

From the beginning of time, humans have been using plants for their grooming and beauty needs. Relatively speaking, it's only been quite recently that we've changed over to using synthetic ingredients. But does that mean that synthetics are an improvement?

It's a shame that we can no longer use the term **"natural"** when referring to cosmetics.

Opportunists have changed it's meaning, along with it's products, to now mean **"UNnatural"**

"All natural" beauty, is always best.

An article by Debbie Bilezikian

SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH

How to read the ingredient lists in personal care products.

Many natural consumers today are concerned about what we eat and what we put on our bodies. In a polluted, industrialized system that seems so at odds with our needs, we try to gain some measure of control over our health by shopping for healthy skin care and cosmetics. We're sure that we want only "natural" and "pure" products, but have a hard time figuring out what items on the shelf qualify.

There is a reason why it is so difficult to make truthful choices that reflect our needs. The natural products consumer is targeted by commercial companies that want our revenue, but don't have the deep desire to promote healthy products that we assume.

It's all about packaging and marketing. Marketers, advertisers, and CEO's of personal care products companies literally sit around tables figuring out how to convince us that what they are selling is natural. This is done with clever wording, choice of colour and label design,

packaging style, and choice of ingredients. Many of these products contain plant extracts that are highlighted on the label, but the base ingredients are synthetic. The same companies that are producing synthetically based products set aside "a portion" of their budget to create and promote a "natural line".

So how are we, as caring and educated as we are, so easily fooled? The first mistake that we make is when scanning an ingredient list on the back of a product, our eyes (and minds) skip over the long, complicated ingredients that we don't understand, and rest on ingredients such as chamomile, lavender, and aloe. I cannot count the number of customers who have said to me, "Oh I just bought a natural chamomile lotion by such and such (commercial brand)", it smelled so good, and it's all natural". If asked "does it have methylparaben or propylene glycol in it?", the answer is invariably "No, it's all natural". Upon follow up research, I consistently find that though the product may contain some plant-based ingredients, it also lists some dangerous chemicals.

A natural products consumer goes to a health type of store looking for a haven; a safe-house, where the scary chemical-laden society recedes, and Nature preside. Because they are so trusting of the establishment, they are less critical of the products, and more likely to believe the advertising claims on the bottles of shampoo and lotion. As a case in point, one of the largest "natural food chains" boasts that they don't carry any food items with preservatives, yet they carry hundreds of personal care products that contain those exact preservatives.

It is a well known fact that 60% of what we put on our skin is absorbed into our body. If you have convinced yourself that these questionable ingredients are not something that you have to worry about, then ask yourself these few questions:

Do you know, or know of a woman that has or has had cancer?

Do you know, or know of a woman, man or child that has eczema, psoriasis, or scalp problems?

Do you know, or know of a woman or a man that is suffering from hair loss or arthritis?

Do you know of a child that has suffered from genital infections?

If you can say yes to any of these questions, and if any of them apply to you, then you do need to become concerned about some of these questionable ingredients.

INGREDIENTS TO AVOID:

QUATERNIUM 15: (DOVE, Johnson's Baby Shampoo)
FORMALDEHYDE, a carcinogen.

FD&C DYE: These dyes are produced from COAL TAR, and are documented to be **CARCINOGENS**.

BUTYL CELLOSOLVE, and **ISOBUTENE:** (Fantastic, Windex, and Formula 409)
A neuro-toxin. Damages the central nervous system, kidney and liver. Listed as a pesticide.

DIOXIN: Lysol disinfectant. Carcinogen, 500,000 times more deadly than DDT Ethyl Alcohol.

PROPYLENE GLYCOL: (contained in shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, lipstick, lotion, face cream, etc)
This industrial solvent is so **HIGHLY** toxic, that industrial workers are warned of **SEVERE** health risks if contact occurs, such as brain, liver, and kidney abnormalities. They are required to wear protective clothing, gloves, and goggles during handling, and PG can only be disposed of in hazardous waste sites at a cost of \$500.00 to \$1,000 per drum!!!

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate
Sodium Laureth Sulfate
Ammonium Lauryl Sulfate
Sodium Myreth Sulfate

These and other detergents are industrial surfactants that are linked to cancer, and literally strip the scalp and skin of necessary oils, leaving it dry, and severely itchy and flaky. They were originally designed to clean floors and engines and now are found in 95%!!!! of shampoos and body cleansers, even the **NATURAL** brands. The saddest aspect of this is that this SLS causes irritation and infection in the genitals of young children, yet is the main ingredient in baby shampoos and bubble bath.

TALC: (contained in baby powder, foot powder, pressed eye shadow and blush, and foundation)
Linked to uterine cancer and respiratory problems in infants. Literally "suffocates" the skin.

DEA, MEA, and TEA

Repeated use of these chemicals leads to a major increase in the incidence of liver and kidney cancer. Restricted in Europe.

DMDM Hydantoin & UREA

Preservatives that release FORMALDEHYDE into the body. Funeral directors are now saying that there is such a high concentration of formaldehyde present in the human body at death that they are using 50% LESS formaldehyde than they used to.

FRAGRANCE (including FRAGRANCE OILS)

Linked to cancer and mental problems including depression.

TRICLOSAN (found in ANTI-BACTERIAL SOAPS) Registered as a PESTICIDE with the FDA, linked to cancer, a hormone disruptor.

METHYLPARABEN, PROPYLPARABEN:

Preservatives that deposit in the human system that disrupt normal enzyme activity.

PTHALATES: (Used nail polish, fragrance and a host of other products) Extremely toxic chemicals (regulated under environmental law) that reduce fertility, harm the male reproductive system, and are especially dangerous to pregnant women's fetuses. Found in products by Proctor & Gamble, L'Oreal, Lever Brothers, Maybelline, Chesebrough-Pond's, Colgate, Elizabeth Arden, Kraft, and Revlon.

CARMINE: (found in lipsticks, glosses, blushes, and eye shadow) This extract from the carmine beetle in South America, has been connected to heart problems.

Now, aside from these obviously toxic chemicals, there are other issues that arise with products that claim to be "all natural from pure vegetable sources".

There are several ways to extract an oil or a wax from a plant, (eg. jojoba oil, evening primrose oil, shea butter, cocoa butter). It can be extracted with a solvent, which leaves toxic residues in the products, or by extremely high heat, which DESTROYS the botanical properties associated with the plant, or by the cold-pressed method. If you are a

consumer or a manufacturer, ASK QUESTIONS. How was the shea butter extracted? Are the oils cold-pressed? Is the vitamin E or glycerine synthetic or natural?

Find out if the ingredients are organic. This is an important issue, due to the high toxicity level of pesticides that become concentrated in liquids extracted from plants.

Look for the words 'cold-pressed' and 'organic' on labels, and if you don't see them, put the product down and keep looking. Ask questions to store owners, who in turn can call suppliers and manufacturers.

Be aware of long words that you cannot pronounce that have the phrase "from coconut oil" in parentheses. Natural ingredients that are broken down chemically are no longer natural. Sodium Laureth Sulfate that comes from coconut oil is still an unhealthy product, despite its source.

This list could go on, but if you'd like more information, start asking questions. Thank you for reading this article, and please e-mail it to a friend.