

7 Common Toxins in Cosmetics by Beth Greer

The cosmetics industry is self-regulated. According to the FDA: “Cosmetic ingredients are not subject to FDA premarket approval authority.” So cosmetics companies can put in just about anything they like into nearly all their health and beauty products and don’t have to reveal if they are health hazards. They leave it up to us to figure out what’s safe and what’s not.

How do you avoid toxins in cosmetics and personal care products? Here are seven of the worst:

Parabens (methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl)– Preservatives that alter hormones (studies found it in breast cancer tumors)

Uses: Preservative, inhibit bacteria, yeast and mold growth and are antibacterial agents in antibacterial toothpaste.

Found in: Moisturizers, anti-aging creams, make-up (including eye shadow), facial cleansers, sunscreen and more

Also called: Benzoic acid, 4-hydroxy benzoic acid, Butyl ester, Parahydroxybenzoate ester, Methylparaben, Ethyl ester, Sodium 4-carbomethoxyphenolate, Isopropylparaben and similar names.

Formaldehyde – Additive that causes Skin Allergies, may trigger asthma, DNA damage, banned by EU

Uses: Disinfectant, germicide, fungicide, preservative.

Found in: Deodorants, nail polish, soap, shampoo, shaving cream, styling gel.

Also called: Formalin, Formic aldehyde, oxomethane, Methyl aldehyde, Merthaldehyde.

DMDM Hydantoin – Releases Formaldehyde at high levels

Uses: Preservative

Found in: Shampoo and conditioner, facial cleansers and body wash, hair color, hand soap and more

Also called: Dimethylol-5,5-dimethylhydantoin; 1,3-BIS (hydroxymethyl) -5,5- dimethyl-; and several other names.

Triclosan – Interferes with our Hormones (especially thyroid and testosterone)

Uses: Preservative, biocide

Found in: Toothpaste, eye shadow, deodorant, facial cleansers, body wash and more

Also called: Phenol 5chloro2 (2,4dichlorophenoxy) – phenol; 2,4,4'-trichloro-2'-hydroxydiphe-nyl ether; and several other confusing names

BHA – Increases sensitivity to the sun

Uses: Antioxidant, masking

Found in: Make-up, including eye shadows and liners, sunscreens, facial moisturizer and more

Also called: Antrancine, Embanox, Tenox BHA, Protex, Antioxyne B, Sustane 1-F, and several similar names

Phthalates – Hormone disruptor

Uses: Plasticizer, solvents in cosmetics

Found in: Nail and cuticle products, blush, bath oils, mascara, lipstick, hair spray, fragrance, lotions.

Also called: Thylene glycol-terephthalic acid polymer; Dioctyl 2,6-naphthalate; Celluflex DPB; Dibutyl 1,2-benzenedicarboxylate; and dozens of other names

Ammonia – Found in window cleaners but also beauty products

Uses: Adjusts pH, buffering

Found in: Hair colors and bleaches, facial moisturizers, wound-care products and more

Also called: Aqua ammonia; Ammonia solution; Ammonium hydroxide