



## THE HIT LIST

The Hit List is Ikigai's run down of cosmetic ingredients known or suspected to cause skin irritation and more serious health problems. Check the labels on your beauty products for any of these nasties. They're widespread, even in some products marketed as 'natural' or 'organic'. Don't panic! Just promise yourself to replace them as soon as you can with less harmful alternatives and commit yourself to careful label-reading for life.

### Formaldehyde

Formaldehyde is known to be a carcinogen. It is an allergen, an irritant and causes contact dermatitis, headaches and chronic fatigue. The vapour is extremely irritating to the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and throat.

### Imidiazolidinyl Urea

Established as a primary cause of contact dermatitis by the American Academy of Dermatology. Contains formaldehyde.

### Methyl, Propyl, Butyl and Ethyl Paraben

Used as inhibitors of microbial growth and to extend the shelf life of products. Linked by some scientific researchers to breast cancer. May cause allergic reactions and rashes.

### Mineral Oil

A petroleum by-product that coats the skin like plastic, clogging the pores and interfering with the skin's ability to eliminate toxins, promoting acne and other disorders. Slows down skin function and cell development, resulting in premature aging.

Used in many products (baby oil is 100 per cent mineral oil). Any mineral oil derivative can be contaminated with carcinogenic PAH's (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons). Manufacturers use petrolatum because it is extremely cheap.

### Propylene Glycol (PG)

PG is a petroleum derivative. It penetrates the skin and can weaken protein and cellular structure. PG is strong enough to remove barnacles from boats. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) considers PG so toxic that it requires workers to wear protective gloves, clothing and goggles and to dispose of any PG solutions by burying them in the ground. Because PG penetrates the skin so quickly, the EPA warns against skin contact to prevent consequences such as brain, liver, and kidney abnormalities. Of course, we're talking in much higher quantities than you'd find in cosmetics. Comforting? Didn't think so.

### Phthalates

Phthalates are used as a plasticiser in food wraps and pliable plastics and containers. They have been shown to have adverse 'gender-bending' effects on normal hormonal activity. Used in hairspray and

cosmetics such as nail varnishes, where they are easily absorbed into the system, phthalates are thought to lower sperm counts and possibly even cause sexual abnormalities and deformities.

### **PVP/V Copolymer**

A petroleum-derived chemical used in hairsprays, setting lotions and other cosmetics. Particles may contribute to foreign bodies in the lungs.

### **Sodium Lauryl Sulphate/Sodium Laureth Sulphate (SLS/SLES)**

Used in car washes, garage floor cleaners and engine degreasers, and in 90 per cent of products that foam. Animals exposed to quantities of SLS/SLES experience eye damage, central nervous system depression, laboured breathing, diarrhoea, severe skin irritation, and even death. Young eyes may not develop properly if exposed to SLS/SLES. It is frequently used in semi-natural cosmetics as it is derived from coconut.

### **Stearalkonium Chloride**

A chemical used in hair conditioners and creams that may cause allergic reactions. Stearalkonium chloride was developed by the fabric industry as a fabric softener, and is a lot cheaper and easier to use in hair conditioning formulas than proteins or herbal extracts, which are beneficial to the hair.

### **Synthetic colours**

For example, FD and C Yellow No. 6. Synthetic colours may be made from coal tar. They contain heavy metal salts that deposit toxins onto the skin, causing skin sensitivity and irritation. They may also be carcinogenic.

### **Synthetic fragrances**

Fragrance on a label can indicate the presence of up to four thousand separate ingredients, some of which are toxic or carcinogenic. Symptoms reported to the USA Food and Drug Administration (FDA) include headaches, dizziness, allergic rashes, skin discolouration, violent coughing and vomiting, and skin irritation. Clinical observation proves that some fragrances can affect the central nervous system, causing depression, hyperactivity, and irritability.

### **Triethanolamine (TEA)**

A highly acidic synthetic emulsifier. Cosmetics containing TEA have been found to be contaminated with nitrosamines, which are potent carcinogens.

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