



# HARMFUL INGREDIENTS

It's a toxic world out there with so many harmful ingredients lurking in beauty products. Some are harmful to your health, some harm the planet, and other are just bad for your hair. Being a holistic stylist, I feel it's important to educate you on what's in the products that come in contact with your skin every day and the effects they may have on you and your surroundings.

## **Things to be on the lookout for:**

**FRAGRANCE:** products that have "fragrance" on their labels are usually synthetic and can contain hidden chemicals. Some ingredients in fragranced products can disrupt the reproductive system and some have evidence linking them to health effects including cancer, reproductive toxicity, asthma, allergies and sensitivities.

**ALCOHOL:** while not all are created equal, only choose fatty alcohols like cetyl which help soften the skin and hair, or cetearyl and stearyl alcohol which hydrate. Most others are drying, though your better brands will add essential oils to offset any drying effects.

**PEGs:** (Polyethylene Glycol) carcinogenic petroleum chemicals that moisten and soften. Most PEGs are followed by a number, such as PEG-100, PEG-4, etc. This number represents the molecular size. The lower the number, the smaller the molecular size of the PEG and the higher the skin absorption rate. Higher numbers are ok to use.

**PHthalates:** plasticizer chemicals that make plastic soft and flexible. They can damage the reproductive systems, irritate skin, some cause cancer. In the past few years, researchers have linked phthalates to asthma, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, breast cancer, obesity and type II diabetes, low IQ, neurodevelopmental issues, behavioral issues, autism spectrum disorders, altered reproductive development and male fertility issues. Some are banned.

**PARABENS:** (methyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl)- artificial preservatives linked to breast cancer. They can act like the hormone estrogen in the body and disrupt the normal function of hormone systems affecting male and female reproductive system functioning, reproductive development, fertility and birth outcomes. They are also bad for our oceans and can kill our coral reefs.

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A photograph of a laboratory setting. In the foreground, there are several glass test tubes on a surface. A blue pipette is positioned above one of the tubes, with a drop of blue liquid about to fall. In the background, a person's face is partially visible, looking towards the camera. The overall lighting is bright and clean.

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**SLS:** (sodium laurel sulfate) foaming agent made from petroleum oil, or from coconut and palm oil which is responsible for deforestation. It is toxic to aquatic organisms, a skin and eye irritant, can produce allergic reactions. Found in shampoos, body wash and toothpaste.

**SLES:** (sodium laureth sulfate) sudsing agent used in shampoos, body wash and toothpaste. Eye, skin and lung irritant. Classified as toxic.

**PETROLEUM:** though not considered toxic, petroleum-based products will cause the hair to shine, but will not allow the hair to be effectively moisturized. Many people mistake the artificial shine petroleum imparts for healthy moisture, but because they repel moisture, overuse of petroleum-based products can lead to dryness and breakage which stunts hair growth. Petroleum refineries and drilling are hazardous and toxic to our environment.

**1-4 DIOXANE:** sudsing agent used in shampoos and body wash. Known human respiratory toxicant and possible carcinogen.

**PPGs:** (Propylene glycol) a synthetic (man-made) alcohol that attracts/absorbs water. It does not evaporate easily and can therefore dehydrate the hair causing a list of issues. It is a skin irritant found to provoke allergic reactions in people with eczema and other skin allergies.

**DIMETHICONE:** a type of silicone that is used in a ton of hair products and contributes to product buildup that makes your hair feel greasy. Since it acts as a protective cover on the surface of the hair, it stops moisture and nutrients from coming in and instead collects dirt and residue. It can clog the pores on the scalp and cause skin irritation. It has an environmental impact on fish and plant life.

**FORMALDEHYDE:** used for smoothing, is a known to cause DNA damage and cancer. Other names include Formalin, Formic aldehyde, Methanediol, Methanal, Methyl aldehyde, Methylene glycol, Methylene oxide.