

McKenzie's Food for Thought

Informed insight on the latest medical & health news & what it means for you

CHEMICALS IN PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS:

In 1989 the Australian Occupational Safety & Health Administration analysed nearly 3,000 chemicals used in personal care products (shampoo, body washes etc.). 884 of the ingredients were found to be toxic, and of these:

- 778 can cause acute toxicity
- 146 can cause tumours
- 218 can cause reproductive complications
- 314 can cause biological mutation
- 376 can cause skin & eye irritation.

As we know from successful use of HRT & nicotine patches, the skin makes an ideal medium with which to transfer a chemical or pharmaceutical agent into the bloodstream. The skin (especially the scalp) & the tender membranes under the tongue allow chemicals into the bloodstream which, when eaten, the liver has a chance of dealing with more effectively due to the complex digestive process.

But the danger from using personal care products can be worse than the danger of eating foods containing the same contaminants. For those who are pregnant it is known that chemical toxins are passed from mother to baby during pregnancy. Most babies are born already affected by the toxins from their mother's makeup, perfume & personal care products. The toxic load will only increase as the child grows & continues to be exposed to mainstream soaps, shampoos, toothpastes etc.

Dr. Smaule S Epstein of the US based Cancer Prevention Coalition says there is a higher risk of cancer with the accumulative toxins & chemicals in these products than in cigarette smoke. Some 30 studies worldwide confirm the high incidence of cancers in children whose parents were exposed to chemical carcinogens during pregnancy.

Our society currently uses more than 70,000 synthetic chemicals that did not exist 100 years ago. Back then there was a 1:80 chance of developing cancer, whereas now there is a risk of 1:3 and this is rising. Between 1975 and 2001 childhood cancers increased by 32%. A 1988 study of adopted children found that most cancers were linked to environment and not to heredity. This has been confirmed by a more recent Scandinavian study of 9,000 identical twins.

Insidious endocrine disruptors (such as **Phthalates**) are exempt from any labelling requirement. They often make up one of many components of a

fragrance & therefore do not have to be listed as individual ingredient. Used in hair spray, perfume, nail polish, makeup, shampoo and soaps, but you will never know unless you have your product laboratory tested. Even if they are not in the products, they are sometimes in the packaging & can leach out of the so-called "soft" plastics used to package personal care products & into the products themselves. For hair products the risk is even more acute because the scalp is the second most efficient part of your body on which to put a substance you wish to absorb into your bloodstream (under the tongue is the first – one of the reasons homeopathic remedies are dissolved in the mouth...)

Another endocrine disruptor is **triclosan** – typically found in toothpastes and antibacterial handwash. It may react with tap water to produce chloroform gas, an issue of concern to both Greenpeace & WWF. But perhaps the most immediate threat comes from its endocrine disrupting properties & its tendency to give rise to **dioxin**. This is a term that refers to a family of 75 toxic chlorinated chemicals which are formed by an accidental by-product of many industrial processes. It is "the most potent carcinogen ever studied: dioxin in an amount the size of a fist is toxic enough to kill every person on earth...long term or prenatal exposure can cause birth defects, cardiovascular & nervous system damage, endometriosis, & a variety of cancers, including leukaemia, cancer of the breast and prostate (how much do the cancer research charities invest in this aspect of their work?). Typically found in deodorants & antibacterial soaps they won't feature on the product list. **MEA & DEA** are also hormone disruptors & can form carcinogenic nitrates & nitrosamines, used as foaming agents.

OTHER NASTIES:

Among the official COSHH Material Data Sheet warning for **Sodium Lauryl Sulphate (SLS)**: the following stand out: (It's found in most shampoos and body washes...)

Wear suitable protective clothing, irritating to eyes, skin & the respiratory system, harmful by inhalation

FOLLOWING PAGE:

Fluoride – as harmful as rat poison?

Alternative product recommendations

"Pause for consideration"

or if swallowed, may cause serious damage to the eyes.

Originally a powerful degreaser & industrial garage floor cleaner, SLS is now one of the most commonly used cheap foaming agents in personal care products.

According to "The Lancet" medical journal, SLS damages the skin barrier function, enhancing the body's response to other toxins & allergens as well as altering skin cells in the process.

Manufacturers sometimes use the ethoxylated version **Sodium Laureth Sulphate (SLES)**. This removes some of the harshness but can create a by-product called 1.4 dioxane. A known carcinogen & one of the main ingredients in Agent Orange. SLES is an oestrogen mimic linked to breast cancer & endometrial cancer, stress-related illness & lower sperm counts. Prolonged use of SLS in bath oils can lead to irritation of the mucous membranes of the genitals resulting in urinary tract and vaginal infection. Dr. Bill Kellner-Read cites evidence that SLS prevents children's eyes from developing properly.

Another common ingredient in personal care products is **Propylene Glycol** & the ethoxylated version **Polyethylene Glycol (PEG)**. It is a 'caustic cleaner' which, when not in your bathroom, is also used brake fluid, hydraulic fluid & industrial antifreeze! It is a skin irritant known to cause dermatitis, liver abnormalities & kidney damage.

When you see the word **Fragrance** or **Perfum** on the list of ingredients, there can be up to 300 chemicals within that one listed ingredient alone as manufacturers are not required to list the ingredients contained within their chosen scent. There are 3-5,000 scent ingredients available to manufacturers. About 95% are synthetic, many derived from petroleum products. **84% of synthetic fragrance ingredients have never been tested for safety.** Some common, and potentially very dangerous synthetic scent ingredients are **Toluene, Phthalates, Benzene** derivatives and **Aldehydes**. Many perfume ingredients are listed on the American environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Substance Control Act. **Glycol esters** found in fragrances can increase the risk of infertility, spontaneous abortion, and birth defects, even at low doses.

Sodium Fluoride is a known carcinogenic, which according to Dr. Dean Burk, Co-Founder of the US NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE, "causes more human cancer death & causes it faster than any other chemical". Dr. Ted Spence cites the following contraindications:

- Increases the ageing process
- Increases the incidence of cancer & tumour growth
- Disrupts the immune system
- Causes genetic damage
- Increases arthritis & is systemic poison.

These properties make it an ideal active ingredient in rat poison, but perhaps not so ideal for toothpaste and mouthwash. Foresight, the UK's premier pre-conception care charity, recommends avoiding fluoride because of its links to Down's Syndrome.

High **alcohol** content (over 25%) in mouthwash is linked to mouth, tongue and throat cancer.

This is just a selection of the potentially hazardous chemicals which are commonly used in beauty care products and household chemicals.

Be aware that life is a risk & ultimately fatal but if some simple changes reduce our toxic load surely it is worth making small shifts to the amount we expose ourselves to – swapping brands isn't that big a deal after all is it?

SOME SOLUTIONS?:

There are a variety of excellent companies that produce products free from many of the above carcinogens and not always those you might expect. I was horrified to discover that SLS could be found in products from the Body Shop or Lush, both of whom I had regarded 'good for alternative stuff...' The one I have most personal knowledge of is Neways. It was founded in 1987 by top American bio-chemist, Tom Mower, who was alarmed to discover that the same chemicals used by car manufacturers and industrial garages were being ordered by skin care companies.

Neways have eliminated ALL known carcinogens from their products. They have also removed phthalates, triclosan, DEA, MEA and other toxins from their products. They test each ingredient for dioxins, & then test the finished product to ensure that none have formed, & then finally package the product in 'hard' plastics that do not leach phthalates or dioxins into the contents! If you buy from a Health Food Store or buy products marked "organic" or "natural" do not assume you are safe. There is very little legislation of product labels. Arm yourself with a list of the toxic chemicals and check the full list of product ingredients (not just the active ingredients listed on the website or marketing materials).

For Neways products contact me as below:

office@fionamckenzie.co.uk

020 7229 6689

01242 890 532.

Some of the many other companies worth checking out are: Neals Yard (www.nealsyardremedies.com); Aubrey Organics (www.aubrey-organics.com); Green People (www.greenpeople.co.uk) and Weleda (www.weleda.co.uk) www.hempgarden.co.uk

(Much of the above material is taken from an article written by Amy Daws)

"PAUSE FOR CONSIDERATION":

May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you.. May you be content knowing you are child of God.. Let His presence settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and everyone of us."