

## **Formaldehyde**

Formaldehyde is a known human carcinogen and can be released from certain cosmetic ingredients, namely, **DMDM hydantoin**, **diazolidinyl urea**, **imidazolidinyl urea**, **methenamine**, **quaternium-15**, and **sodium hydroxymethylglycinate**.

They are used as preservatives and are most commonly found in body wash, shampoo, conditioner, styling gel, moisturizer, and nail polish

## **Parfum (fragrance)**

The term fragrance, which can also be listed as parfum or aroma, represents a complex mixture of many, undisclosed chemicals. It is found in almost every cosmetic product, as well as other consumer products like laundry detergent or dishwasher liquid.

## **Parabens**

Parabens are listed as ethylparaben, butylparaben, methylparaben, propylparaben

They are the most widely used preservatives in cosmetics. Found in: almost everything!

They are partly able to mimic estrogen and parabens have been found in breast cancer tissue; therefore, they may possibly be linked to breast cancer.

## **Oxybenzone**

**Oxybenzone** provides protection from harmful UV rays so it is mainly found in sunscreen or products labeled with SPF protection such as lip balm and moisturizers.

## **Retinyl palmitate**

**Retinyl palmitate** can be found in sunscreen, moisturizers, and creams. Its use in cosmetics is controversial, particularly its use in sunscreens.

## **Selenium sulfide**

**Selenium sulfide** is a highly toxic compound. It is the active ingredient in anti-dandruff products and scalp treatments, used for its anti-fungal properties. There is sufficient evidence to believe that it is a carcinogen.

## **Sodium laureth sulfate (SLES)**

SLES is a foaming agent and added to products such as soaps, shampoos, toothpastes, and detergents. The issue with SLES is that it can be contaminated with 1,4 dioxane, a possible carcinogen.

## **Toluene**

Toluene helps nail polish apply smoothly and adhere evenly; thus, it is mainly found in nail polish

There is strong evidence that toluene is a human developmental toxicant.

ACTION CANCER DU SEIN DU QUÉBEC  
BREAST CANCER ACTION QUEBEC

1001 rue Lenoir,  
suite B-250,  
Montréal (QC) H4C 2Z6

Phone : (514) 483-1846  
E-mail: [info@acsqc.ca](mailto:info@acsqc.ca)  
Web site: [www.acsqc.ca](http://www.acsqc.ca)



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## **THE "TOXIC TWENTY"** Chemicals to avoid in everyday products

POCKET GUIDE - READ THE LABEL



## **Phthalates**

Often listed on labels as "fragrance" not phthalates. They serve many functions in cosmetic products. Dibutyl phthalate (DBP) is mainly used in nail products to act as a plasticizer that prevents nail polish from becoming brittle, while diethyl phthalates (DEP) are added to fragrances to make them last longer.

Found in: everything - hairspray, body cream, perfume, deodorant, etc.

## **Triclosan**

Triclosan can be found in various consumer products ranging from soaps, toothpastes, and acne creams to cleaning products, furniture and clothing.

It is used for its antibacterial and antifungal properties and is the active ingredient in most antibacterial products.

## **Benzalkonium Chloride**

Benzalkonium Chloride is used as a disinfectant to prevent the growth of micro-organisms in products.

It is most commonly found in eye drops, contact lens solution, facial and acne cleansers, mouthwash, and nasal sprays, but can also be found in moisturizers and sunscreens.



## **Hydroxyanisole butylé (BHA)/ hydroxytoluène butylé (BHT)**

BHA and BHT are similar synthetic antioxidants used as preservatives in many lip and eye products (lipstick, eyeliner, mascara, etc.), as well as moisturizers and lotions.

BHA has been classified as a possible human carcinogen and a hormone disruptor, while BHT can cause allergic reactions and is a possible reproductive toxicant.

## **Coal Tar Dyes**

Coal tar dyes are dyes that were originally derived from coal tar, however today are mostly synthetically produced.

They are usually listed by their name (e.g. Acid Red 184, Disperse Violet, Basic Blue 9, etc.) and are used extensively in cosmetics, especially in hair dyes, eye makeup and lipsticks.

## **DEA-related ingredients**

DEA-related ingredients are foaming agents used to make cosmetics like soaps, cleansers, and shampoos creamy or sudsy.

They usually contain **DEA**, **TEA** or **MEA** in their name (e.g. **Cocamide DEA**, **Lauramide DEA**, **Linoleamide MEA**, **TEA-Lauryl Sulfate**).

## **Benzophenone**

Benzophenone can be found in nail polish, shampoos, body washes, hair styling gels, perfumes, lip products and sunscreens. The main concern is its use in sunscreens as benzophenone may potentially be carcinogenic.

## **Heavy Metal**

**Heavy metals**, like arsenic, nickel, lead, mercury and cadmium, are found in cosmetics as contaminants.

They can be present in mascara, lipstick, eye shadow, foundation and blush, eyeliner, whitening toothpaste, sunscreen and more.

## **Nonoxynols**

Nonoxynols can be found in a variety products but mainly found in hair care products (hair colour, styling sprays, gels and mousse, leave-in conditioners and hair relaxers). It is used as a detergent, wetting agent or defoaming agent.

## **Petrolatum**

**Petrolatum**, also known as petroleum jelly, mineral jelly, mineral oil, or mineral grease, is found in moisturizers because it helps to lock moisture in the skin.

However, petrolatum can be contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are known carcinogens.

## **Polyethylene glycol and other PEG compounds**

PEG compounds such as polyethylene glycol (PEG-7), are petroleum-based substances used to retain moisture in products such as skin creams, fragrance, and sunscreens.

**For more information:**

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