



TABLE: Harmful Chemicals in Personal Care Products, Where They are Found, Health Effects and How to Avoid Them

Harmful Chemical	Where Found	Health Effects	How to Avoid
1,4-Dioxane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shampoos • Body washes • Lotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidney toxicant • Neurotoxicant • Lung irritant • Carcinogen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy products certified under the USDA National Organic Program.
Parabens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deodorants and antiperspirants • Shampoos and conditioners • Spray tans • Lotions and sunscreens • Makeup and other cosmetics • Pharmaceuticals • Food additives • Fragrances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endocrine disruptor • Estrogen mimic • Breast cancer risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for paraben-free products to purchase. • Look for products in dark containers with a pump to keep out light and air. • Use products before their expiration date.
Phthalates (Phthalates make cosmetics easy to spread; now banned in products for children under four years of age. More than 90% of people have detectable levels in their urine. ¹²⁸)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nail polish and removers • Hairsprays • Lipstick • Shampoos • Perfumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitochondrial damage • Low sperm count • Possible liver damage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't use plastic products with recycling codes of 3 and 7. • Avoid using any plastic in the kitchen. • Use glass, stainless steel, or silicone. • Look in ingredient lists and avoid products containing phthalates.

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Harmful Chemical	Where Found	Health Effects	How to Avoid
Methylisothiazolinone (MIT) (Kills bacteria and fungi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shampoos • Conditioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At higher concentrations, linked to diseases of the brain and nervous system • Allergen • Irritant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look online for MIT-free hair care products.
Toluene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthetic fragrances • Nail polishes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurological damage • Impairs breathing • Causes nausea • Liver and kidney damage • Developmental problems in fetuses • Low blood cell counts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check online to verify your favorite products are free of “the toxic three”: toluene, dibutyl phthalate and formaldehyde. • Be careful of products applied at a salon, especially if there is inadequate ventilation. • At home, apply nail polish in a well-ventilated room.
Triclosan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some dish soaps • Toothpaste • Shampoos • Acne treatments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitochondrial damage • Disrupts hormones • Impaired muscle function • A possible contribution to antibiotic-resistant germs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid products labeled as “antibacterial.” • Check online for Triclosan-free personal care products.
Sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) and aluminum lauryl sulfate (ALS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shampoos • Laundry detergents • Dish soaps • Toothpaste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritation to eye and skin • Possible allergen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check online for SLS and ALS-free personal care products.
Propylene glycol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin conditioning agents • Fragrances • Cosmetic moisturizers • Shampoos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible irritant and allergen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are developing allergies, you may want to find products that are free of this chemical.

