

Are there laws that protect us?

The EU Cosmetics Directive regulates all cosmetic products. According to this directive, all ingredients must be labelled on the product (INCI declaration). 24 allergenic fragrances are labelled with their technical names, all others with the collective term 'perfume' / 'fragrance'. Nanoparticles are labelled with [nano]. The substances are always listed in descending order of concentration. The European Commission plans to draw up a list of endocrine disruptors to be regulated in cosmetics. Currently, only individual ingredients and not mixtures are tested, even though cosmetics consist of mixtures of ingredients. However, the Cosmetics Directive sets limits for several groups of ingredients that occur in mixtures, such as certain allergenic preservatives. Please note: regulations may differ between countries when it comes to cosmetics.

How can this guide help?

We inform you about concerning chemicals in products and provide tips on how to avoid them.



Your right to information

When purchasing a care product, ask whether it has been tested for hormonal effects. For some substances (ECHA Candidate List of substances of very high concern), there is an obligation to provide information within 45 days. By asking critical questions, you can also influence the product policy.

WECF is committed to pollutant free products in politics and in production. Support us with a donation.

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Would you like to know more?

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

Get in touch with us

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General Tips

- Good hygiene (mild soap, water, shaving) helps to reduce the use of deodorants or perfumes.
- If you suffer from allergies, avoid allergy triggers such as fragrances or certain preservatives. Pay attention to the information on the packaging (INCI).
- Avoid permanent hair dyes; read the test results from consumer organisations.
- Avoid „antibacterial“ products (wet wipes, cleaning agents, fabric softeners or wipes for textile or surface cleaning). They affect the skin's PH balance and can lead to the development of bacterial resistance.
- If you are pregnant, take a close look at your cosmetics and avoid products with harmful ingredients (table). Certified natural cosmetics are the better alternative.

- Another tip: to ensure a healthy indoor air quality, ventilate the rooms and avoid scented candles and room sprays as they pollute the air.
- Look for the following labels:



Shampoos, bath additives
make-up
creams
sun protection
toothpaste
Perfumes

Tip

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

Further links:

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, Yuk

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 Edited by Wen.UK

	Hazardous chemicals (INCI*)	Possible health risks
	*International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients	
	Aromatic amines in hair dyes: P-phenylenediamine, P-toluene diamine, etc.	Allergens, some are carcinogenic
	Biocides: 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)	Carcinogenic, mutagenic, disrupt reproductive function, irritate mucous membranes and skin, allergenic
	Preservatives: Isothiazolinones	Allergenic
	Preservatives: Parabens (methylparaben, butyl-paraben)	Oestrogenic effect, disrupts the hormone system, sensitising
	Preservative: Phenoxyethanol	Irritant after prolonged contact, neurotoxic, allergy risk
	Preservative: Triclosan	Can trigger allergies and promote antibiotic resistance
	Light stabilisers: Benzophenone-3(oxybenzone), benzophenone-1 & 4, homosalate (HMS), 4-methyl-benzylidene camphor (4 MBC), 3-benzylidene camphor (3 BC), octyl methoxycinnamate (OMC), octyl-dimethyl PABA (OD-PABA)	Disrupt the endocrine system, Accumulate in living organisms (e.g. breast milk) and in the environment, Can trigger photoallergic reactions
	Metals: traces of lead, aluminium, nickel	Neurotoxic (Pb, Al), allergens (Ni), irritants (Al)
	Mineral oils: Paraffinum liquidum, Petrolatum, Ceresine wax, Vaseline	Cannot be metabolised by the organism
	Perfume, fragrance: fragrances, musk compounds	Risk of allergies, accumulate in the environment and breast milk
	Surfactants: Sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS), cocamidopropylamine oxide	Irritants and degrease the skin
	Sunscreen filters: Titanium dioxide, zinc oxide or methylene bis-benzotriazolyl (nano), sodium lauryl sulphate	Indications of toxic effects in the cells, accumulate in the organism, health risks cannot be assessed
	Emollient: Cyclopentasiloxane, Cyclomethicone, Cyclotetrasiloxane	Suspected hormonal effect, toxic by inhalation, interfere with fertility

(*INCI designation in cosmetic products)



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Protect health – avoid toxic chemicals

WECF Guide Updated edition

Bodycare & Cosmetics

Shampoos

Active washing substances such as surfactants and foaming bases (sodium lauryl sulphate, etc.) can dry out the skin when bathing and showering. Critical chemicals in shampoos and shower gels also include certain preservatives and fragrances that are allergenic, hormonally active or carcinogenic. Microplastic beads used as exfoliators should be avoided as they harm the environment.



■ Tips

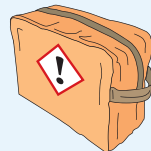
- **Choose organic** vegetable-based soap bars.
- **Sodium lauryl sulphate** and cocamidopropylamine oxide are particularly irritating.
- **Avoid products with questionable preservatives** such as parabens or formaldehyde releasers.
- **If possible, buy products without harmful fragrances** such as oakmoss, tree moss, isoeugenol and cinnamal. Note that, regrettably, not all of these are listed on the label and can be hard to avoid.
- **Think about natural exfoliants** (salt, sugar and almond powder for the face).

■ Tips

- **Choose make-up products with natural pigments**; pay attention to possible allergens.
- **If you use nail polish**, ensure it is „eco“. Ventilate well before and after application. Well-groomed, unpainted nails are also beautiful.
- **Are you pregnant?** Avoid artificial fingernails and hair colouring.

Make-up, nail care and hair products

Make-up products are a common source of exposure to dyes, metals (lead, aluminium), preservatives, fragrances, etc. Nail polishes can release formaldehyde, which is carcinogenic and irritates the respiratory tract. Nail polish removers should be acetone-free. Colourants in hair dyes are regularly identified as allergens and can be carcinogenic or hormonally active (e.g. resorcinol). Never use chemical lye-based hair straighteners. They can contain cancerogenic formaldehyde and other toxic chemicals.



Lotions, creams & oils



Synthetic mineral oils are often found in skin-care products. They can accumulate in the body and contain carcinogenic compounds (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons). Allergy-causing fragrances are problematic. Preservatives such as parabens can have a hormonal effect. Many day creams are also designed to protect against UV damage. Some UV filters can accumulate in the body and disrupt the hormone system (see notes on sun cream).

■ Tips

- **Opt for plant-based care products**, e.g., almond or olive oil, with as few additives as possible.
- **Avoid products with synthetic paraffin**, petrolatum, paraffinum liquidum or silicones.
- **People with contact allergies and sensitive skin**, in particular, should use products without fragrances and preservatives.

■ Tips

- **Avoid products with harmful UV filters**. See the „Dangerous chemicals“ table.
- **Sun creams and gels that are free from colourants, fragrances and preservatives** are the best, preferably with mineral sunscreens and a certified eco-label.
- **No/little sun exposure** during the hottest hours; shade, light clothing, hat and sunglasses are the best sun protection



Sun creams & sunblock

Chemical filters and mineral pigments in sun creams and sun blockers protect against UV rays from the sun, which can promote skin cancer. Some chemical filters, such as benzophenone-3 (oxybenzone), can disrupt the hormone system and accumulate in the body. Mineral protective filters such as titanium oxide and zinc oxide as nanoparticles leave no white marks on the skin but are suspected of being harmful to health.

Toothpaste & mouthwash

Foaming agents, surfactants (sodium lauryl sulphate, PEG and derivatives), preservatives, and sometimes antibacterial agents are often found in toothpaste. Some of these can attack the oral mucosa, leading to absorption twice as much as the skin.

■ Tips

- **Avoid preservatives** such as chlorhexidine digluconate or cetylpyridinium chloride; they can disrupt the hormone system. If used continuously, they can cause tooth discolouration and a change in taste and have an irritating effect.
- **Avoid products containing triclosan** at all costs! It can irritate mucous membranes, cause allergies, is linked to cancer, and disrupt the endocrine system. Look out for certified eco-labels.



■ Tips

- **Use mild deodorants** without alcohol, aluminium and allergenic fragrances.
- **Ask whether phthalates** have been used in the deodorants or perfumes.
- **Use perfume „sparingly“**: Strong perfume is a health hazard and an air pollutant and can cause headaches or circulation problems in sensitive people.
- **Alternative: Apply body oil or milk** with a pinch of bicarbonate.

Deodorants & Perfumes

Deodorants use preservatives such as alcohol or formaldehyde releaser and alcohol to combat bacteria that cause odours when sweating. Alcohol can dry out the skin and have an irritating effect. Some fragrances are allergenic. In deodorants and perfumes, hormonally active phthalates can be used as denaturants, which are rarely declared. Even if the connection between the use of aluminium salts and breast cancer has not been accepted, you should be cautious.



Protect health – avoid toxic chemicals

What is the problem?

Many body care products contain ingredients that have an irritating or allergenic effect or are suspected of affecting hormone balance and being carcinogenic. The intensive contact of skin and mucous membranes with the ingredients, e.g. when bathing or applying cream, helps them enter the body. Even if the ingredients of the cosmetics are listed on the packaging, safe products are not immediately recognisable. The ingredients are printed in small print and are often incomprehensible to laypeople. Nevertheless, check carefully. Women generally use more skincare products and are, therefore, more exposed to harmful substances. During pregnancy and breastfeeding, harmful substances pass from the mother to the child, which can also affect the child's health later in life.

Allergies caused by cosmetic ingredients?

Redness, blisters and itching can be signs of an allergic reaction to ingredients. Contact

allergies cannot be cured. Specialised dermatologists will diagnose substances you are allergic to and enter them in an allergy passport. Only use cosmetics that are free from these allergy substances.

Allergies caused by fragrances?

Fragrances are the second most common allergy trigger after nickel and can be found in almost all cosmetics (including cleaning agents and detergents). The following 24 allergenic fragrances must be labelled on the packaging - without the words „allergenic“: Amyl Cinnamal, Amylcinnamyl Alcohol, Alpha Isomethyl ionone, Anise Alcohol, Benzyl Alcohol, Benzyl Benzoate, Benzyl Cinnamate, Benzyl Salicylate, Cinnamal, Cinnamyl Alcohol, Citral, Citronellol, Coumarin, Eugenol, Evernia Furacea Extract (Tree Moss Extract), Evernia Prunastri Extract (Oak Moss Extract), Farnesol, Geraniol, Hexyl Cinnamal, Hydroxycitronella, Isoeugenol, d-Limonene, Linalool and Methyl-2-Octynoate.