Are there toxic chemicals in your cosmetics?

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David Suzuki Foundation

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Sustainable Shopper's Guide to a Dirty Dozen Ingredients to Avoid in your Cosmetics

BHA and BHT: In moisturizer, makeup, etc. May cause cancer and interfere with hormone function. Harmful to fish and other wildlife.

Coal tar dyes: Look for P-PHENYL-ENEDIAMINE in hair dyes, and colours identified as "C.I." followed by five digits in other products. Potential to cause cancer and can be contaminated with heavy metals toxic to the brain.

CYCLOMETHICONE and siloxanes: Widely used in moisturizer, makeup, hair products, etc. May interfere with hormone function and damage the liver. Harmful to fish and other wildlife.

DEA, MEA and TEA: In creamy and foaming products such as moisturizer, shampoo. Can react to form cancer-causing nitrosamines. Harmful to fish and other wildlife.

DIBUTYL PHTHALATE: In nail products. Toxic to reproduction and may interfere with hormone function. Harmful to fish and other wildlife.

Formaldehyde-releasing preservatives: Look for DMDM HYDANTOIN, DIAZOLIDI-NYL UREA, IMIDAZOLIDINYL UREA, METHENAMINE, or QUARTERNIUM-15 Widely used in hair products, moisturizers, etc. Formaldehyde causes cancer.

Parabens: Widely used in makeup, mois-turizers, etc. May interfere with hormone function. Associated with breast cancer.

PARFUM: Widely used even in some products marketed as "unscented" (often the last ingredient). Mixture of chemicals that can trigger allergies and asthma. Some linked to cancer and neurotoxicity. Some harmful to fish and other wildlife.

PEG: Widely used in conditioners, moisturizers, deodorants, etc. Can be contaminated with 1,4-dioxane, which may cause cancer.

PETROLATUM: In hair products, lip balm/lipstick, skin care products. Petroleum product that can be contaminated with cancer-causing impurities.

SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE (SLES) and SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE (SLS): In products that foam such as shampoo, cleansers, bubble bath. SLES can be contaminated with 1,4-dioxane, which may cause cancer. SLS may damage liver. Harmful to fish and other wildlife.

TRICLOSAN: In "anti-bacterial" products such as toothpaste, soaps, hand sanitizers. May interfere with hormone func-tion and contribute to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Harmful to fish and other wildlife.

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