

Are there laws to protect us?

In the EU cosmetic products are regulated by the EU Cosmetics Regulation. All ingredients must be listed individually on the product packaging, with the exception of fragrances. These are listed under the collective term „fragrance“. Only 24 allergenic fragrances are labelled individually if their concentration in creams, lotions or shampoos exceeds a certain limit. If nano-sized ingredients are contained, these are labelled with the suffix [nano]. The preservatives propylparaben and butylparaben are prohibited in children's cosmetics that are used in the nappy area, e.g. in nappy rash creams. These parabens are permitted in personal care products for children older than 3 years. In creams that remain on the skin, the mixture of allergenic methylchloroisothiazolinone (MCI) and methylisothiazolinone (MI) are prohibited. The European Commission is planning to regulate several hormonally active substances in cosmetics. Cosmetic products are regulated differently across countries. Check your national regulations.

How can this guide help you?

We provide information on chemicals of concern in products and give tips on how to avoid them.

Your right on information

When buying, ask if the product has been tested for hormonal effects. Retailers must inform you within 45 days about certain chemicals of concern. This applies to specific substances on the Candidate List (ECHA). By asking questions, you can raise awareness and influence policy. WECF is dedicated to ensuring products are free of harmful substances.

Support us with a donation: WECF e.V., IBAN DE68 7015 0000 0013 139

Do you want to know more?

www.projectnesting.org, <https://www.wen.org.uk/our-work/greenbaby/>

Contact us

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General Tips

- **Less is more!** Try to use baby- and childcare products only when necessary.
- **Avoid products containing nanoparticles.** The risks to health and the environment are not yet clarified. Watch out for the label "nano".
- **Avoid products with synthetic fragrances** and use essential oils sparingly. Fragranced products and essential oils are not necessary. This is because they are so concentrated, even if certified organic, they can trigger allergies and irritate the baby's airways.
- **Do not use adult products on children**, as they may contain preservatives such as certain parabens, which are prohibited in children's cosmetics.
- **Avoid „antibacterial“ products** such as wipes, cleansing lotions and scent boosters. They disrupt the skin's natural defence reaction and can lead to bacterial resistance.

- **Do not use baby powder.** It can be harmful when inhaled.
- **The term „hypoallergenic“** signifies that a product does not contain any known allergens.

- The following labels can help:



Shampoos and bath additives
Lotions, creams and oils
Sunscreen
Toothpaste
Wet wipes

Tip

Compare the information on the product with the hazardous ingredients in the table.

More information

www.projectnesting.org
<https://www.wen.org.uk/our-work/greenbaby/>
www.oekotest.de (German)
www.ecolabel.com/en/
www.test.de (German)

Apps

ToxFox, CodeCheck, Yuka

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Hazardous chemicals (INCI*)

*International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients

Hazardous chemicals (INCI*)	Possible health effects
Parabens (e.g. Methylparaben, Butylparaben)	<i>Estrogenic effects, disrupts the hormone system, sensitising agent</i>
Phenoxyethanol	<i>Irritating after prolonged exposure, neurotoxic, allergenic</i>
Isothiazolinones (CMIT, MIT, BIT, OIT) Preservatives	<i>Highly allergenic, can trigger contact allergies, irritant</i>
Formaldehydes and formaldehyde releasers (e.g. Benzylhemiformal, 2-Bromo-2-nitropropane-1,3-diol, 5-Bromo-5-nitro-1,3-dioxane, diazolidinyl urea, Imidazolidinyl urea, Quaternium-15, DMDM Hydantoin)	<i>Carcinogenic, mutagenic, impairs fertility, irritates mucous membranes and skin, allergenic</i>
Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS)	<i>Irritates and dries out the skin</i>
UV-filters: Benzophenone-3 (oxybenzone), 4-Methylbenzylidene camphor (4-MBC), 3-Benzylidene camphor (3 BC), Octyl methoxycinnamate (OMC), Octyl-Dimethyl-para-Amino-benzoic-Acid PABA (OD-PABA)	<i>Disrupts the hormone system, accumulate in living organisms (e.g. breast milk) and in the environment and can trigger photoallergic reactions</i>
Phthalates (e.g. in perfumes and products containing alcohol) no labelling obligation	<i>Disrupt the hormone system, potentially sensitising</i>
Fragrances Musk compounds (perfume, scent)	<i>Allergy risk, irritate the skin, accumulate in the environment, the body & breast milk, some can disrupt the hormone system</i>
Mineral oils (Paraffinum liquidum, Wax)	<i>Not broken down by the human body</i>
Triclosan	<i>Can trigger allergies and promote antibiotic bacterial resistance</i>

*INCI International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients – for more info if needed check here – <https://incidecoder.com/>



wecf Women Engage for a Common Future

Protect children – Avoid harmful substances!

WECF guide Updated edition



Baby- and childcare

Perfumed baby care

From baby bubble baths to massage oils, most cosmetic products for infants are, unfortunately, fragranced. Fragrances, even natural ones, can cause skin irritation and allergies. Some accumulate in the body and in the environment. Some synthetic musk compounds can have hormone-like effects. You can recognise allergenic fragrances by the following names Anise Alcohol, Amyl Cinnamal, Amyl cinnamyl Alcohol, Benzyl Alcohol, Benzyl Benzoate, Benzyl Cinnamate, Benzyl Salicylate, Cinnamal, Cinnamyl Alcohol, Citral, Citronellol, Coumarin, Eugenol Evernia Furfuracea Extract, Evernia Prunastri Extract, Farnesol, Geraniol, Hexyl Cinnamal, Hydroxycitronellal, Linalool, Isoeugenol, alpha-Isomethyl Ionone, d-Limonene, Methyl-2-Octynoate.

■ Tips!

- Use fragrance-free products when caring for your little ones. Babies are more sensitive to fragrances than adults.
- Avoid all forms of essential oils, even if certified organic; they are concentrated and can be allergic or toxic to infants.

■ Tips!

- One to a maximum of two baths per week for 5 minutes is sufficient.
- Soap and shampoos are not really necessary; warm water or a damp flannel is usually sufficient for cleaning; if you do use bath additives use them sparingly.
- Alternative: simply add a little vegetable oil or cream in the bath water.



Shampoos & hair products

Less is more: Water gently cleanses sweat and dust. Shampoos and bath additives can contain skin irritants like sodium lauryl sulfate. Triclosan may trigger allergies and bacterial resistance, while fragrances are also concerning. Be cautious with lice shampoos, which may contain harmful substances like endocrine disruptors (cyclomethicone, cyclopentasiloxane) and allergens. Instead, opt for natural methods like oil wraps and rinsing. Never use chemical lye-based hair straighteners. They can contain cancerogenic formaldehyde and other toxic chemicals.

Lotions, creams and oils

Babies often suffer from dry skin. Gentle skin care is important. Synthetic mineral oils, fragrances and preservatives are problematic in skin care products; parabens, for example, can disrupt the hormonal system. Mineral oils such as Paraffinum Liquidum don't biodegrade and leave a greasy film on the skin.



■ Tips!

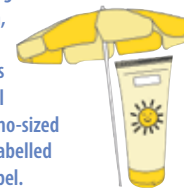
- Use creams, preferably plant-based, with as few additives as possible, without fragrances and preservatives.
- To prevent a sore bottom: change nappies more often and ensure your baby spends more time in the fresh air. Consider using reusable nappies. For sore bums: use special oily creams with panthenol or zinc oxide.
- Wind and weather creams should be rich in fat, as products containing water cool the face.
- For dry skin, choose vegetable oils without added mineral oil, e.g. olive oil or almond oil.

■ Tips!

- Babies and children should not be exposed to direct sunlight and should be protected with light clothing, sun hats, sunglasses and sun canopies.
- Sun creams and gels that are free from colourings, fragrances and preservatives are generally better tolerated.

Sun protection

Baby and children's skin is particularly susceptible to sunburn as it has little protection of its own. Conventional sunscreens contain chemical or mineral UV filters, but these do not block all the radiation. Some chemical filters (table) can disrupt the hormone system and accumulate in the body. Although certain sunscreen containing nano particles avoiding the white film on the skin, they can easily be absorbed by children's skin and have harmful effects on health. Nano-sized ingredients must be labelled with [nano] on the label.



Toothpaste

The first teeth can be polished with a moistened, soft cloth. Later, toothbrushes and toothpaste are necessary. Children's toothpaste contains surfactants, fragrances, flavourings, sweeteners and preservatives as well as fluoride, which are intended to prevent the development of tooth decay. An overdose of fluoride can lead to tooth enamel decay. As young children often swallow toothpaste, children's toothpaste with a low fluoride content and free from nanoparticles should be used.



■ Tip!

- Pay attention to the fluoride content in the toothpaste. Products for small children should contain a maximum of 0.25mg of fluoride.

■ Tips!

- Flannels or cloths with vegetable oil are gentler.
- If you do use personal care products, make sure you use „fragrance-free“ products without phenoxyethanol and parabens.



Wet wipes

Wet wipes might be practical but largely unnecessary, creating waste and polluting sewage systems. Even well-rated wipes (OEKO-TEST) often contain fragrances, are made of plastic, and contribute to microplastic pollution. Conclusion: Avoid them and never flush.

Protect children – avoid harmful substances!

What is the issue?

Many baby care products still contain ingredients that are carcinogenic, are suspected of affecting hormones or can have an irritating or allergenic effect. This is despite the fact that laws governing chemicals are regularly updated. Extended exposure to harmful substances, such as during bathing or while applying creams, enhances their absorption into the body. Although most cosmetic ingredients are listed on the packaging using INCI nomenclature, it's not always easy to identify mild, well-tolerated products because the terminology used is often complex and difficult to understand.

Why are children especially vulnerable?

Children come into frequent and particular contact with their environment: Due to the larger surface area of their skin in relation

to their weight, their higher respiratory volume, and their increased metabolic rate, they absorb more pollutants. Their immune and nervous systems are still developing, and detoxification mechanisms are only able to function to a limited extent. In addition, baby skin is significantly thinner than adult skin and, not fully developed and so doesn't act as an effective barrier. The production of sebaceous gland lipids (fat glands) is limited, so the skin tends to be low in fats and dries out more easily. At the same time, children are exposed to a variety of hazardous chemicals from different sources („cocktail effect“), not only from care products or toys, but also from everyday products such as clothing, food, or furniture. Even the smallest amounts of harmful substances can have a lasting effect on a child's development - sometimes for a lifetime. This is demonstrated by e.g., the increasing rates of allergies.