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BCPP.org
(<https://www.bcpp.org/>)

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Top Toxic Ingredients in Cosmetics

Use our lists below to see how your products stack up. These are the most common toxic chemical ingredients in cosmetics.

For businesses, check out our [Red List \(/red-list/business/\)](/red-list/business/), our recommended “do not use” list of toxic chemicals.



20 Toxic Ingredients to Avoid

Beauty and personal care products can contain toxic chemicals that we absorb, inhale, and ingest daily.
Always check the ingredient list to avoid the below!



Acrylates (EMA, MMA)

Alkylphenols

(look for nonylphenol, octylphenol, hectaphenol)

Benzophenone

Butylated compounds (BHA, BHT)

Carbon black

Diazolidinyl urea

DMDM hydantoin

Parabens

Ethanolamines (DEA, TEA, MEA)

Formaldehyde

Fragrance, parfum

Homosalate

Octinoxate

PTFE

Phthalates

o, m and p-phenylenediamine

Quaternium-15

Resorcinol

Toluene

Triphenyl phosphate (TPP, TPHP)



**Campaign
for Safe
Cosmetics**

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics leads the movement to make beauty and personal care products safer for all.
www.safecosmetics.org

Top 20 Toxic Ingredients in Cosmetics

Download this free list of top chemical ingredients to avoid.

[Get the List](#)

Hidden in plain sight.

Most of us use 12 beauty and personal care products on average every day.

These products can contain hundreds of unique chemicals that we absorb, inhale and ingest – some are linked to cancer, birth defects, learning disabilities and other serious health problems.

Lax regulation means the industry can sell products made with virtually any industrial chemical, without FDA safety testing or review.

Together, we can change that. [Take Action > \(/take-action/\)](#)



Top Toxic Ingredients in Cosmetics to Avoid

Moisturizer ▲

- Polyacrylamide (possible acrylamide contamination)
- PTFE (possible PFOA contamination)
- Petrolatum (possible PAH contamination)
- UV filters (octinoxate, oxybenzone, homosalate)

Sunscreen ▲

- Benzophenone
- Homosalate
- Octinoxate
- Oxybenzone
- Padimate O
- Para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA)

Shampoo



- Ethanolamine compounds (cocamide DEA, MEA, TEA and others)
- Parabens (e.g. butylparaben)
- UV filters (octinoxate, oxybenzone)
- Formaldehyde-releasing preservatives (diazolidinyl urea, imidazolidinyl urea, quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin)
- Sodium laureth sulfate and other –eth compounds (possible 1,4-dioxane or ethylene oxide contamination)

Conditioner



- Ethanolamine compounds (cocamide DEA, MEA, TEA and others)
- Parabens (e.g. butylparaben)
- Formaldehyde-releasing preservatives (diazolidinyl urea, imidazolidinyl urea, quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin)
- Sodium laureth sulfate and other –eth compounds (possible 1,4-dioxane and ethylene oxide contamination)
- Nonoxynols (possible 1,4-dioxane or ethylene oxide contamination)
- Hydrogenated cottonseed oil (possible arsenic contamination)

Hair Color



- Resorcinol
- p-phenylenediamine
- toluene
- lead acetate
- Ethanolamines (cocamide DEA and others)

Fragrance



- The word ‘fragrance’ on a product label can hide dozens of secret, often, toxic chemicals.

Color Cosmetics



Blush, Face Powders, Eye Shadow, etc.

- Titanium dioxide (inhalable, nanosized)
- Carbon black
- PTFE (possible PFOA contamination)

- Talc
- BHA
- Silica
- Formaldehyde-releasing preservatives (imidazolidinyl urea, quaternium-15)

Skin Lighteners



- Butylated hydroxytoluene; BHT
- Ceteareth-20 (1,4-dioxane contamination)
- DMDM hydantoin (formaldehyde releaser)
- Padimate O (nitrosamine contamination)
- Hydroquinone

View All Chemicals of Concern
(/chemicals/)

Knowledge is Power.

Want more tools? Check out apps like Clearya (<https://www.clearya.com/>), Think Dirty (<https://www.thinkdirtyapp.com/>), and Skin Deep (<http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>). Plus, certifiers like Made Safe (<http://madesafe.org/>) and EWG Verified (<https://www.ewg.org/ewgverified/>) rate your personal care products for safety and toxicity.



Top tips

- Your choices are powerful. Choose products that are safer for you and for the environment.
- Decrease your exposure by using fewer products and choosing those with simpler ingredients.
- Don't be fooled by the words "natural" and "safe," which have little meaning in the largely unregulated cosmetics industry.
- Avoid anything without 'fragrance' or 'parfum' ingredient disclosure.
- More (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/resources/safe-cosmetics-tips/>)tips > (<https://www.safecosmetics.org/resources/safe-cosmetics-tips/safer-cosmetic-products/>).

Join us.

Spread the word about unsafe chemicals in cosmetics and how to find safer alternatives.

We have resources and materials to help!

@SafeCosmeticsHQ (<http://instagram.com/safecosmeticshq>).

Facebook.com/SafeCosmetics (<http://facebook.com/safecosmetics>).

Take Action Today!
(/take-action/)

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