

# 10 Skin-Care Nasties

Confused about chemicals in skin-care products?

You should be.

Here is a simple 10-point checklist to steer you in the right direction.

Today's personal care products do more than just clean and moisturise, they promise smoother, clearer, more radiant skin with fewer fine lines and wrinkles. However there's a downside to some of the ingredients.

## New Alpha Hydroxy Warning

For example, a seemingly endless array of creams, lotions and cleansers use alpha hydroxy acids to improve skin texture and make it firmer by thickening the collagen beneath the surface. However, these acids also can make the skin more sensitive to the ravages of the sun; it becomes more prone to burning, which not only contributes to aging but also can lead to skin cancer.

Now government regulators are recommending that consumers be warned about the risks of alpha hydroxy acids. With manufacturers "putting more and more active ingredients in products, such as AHAs, they should be warning the public that there may be side effects such as sun sensitivity," said Dr Elisabeth Shim, a skin cancer specialist in Santa Monica, USA.

Alpha hydroxy acids, from fruit and milk sugars, exfoliate the skin, which means they strip dead cells from the skin's top layers. But in thinning that outermost shield against the elements, they can increase the possibility of sunburn and sensitivity for up to a week after they've been applied. Most cosmetic products containing alpha hydroxy acids have concentrations of six to ten percent of the acid. Stronger versions are used by cosmetologists, facialists and dermatologists for various facial peels.

Here is a list of the other 10 ingredients you should avoid.

### **1. Mineral Oil**

Most baby oil is 100 percent mineral oil. This commonly used petroleum ingredient coats the skin just like plastic wrap. The skin's natural immune barrier is disrupted as this plastic coating inhibits its ability to breathe and absorb the Natural Moisture Factor (moisture and nutrition). The skin's ability to

release toxins is impeded by this 'plastic wrap' that can promote acne and other disorders. This process slows down skin function and normal cell development causing the skin to prematurely age.

### **2. Isopropyl Alcohol**

This is a solvent and denaturant (poisonous substance that changes another substance's natural qualities). Isopropyl alcohol is found in hair colour rinses, body rubs, hand lotions, after-shave lotions, fragrances and many other cosmetics. This petroleum-derived substance is also used in antifreeze and as a solvent in shellac.

### **3. DEA (diethanolamine) MEA (monoethanolamine)**

DEA and MEA are usually listed on the ingredients label in conjunction with the compound being neutralised. Thus look for names like Cocoamide DEA or MEA, Lauramide DEA, etc. These are hormone-disrupting chemicals and are known to form cancer-causing nitrates and nitrosamines.

These are commonly found in most personal care products that foam, including bubble baths, body washes, shampoos, soaps and facial cleansers. On the show *CBS This Morning*, Roberta Baskin revealed that a recent government report shows DEA and MEA are readily absorbed in the skin. Dr. Samuel Epstein, Professor of Environmental Health at the University of Illinois said, "repeated skin applications of DEA-based detergents resulted in a major increase in the incidence of two cancers – liver and kidney cancers."

### **4. PEG**

This is an abbreviation for polyethylene glycol that is used in making cleansers to dissolve oil and grease as well as thicken products. Because of their effectiveness, PEGs are often used in caustic spray-on oven cleaners and yet are found in many personal care products. PEGs contribute to stripping the Natural Moisture Factor, leaving the immune system vulnerable.

## 5. Propylene Glycol (PG)

As a 'surfactant' or wetting agent and solvent, this ingredient is actually the active component in antifreeze. There is no difference between PG used in industry and the PG used in personal care products. It is used in industry to break down protein and cellular structure (what the skin is made of) yet is found in most forms of make-up, hair products, lotions, after-shaves, deodorants, mouthwashes and toothpastes.

Because of its ability to quickly penetrate the skin, the EPA requires workers to wear protective gloves, clothing and goggles when working with this toxic substance. The Material Safety Data Sheets warn against skin contact, as PG has systemic consequences such as brain, liver and kidney abnormalities.

## 6. Chlorine

According to Doris. J. Rap, M.D., author of *Is This Your Child's World*, exposure to chlorine in tap water, showers, pool, laundry products, cleaning agents, food processing, sewage systems and many others, can affect health by contributing to asthma, hay fever, bronchitis, circulatory collapse, confusion, delirium, diabetes, dizziness, irritation of the eye, mouth, nose, throat, lung, skin and stomach, heart disease, high blood pressure and nausea.

It is also a possible cause of cancer. Even though you will not see chlorine on personal care products labels, it is important for you to be aware of the need to protect your skin when bathing and washing your hair.

## 7. F, D & C Colour Pigments

Many colour pigments such as F, D & C cause skin sensitivity and irritation. Absorption of certain colours can cause depletion of oxygen in the body according to *A Consumer's Dictionary of Cosmetic Ingredients*. Many synthetic colours that can be used in foods, drugs and cosmetics are made from coal tar. There is a great deal of controversy about their use. Look for plant derived & natural pigments in a product.

## 8. Fragrance

Fragrance is present in most deodorants, shampoos, sunscreens; skin care, body care and baby care products. Many of the compounds in fragrances are carcinogenic or otherwise toxic. "Fragrance on a label can indicate the presence of over 3,000 separate ingredients. Most or all of them are synthetic. Symptoms reported to the FDA have included headaches, dizziness, rashes, skin

discoloration, violent coughing and vomiting, and allergic skin irritation.

## Imidazolidinyl Urea & DMDM Hydantoin

These are two of the many preservatives that release formaldehyde (formaldehyde-donors). Exposure to formaldehyde may cause joint pain, allergies, depression, headaches, chest pains, ear infections, chronic fatigue, dizziness and loss of sleep. It can also aggravate coughs and colds and trigger asthma. Serious side effects include weakening of the immune system and cancer.

## 9. Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES)

Used as surfactants in many shampoos, these closely related compounds are found in garage floor cleaners and engine degreasers. Both SLS and SLES are used widely as one of the major ingredients in cosmetics, toothpastes, hair conditioners and about 90% of all shampoos and products that foam. Skin layers may separate and inflame due to its protein denaturing properties.

It is possibly the most dangerous of all ingredients in personal care products. According to the American College of Toxicology report, "SLS stays in the body for up to five days..."

"Other studies have indicated that SLS easily penetrates through the skin and enters and maintains residual levels in the heart, the liver, the lungs and the brain. This poses serious questions regarding its potential health threat through its use in shampoos and toothpaste."

## The Important Part of Being Aware

Remember to feed and nourish your skin by eating the proper foods. Give your skin a drink too. Those eight glasses of water a day are essential to maintaining your skin's elasticity and suppleness, say experts. Of course, drinking tap water is usually not so good. If you care about the quality of your water, use a good water filtration system and don't count coffee or any of the caffeinated soft drinks as part of the eight glasses because caffeine is dehydrating.

## Further information

For information about the world's first certified organic range of skin/body care products and cosmetics (made in Australia) with 100% beneficial ingredients, please contact VITALLY ESSENTIAL Phone Pauline on (02) 49449043 or 0404-841539 OR email [perkinsp@hotmail.com](mailto:perkinsp@hotmail.com) OR visit our website [www.vitallyessential.com](http://www.vitallyessential.com)