the information that the companies provided the costumers with is information that is too complex for their individual understanding. Many of these products contain ingredients with questionable implications, as well as potentially toxic agents that are not even included on the label. Not only are harmful ingredients often not listed on the labels but often people don't bother to take the time to read the

labels and when some actually take the time to mind the ingredients within the product they are provided with very complex names to those ingredients.

When I started working with this research I did something that had never crossed my mind before. I am a person in whose life cosmetics formed a vital part to; there wasn't a day where I didn't apply cosmetics to my skin. When I started this research I took the time to grab those products I used on a daily basis and look at the things I was applying onto my skin. I found my self with the surprise that all of Mary Kay's products do not even have any ingredients labeled. For Mary Kay's products if you wish to know the components of them you have to request them with your supplier and it can take a very large period of time before you can receive these because most of the ingredients are not even available online.

As I went on looking through the many products I found many in which I was appalled with the names of their ingredients. As I furthered out the research by looking up those ingredients the harmful chemicals that make up those products astounded me. For instance Ethylene glycol, is commonly used in products such as acrylic paints, brake fluid, antifreeze, primer, sealant paste, floor polish, tire sealant and shoe polish and yet it's also used in smoothing lotions and firming moisturizers. Ethylene glycol causes respiratory irritation in humans and it affects the respiratory system and the kidney. ("ETHYLENE GLYCOL") Therefore before applying any one product to one's skin one should take the time to read the labels. Hopefully by reading the labels one can lower

the risks that the skin is exposed to with the use of cosmetics or personal care products.

While many non cosmetic users might think they are safe from the harmful chemicals in cosmetics since they don't use such they are not because these harmful chemicals are often as well found in products we all use daily, for example toothpaste, soap and shampoo. These personal care products often include Sodium lauryl sulfate and sodium laureth sulfate. Sodium lauryl sulfate is a detergent and surfactant found in many personal care products These chemicals are very effective as foaming agents yet they are also well known carcinogens. Sodium lauryl sulfate dissolves the oils on your skin, which causes a drying effect. It has also been proven that it denatures skin proteins, which causes not only irritation, but also allows environmental contaminants to access sensitive layers of the skin easier. ("Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES). The Killers in your bathroom? ")

Many helpless and defenseless animals have been tested on for cosmetics through out the years. Every year cosmetics companies test their products on animals and end up killing millions of animals. The purpose behind animal testing is that they want to measure the irritancy levels of products and to test for any damages or toxicity caused by the products. ("cosmetic testing facts") These companies claim they test on animals to ensure safety in their products and ingredients for their consumers but never do they consider the safety of animals.

After many years of living with this disapproving conditions mentioned above; the cosmetic industry has now stepped up and improved this conditions. They have substituted as much unhelpful actions as they can with positive ones. In these rational changes the government has served as an important benefactor in making cosmetics less harmful and a lot greener. For example the government has prohibited many ingredients that cosmetics companies would use to formulate their products. By the government taking such a step it has force cosmetic companies to look for different products that serve the same purpose as the one used before but which is a lot greener and less harmful.

Government's place in the fight towards safe cosmetics is indispensable. Not only are they needed for regulations but as well to enforce the regulations. Just recently government has been working on propositions and bills that should help with executing the plan of turning cosmetics safer. (greenerdesign) In July 2010 the U.S House of Representative proposed the Safe Cosmetics Act. The Safe Cosmetics Act was designed to give the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authority to ensure that personal care products are free of harmful ingredients and that ingredients are fully disclosed. ("cosmetics laws")

Additional to the need of the Government the existence of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is as well needed. The two most important laws pertaining to cosmetics marketed in the United States are the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act(FPLA). ("cosmetics laws")

It is very important that the government the FDA and the many cosmetic companies work together hand in hand towards the cause of making products safer for both people and the Earth. However there needs to be a strong bond between the three in order to carry out the project. They each on their very own way are fundamental to the cause. Without the government the FDA would have no right to utilize its authority to regulate the products. However without the companies there is just no product to regulate at all.

Currently the natural and organic personal care industry is estimated to account for between 3 to 4 percent of the total industry. However the rapid growth means that it is likely to soon make the step from a niche category to become a second tier category.(pitman) As the industry has progressed at using less harmful ingredients they have come to work with natural products. Now many companies such as Bare Minerals, Bare Escentuals, E.L.F. and many more have been introduced to the cosmetic industry. Such companies are focused on producing products that are created based on natural components. Some of the ingredients in these green cosmetics are zinc oxide which is a natural source mineral. It works by forming a safety barrier for the skin to protect it from irritants. ("zinc oxide") In comparison to the usual cosmetic products this mineral made products are less toxic to the body. They are not quite 100 percent non toxic yet however they are better than the regular products.

Despite the different brand names and marketing strategies, most mineral

makeup has very similar ingredients. The most commonly used minerals that are used in these products are micronized titanium dioxide, micronized zinc oxide, iron oxide, silk mica, and hydrated silica. Micronized titanium dioxide is a common ingredient in sun block products, it is particularly used to protect skin from damaging sunlight. Micronized zinc oxide works in combination with the micronized titanium dioxide to reflect the sunlight's dangerous UVA and UVB rays. ("mineral makeup ingredients") To this Sussana Burke added that organic botanicals, are the natural substitutes for parabens and preservatives to name a few. Sussana Burke mentioned that this is done to substitutes for toxic chemicals and chemical processes. This action is it's called green chemistry. Lately most chemically safe cosmetic companies are seeking out alternatives to toxic chemicals by turning to green chemistry and chemical suppliers.

Although safer cosmetics have been out on the market for a while now; still not many people are using them. Many consumers are currently still using their harmful cosmetics due to the high priced green cosmetics. Even though eco-friendly cosmetics should be used by most cosmetic users many are not able to afford them. By many consumers lack of affording better cosmetics they remain harming their bodies and the planet along with the planet's animals.

If cosmetic companies are truly willing to help the Earth and a make a change they should re-price their products. The reason to this is that for example a regular make-up powder cost starts ranging from about 9 dollars while a mineral powder range starts from about 30 dollars. Therefore obviously

most consumers will go with buying the cheaper product after all in appearance it will give the same result as the mineral one.

Without regard to the prices of cosmetics there is more to it from the consumer side. The consumer should not just rely on the government passing laws that will make products safer. Also one should not expect the FDA to always put the best products on the market. It is after all our own responsibility to know what we are acquiring. The consumer needs to base the decision of their purchase not only on the price but as well needs to take the time and look at the components of the products. Today the information behind those complex chemicals within the products are not very far from our reach. As of today it is very easy to access information about the ingredients and find the advantages and disadvantages that the product has. Therefore everyone should be responsible for caring to know what they are acquiring.

Aside from green cosmetics being developed there has also been green personal care products developed. There has been from natural toothpaste to organic soaps and shampoos created to keep your body safe from toxins. Some of the natural toothpastes consist of products such as baking soda, naturally sourced fluoride, zinc citrate and natural silica; which are harmless products. As for the shampoos there is such products like Burt Bee's products which contain natural fruit extracts and contains several polyphenols and anthocyanidins which are highly antioxidants protecting hair and skin. ("Very Volumizing Pomegranate & Soy Shampoo")

One more positive side to eco-friendly/green cosmetics is that there is barely if not any animal testing. So now not only are the companies focusing in the safety of the human but as well the environment in which animals are included. This gives a safe and free of chemical toxins life not only to humans but as well to all of our surroundings.

After successfully conversing with Susanna Burke a distinguished cosmetic agent and her colleague Paige an Eco/Green Beauty Expert I became more familiar with the cosmetic industry. During the process of carrying on with this consultation my knowledge concerning the innovation of natural based products was extended. When asked What actions cosmetic companies are taking towards saving the environment. The response given was that many large cosmetic companies are making mineral lines. Such actions are making a difference by beginning to omit toxic chemicals and they are using environmentally kind packaging or less packaging in general. This is resulting in less toxins in our environment which means healthier people, food and water. Less or recycled packaging equals a less landfill and more natural resources. Paige stated that many companies aren't clean at all while some are cleaner than others. However the smaller and newer cosmetic companies are she affirmed. Paige also explained that the commitment of the different companies varies among the many.

Paige as well took a minute to express that overall there is a lot of talk

about chemically safe products in companies and in government. That is the good news she explained that it will only be a matter of time before companies are regulated to omit toxic chemicals. She mentioned that many propositions and bills are already being presented at city, state and federal levels. She as well mentioned the industry has been introducing many green innovations and both her as well as Burke complied that green chemistry as mentioned before is currently an immense innovation to the industry.

To elaborate more on green chemistry they mentioned that the chemical supplier Eastman launched an emollient ester produced using a catalytic process at the trade show in cosmetics in 2008, and announced earlier this year it would be producing greener versions of four of the most commonly used emollient esters in cosmetics products using the same process. Emollient esters improve slip and other properties of personal care formulations such as slip, glide, feel, rubout, combability, and gloss while reducing tack.

As said before not all the companies share the same commitment. Burke and Paige expressed that every company has a different agenda. They as well specified that money is usually the key factor in how far they each are willing to go to protect the environment as an individual as well as the sacrifices they are willing to make. Paige articulated that some of the actions companies should or could take as an option of helping the environment are; omitting toxic or untested chemicals and to follow the European Union Cosmetics Directive which has banned 1,100 toxic chemicals in Europe. Additionally use environmentally

kind standards and practices and further more use less packaging, recycled packaging, biodegradable packaging or compostable packaging.

Conclusively, the cosmetic industry has certainly come a long way. It has gone from harmful chemicals to natural minerals. Also it went from polluting and damaging the environment to taking part in saving the environment. Now after years of the cosmetic industry along with the government and the FDA striving to find an alternative for the defects that the cosmetics and personal care products beared they finally seemed to have it settled down. There is still certainly a long way to go to make the products fully safe and harmless but step by step they are becoming closer to that point. Although it is upon the industry to try to provide the best products for you one should still become involve in reading the labels and taking it upon one's self to know what you are using and what effects does it cause.

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