The Hidden Dangers of Personal Care Products

By Dr. Ramona Warren

In the United States there are over 82,000 chemicals found in personal care products and cosmetics. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has only banned 11 of these chemicals, while Europe has banned hundreds. Many people are unaware of the countless toxic ingredients found in personal care products and cosmetics, and they are also unaware of the damage these products can cause. Here’s an illustration of how we unknowingly use these toxic substances daily:

When the alarm rings she slowly gets out of bed. She heads to the shower and, under the steady stream of water, gently scrubs her body with a deodorant soap. Next, she shampoos her tinted hair, applies a good amount of hair conditioner and lets it penetrate. Meanwhile, she pops the top on the shaving cream and shaves her legs.

The shower finished, she towel dries and spreads on an even coat of body lotion and a dusting of powder. She sprays on scented deodorant, brushes her teeth, then rinses and gargles with mouthwash. She combs setting gel through her hair, blows it dry, and spritzes with hairspray.

She carefully applies moisturizer over her face to reduce the fine lines. She adds foundation, blush, eye shadow, eyeliner and a stroke of mascara. A dab of lipstick, a poof of perfume and a little sunscreen on her arms, and she is set for the day. She looks radiant and healthy, but take a look at what these products have exposed her to in a matter of minutes:

* The *deodorant soap* has a pH of 9, which removes the protective acid mantle of the skin making it more alkaline and vulnerable to penetration. It also contains ammonia, formaldehyde and phenol (known carcinogens) and triclocarban, which is under suspicion of being a cancer-causing agent with daily use.
* Her *shampoo* contains cocamide DEA, which is associated with carcinogenic nitrosamines, and sodium lauryl sulfate, a known mutagen. The *hair tint* contains quaternium-15, which releases carcinogenic formaldehyde and the carcinogen phenylenediamine.
* The *conditioner* contains Methylisothiazolinone*,* an ingredient that is mutagenic and is presently being evaluated as cancer causing.
* The *shaving cream* contains a-pinene, a chemical that damages the immune system.
* Her *body lotion* contains mineral oil, which, as a cosmetic grade petroleum product, includes the contaminant polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PHAs), which can mimic estrogen in the body.
* The *powder* contains talc, a substance like asbestos. When talc was combined with a common air pollutant, benzo a pyrene, it induced tumors in 80 percent of the animals tested. Many scientists believe talc should be placed on the “known carcinogens” list.
* The *deodorant* has aluminum, which is being tested in connection to Alzheimer’s.
* The *toothpaste* contains saccharin and FD&C Blue#1, which are carcinogens. It also contains resorcinol, which can cause a blood disorder (methemoglobinemia), convulsions and death.
* The *mouthwash* contains 27 percent ethanol, which is suspected of causing esophageal cancer. It also contains phenol, which can cause fatal poisoning through skin absorption.
* The *hairspray* contains polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP). Reports show PVP may cause harm if the particles are inhaled. Modest intravenous doses fed to rats caused tumors.
* The *moisturizer* contains phenol carbolic acid, which can cause a circulatory collapse, paralysis, convulsions, coma, and death as a result of respiratory failure. It also contains PEG-40, which contains dangerous levels of dioxin and propylene glycol, which studies show can negatively alter brain waves and cause liver and kidney disorders.
* Her *blush* contains FD&C Red#3, which causes human breast cells to grow, mimics the effect of natural estrogen at the molecular level, and damages the genetic material of human breast cells.
* The *eye shadow* contains iron oxide, which although deemed safe by the FDA for use in the eye area, is a suspected carcinogen, teratogen, or toxin.
* The *eyeliner* contains ascorbyl palpitate, and studies suggest that the palmitates are to be considered carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic.
* The *mascara* may be contaminated with bacteria. It also contains polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP), a carcinogen.
* The *lipstick* contains paraffin, which is a mixture of hydrocarbons and is derived from petroleum. It is known to be contaminated with the carcinogens benzo a pyrene and benzo b fluoranthene.
* The *perfume* contains toluene, a suspected potent carcinogen, and benzaldehyde, which is a central nervous system depressant that may cause kidney damage.
* The *sunscreen* contains padimate O and the preservative, BNPD, which together creates the carcinogenic nitrosamine, NMPABAO.

I’m not saying to never use makeup or other personal care products. Rather, take time to read the labels and know what you are putting on your body. What goes on the body goes IN the body. If you wouldn’t eat the ingredient, then don’t put it on your skin! There better quality products. Environmental Working Group, [ewg.org](http://ewg.org), is a good website to check your product and find recommendations for less toxic options.

Beauty comes from within and diet and exercise are far superior to getting that “healthy glow” than using chemical peels, lotions, facelifts or other invasive measures. Making sure you eat a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits will help give you the necessary nutrients to keep your skin healthy. Essential fatty acids are also important for skin health. Eating cold-water fish, nuts, avocados, using flaxseed oil, coconut oil and taking fish oil are good ways to get quality fats. Staying well hydrated by drinking a minimum of eight glasses of water a day will also benefit the skin. Finally, a good 14- or 21-day cleanse can be helpful in improving skin complexion and tone. Many people are amazed at how their skin improves and “glows” after a quality cleanse.

Read the labels on your personal products and take the steps recommended so you can avoid the toxins and have that healthy glow naturally.