



NOT SO PRETTY:

Toxic Products Marketed to Black Women

Chemicals linked to infertility in nail products? Cancer-causing chemicals in skin lighteners? Hair relaxers with ingredients linked to immune system problems and hormone disruption?

What's going on?

Black women are disproportionately exposed to toxic chemicals in the workplace, in communities and from cosmetics.

Products marketed to black women (like hair relaxers and skin lighteners) contain some of the most toxic chemicals used by the cosmetics industry. Many cosmetics chemicals have never even been assessed for safety.

Black women spend an estimated \$5.7 billion a year on beauty and salon products and services, and, on average, visit a salon more than twice a month. Market research suggests that black women spend twice as much on skin care than women in other demographics. So, black women spend more on and use more cosmetics, *and* these products often have a higher toxicity than those marketed to the general population.

But here is the good news: Black women are a very powerful consumer group! With this kind of buying power, black women can change the industry by demanding—and buying—non-toxic products that are safer for our health. **Send the beauty industry a message by making your demands known and by taking your dollars to companies that pledge to make safer products free of toxic chemicals.**

Is it legal to put toxic ingredients in personal care products?

In the United States, it's perfectly legal for products that we use every day to contain chemicals linked to breast cancer, hormone disruption, birth defects and other chronic health problems that are on the rise. The \$50 billion personal care products industry has “regulated” itself for decades, and even argues that “just a little bit” of a toxic chemical in a product is OK. It's *not* OK: these chemicals are getting into our bodies and can be passed on to our babies. They can be potent even in small doses. And they add to our toxic exposures from other sources.



NEED MORE INFORMATION?
E-mail info@safecosmetics.org
or call 617-338-8131.

Products That May Contain Chemicals of Concern

- Hair relaxers
- Skin lighteners
- Dandruff shampoos
- Hair conditioners
- Hair dyes (especially those containing coal tar)
- Nail polish/treatments
- Fragrance and scented products



GIVING THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY A MAKEOVER

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics is a coalition of nonprofit organizations and concerned people like you who are calling on the beauty industry to stop using toxic chemicals. We're working with hundreds of responsible companies that have agreed to make safer products, and we're advocating for laws that protect our health. We need your voice! To learn more about getting the message to companies and elected officials,

visit www.SafeCosmetics.org
or call (617) 338-8131.

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics is a coalition of more than 100 nonprofit organizations working to protect the health of consumers and workers by eliminating dangerous chemicals from cosmetics and personal care products. Core members include: Breast Cancer Fund, Clean Water Action, Commonweal, Environmental Working Group, Friends of the Earth, Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition and Women's Voices for the Earth.

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics
www.SafeCosmetics.org

Clip and fold this guide to keep with you!

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COSMETIC INGREDIENTS TO AVOID

(and products they're in and the health concerns)

- **BHA:** relaxers, hair-growth products, skin lighteners (immune system toxicity, cancer, hormone disruption, organ toxicity; can build up in our bodies)
- **Coal tar:** some hair dyes, dandruff shampoos (cancer; can build up in our bodies)
- **Coumarin:** hair relaxers, hair dyes, fragrance (immune system toxicity, reproductive harm, cancer, cell damage)
- **Dibutyl phthalate:** nail polish, cuticle treatments, other nail treatments (reproductive and developmental harm, immune system toxicity, hormone disruption)
- **DMDM hydantoin:** hair relaxers, dandruff shampoos, hair dyes and bleach, some skin lighteners (releases formaldehyde, which is linked to cancer)
- **Formaldehyde:** nail polish, nail treatments, eyelash glue, some hair straighteners (breathing problems, cancer)
- **Hydroquinone:** skin lighteners, hair dyes (immune system and skin toxicity, cancer, reproductive harm)
- **Octoxynol-40:** hair dyes, hair relaxers (mutagen, cancer, immune system toxicity; may be contaminated with 1,4-dioxane or ethylene oxide, which are linked to cancer)
- **P-phenylenediamine:** hair dyes (immune system toxicity, skin toxicity, hormone disruption, cancer)
- **PEG 10 sorbitan laurate:** moisturizing/soothing shampoo (skin toxicity, reproductive harm)
- **Placental extract:** conditioners, facial moisturizers (hormone mimicker)
- **Selenium sulfide:** dandruff shampoos (linked to cancer, neurotoxicity, developmental harm; can build up in our bodies)
- **Synthetic fragrance:** many personal care products (allergies, cancer, birth defects)
- **Toluene:** nail polish, cuticle treatments, other nail treatments (reproductive and developmental harm, nervous system toxicity, kidney and liver toxicity)