

Toxins in Your Beauty Products? 8 Things to Know Now



We use our cosmetics daily, paying far more attention to how it makes us look rather than what we may be putting on our face. It's no joke: A lot of our favorite cosmetics are loaded with toxic chemicals.

"Did you know that the European Union bans 1,342 ingredients from personal care products while the US bans 9 or 11?" says **Wendy Kuhn**, a Holistic Health Coach. Here are her tips for being more aware.

1. Check out the product on the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep database.

It's not perfect, but it's really, really good and incredibly helpful. It's now an app, so you can scan the barcode of a product to identify the toxicity of its ingredients.

2. Be wary of fragrances.

"Because fragrances are often trade secrets, manufacturers are not required to disclose the ingredients—often endocrine disrupting chemicals hide in these fragrances," says Kuhn.

3. Chemicals in beauty products can include mercury in mascara and lead in lipstick—both known neurotoxins.

In fact, one study found lead in more than 60% of lipsticks, says **Rachel Lincoln Sarnoff**, better known as **Mommy Greenest**, a Los Angeles-based writer and consultant.

4. Look at your nail polish carefully.

"I am focusing on nail polish that contains toluene, phthalates, formaldehyde, and acetates. These known toxins are in most nail polishes that cause everything from brain fatigue to terrible skin rashes," says **Dr. Elizabeth Trattner**, A.P., DOM based out of Miami Beach. Recently, a patient of Dr. Trattner sought aggressive care for a rash caused by a Brazilian nail polish "that never comes off." Another patient developed contact dermatitis from nail polish, because she was always touching her face. Once they removed the nail polish, she was fine.

5. Read ingredient lists.

"I give my clients a handout of ingredients to avoid in food and in personal care products," says Kuhn.

6. And the danger may not even be listed.

"Here is a chemistry secret. 1,4 Dioxane is listed by the FDA as a carcinogen. It is a byproduct from the making of certain chemicals commonly used in cosmetics. So, if your favorite product contains a glycol, PEG, or potentially any word ending in 'eth,' throw it away. It contains 1,4 Dioxane—and you didn't even know it, because it's not something that is listed directly on your product," shares **David Pollock**, a chemist and beauty industry expert, author of *Just Stop the Lies: Secrets the Beauty Industry Doesn't Want You to Know*.

7. Vote with your wallet.

"We are seeing changes to product formulations and store policies because of the choices people are making," says Kuhn.

8. Why is this such a big deal?

"There are many long-term side-effects of using toxic makeup, such as cancer, headaches, nausea, contact dermatitis, reproductive disorders, memory loss, fatigue, and neurological problems. Even though each individual level of exposure is low, it can quickly build up over time. Skin is extremely susceptible to metals, and exposure can increase fine lines and wrinkles," says **Dr. John Salerno** of [The Salerno Center](#).