

The BIG LIST

Alcohol

A colourless, volatile, flammable liquid produced by the fermentation of yeast and carbohydrates. Alcohol is used frequently as a solvent and is also found in beverages and medicine. As an ingredient in ingestible products, alcohol may cause body tissues to be more vulnerable to carcinogens. Mouthwashes with an alcohol content of 25% or more have been implicated in mouth, tongue and throat cancers.

Alpha Hydroxy Acid

An organic acid produced by anaerobic respiration. Skin care products containing AHA exfoliate not only damage skin cells, but the skin's protective barrier as well. Long term skin damage may result from its use.

Aluminium

A metallic element used extensively in the manufacture of aircraft components, prosthetic devices and as an ingredient in antiperspirants, antacids and antiseptics. Aluminium has been linked to Alzheimer's disease.

Animal Fat (Tallow)

A type of animal tissue made up of oily solids or semisolids that are water-insoluble esters of glycerol with fatty acids. Animal fats and lye are the chief ingredients in a bar of soap; a cleaning and emulsifying product that may act as a breeding ground for bacteria.

Bentonite

A porous clay that expands to many times its dry volume as it absorbs water. Bentonite, commonly found in many cosmetic foundations, may clog pores and suffocate the skin.

Butane

Aerosol propellant. Flammable and in high doses may be narcotic or cause asphyxiation.

Collagen

An insoluble fibrous protein that is too large to penetrate the skin. The collagen found in most skin care products is derived from

animal skins and ground up chicken feet. This ingredient forms a layer of film that may suffocate the skin.

DEA, MEA, TEA.

Cause allergic reactions, irritate the eyes and dry the hair and skin. Can be carcinogenic, especially to kidney and liver.

Dioxins

A potentially carcinogenic by-product that results from the process used to bleach paper at paper mills. Dioxin treated containers sometimes transfer dioxins to the product itself.

Elastin of High –molecular weight

A protein similar to collagen that is the main component of elastic fibres. Elastin is also derived from animal sources. Its effect on the skin is similar to collagen.

Fluorocarbons

A colourless, non-flammable gas or liquid that can produce mild upper respiratory tract irritation. Fluorocarbons are commonly used as a propellant in hairsprays.

Formaldehyde

A toxic, colourless gas that is an irritant and a carcinogen. When combined with water, formaldehyde is used as a disinfectant, fixative or preservative. Formaldehyde is found in many cosmetic products and conventional nail care systems.

Fragrance

Usually petroleum-based. Can cause headaches, dizziness, rashes, respiratory problems, vomiting, skin irritation and multiple chemical sensitivity.

Glycerin

A syrupy liquid that is chemically produced by combining water and fat. Glycerin is used as a solvent and plasticiser. Unless the humidity of air is over 65%, glycerin draws moisture from the lower layers of the skin and holds it on the surface, which dries the skin from the inside out.

Imidazolidinyl urea and DMDM hydantoin

These formaldehyde-forming preservatives can cause joint pain, allergies, depression, headaches, chest pain, chronic fatigue, dizziness, insomnia and asthma. Can also weaken the immune

system and can even cause cancer. Found in skin, body and hair products, antiperspirants and nail polish.

Kaolin

A fine white clay used in making porcelain. Like bentonite, kaolin smothers and weakens the skin.

Lanolin

A fatty substance extracted from wool, which is frequently found in cosmetics and lotions. Lanolin is a common skin sensitiser that can cause allergic reactions, such as skin rashes.

Lye

A highly concentrated watery solution of sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide. Lye is combined with animal fats to make bars of soap, which may corrode and dry out the skin.

Methyl, Propyl, butyl, and ethyl paraben

Are used to extend a product's shelf life and inhibit microbial growth. Highly toxic. Can cause rashes and other allergic reactions.

Mineral Oil

A derivative of crude oil (petroleum) that is used industrially as a cutting fluid and lubricating oil. Mineral oil forms an oily film over the skin to lock in moisture, toxins and wastes, but hinders normal skin respiration by keeping oxygen out.

Padimate-O

Also known as octyl dimethyl, PABA is found mostly in sunscreens. Like DEA, a nitrosamine-forming agent. There's concern that the energy absorbed by this sunscreen is then turned into free radicals, which may actually increase the risk of skin cancer.

Petrolatum

A petroleum based grease that is used industrially as a grease component. Petrolatum exhibits many of the same potentially harmful properties as mineral oil.

Propane

Aerosol propellant. Is flammable and in high doses may be narcotic.

Propylene Glycol

A cosmetic form of mineral oil found in automatic brake and hydraulic fluid and industrial antifreeze. In skin and hair products, propylene glycol works as a humectant, which is a substance that retains the moisture content of skin or cosmetic products by preventing the escape of moisture or water. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) warn users to avoid skin contact with propylene glycol as this strong skin irritant can cause liver abnormalities and kidney damage.

PVP/VA copolymer

A petroleum-based ingredient used in hairsprays.

Salt

Very drying, irritating and corrosive.

Sodium Lauryl Sulphate (SLS)

Harsh detergents and wetting agents used in garage floor cleaners, engine degreasers and auto cleaning products. SLS is well-known in the scientific community as a common skin irritant. It is rapidly absorbed and retained in the eyes, brain, heart and liver, which may result in harmful long-term effects. SLS could retard healing, cause cataracts in adults, and prevent children's eyes from developing properly.

Sodium Laureth Sulphate (SLES)

SLES is the alcohol form (ethoxylate) of SLS. It is slightly less irritating than SLS, but may cause more drying. Both SLS and SLES may cause potentially carcinogenic formations of nitrates and dioxins to form in shampoos and cleansers by reacting with other ingredients. Large amounts of nitrates may enter the blood system from just one shampooing.

Synthetic colours:

Coal-tar dyes are generally labelled as FD&C or D&C followed by a number. Carcinogenic.

Talc

A soft grey-green mineral used in some personal hygiene and cosmetic products. Inhaling talc may be harmful as this substance is recognised as a potential carcinogen.