



3 HARMFUL INGREDIENTS IN BEAUTY PRODUCTS & SAFE ALTERNATIVES

By Jane Leonhardt

Have you ever put on a lotion or used a face wash that made your skin burn? Or a hair product made your hair dry and brittle even though it is advertised as being “nourishing”? It begs the question, “What is *in* here?”

If it feels like you’re lathering yourself in chemicals, more than likely, you are.

Check the ingredients on your products for these formaldehyde-producing ingredients

- quaternium-15
- DMDM hydantoin
- imidazolidinyl urea
- diazolidinyl urea
- polyoxymethylene urea
- sodium hydroxymethylglycinate
- bromopol
- glyoxal

SAFE ALTERNATIVES

TO PRESERVATIVES

While you’re checking out those ingredients, seek out products that contain healthier, natural preservatives. **Tea tree, antioxidants and vitamin E** are all safe alternatives.

Studies show that **limonene** (found in lemons and limes) is a natural reducer of

Many beauty products like shaving cream, lotion, shampoo, conditioner, and deodorant contain ingredients that are *known* to be irritants or cancer-causing. Fortunately, if we can recognize them harmful ingredients, we can replace them with healthier ones.

✗ PRESERVATIVES ✗

Parabens are a commonly seen preservative in body products and lately some are advertised as specifically not containing parabens. A lesser known and shocking preservative is *formaldehyde*. Formaldehyde is either added directly or is a by-product of preservatives that are put in products to make them last longer and to prohibit the growth of bacteria (1). While some countries have banned their use, the United States does not have any restrictions on toxic preservatives in beauty products (2) despite warnings by the FDA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease registry (1).

formaldehyde and has incredible benefits for the skin including brightening, tightening and blemish reduction (3).

✗ ALUMINUM ✗

Aluminum, found in many popular anti-perspirants and deodorants, is meant to “plug” sweat ducts underneath the skin

so that the sweat never reaches the surface. Too much aluminum is related to the build-up of *tau proteins* in the brain, which studies show to be related to Alzheimer's Disease and cause brain degradation (4).

SAFE ALTERNATIVES



TO ALUMINUM

The best alternative to aluminum-containing anti-perspirants is **none at all**. Sweating releases toxins from our bodies and after your body sweats out the toxins, it is possible for you to see a decrease or halt in sweating altogether.

But, that's not always realistic.

Drinking diluted apple cider vinegar three times a day and applying it full strength to your underarms before bed will help to remove bacteria, and shrink pores, making you sweat less and smell fresh.

Because sweat is clear and odorless until coming in contact with bacteria, **natural mineral salt** can be used as a natural deodorant and anti-bacterial that creates a thin film of salt when rubbed or sprayed on the skin. It can last on the skin, killing bacteria and odor, for upto 24 hours (5). One stick of mineral salt can last for months, saving your bank account while saving your body.

✘SULFATES ✘

It's very common nowadays to see shampoos being marketed as "sulfate free." If you've wondered what sulfates

are and why they're bad for your hair, you aren't alone. Sulfates are salt that is produced when sulfuric acid reacts with other chemicals. The most common ones in shampoos are sodium lauryl sulfate and sodium laureth sulfate. They are produced from petroleum and palm oil and are most likely used in your cleaning products **yuck**. According to healthline.com, products containing these sulfates cause irritation to our *skin, eyes and lungs*. They can also be contaminated with a chemical called 1,4-dioxane which has been seen to cause cancer in laboratory tested animals (6). Also, products containing this chemical often *tests on animals*.



SAFE ALTERNATIVES

TO SULFATES

Sulfates create that amazing lather that we love when we wash our bodies and hair, but that is absolutely not necessary for cleanliness. A **solid shampoo bar** or an **oil-based soaps** are great alternatives to sulfate-containing products (6).

Sulfates are not an essential ingredient in soaps and shampoos, so products that are labeled as not containing them, more than likely work just as well as the ones that do contain them. As well as saving your hair and skin from drying out, you'll be helping the environment and small animals, too.

- (1) Get Toxic Chemicals Out of Cosmetics. (2017). *Scientific American*, (5), 10. Retrieved from <https://libproxy.albany.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgao&AN=edsgcl.512902767&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- (2) http://www.safecosmetics.org/get-the-facts/chemicals-of-concern/formaldehyde/#_edn39
- (3) Anderson, S. E., Khurshid, S. S., Meade, B. J., Lukomska, E., & Wells, J. R. (2012). Toxicological analysis of limonene reaction products using an in vitro exposure system. *Toxicology in vitro : an international journal published in association with BIBRA*, 27(2), 721-30.
- (4) Kandimalla, R., Vallamkondu, J., Corgiat, E. B., & Gill, K. D. (2016). Understanding Aspects of Aluminum Exposure in Alzheimer's Disease Development. *Brain Pathology (Zurich, Switzerland)*, 26(2), 139-154. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bpa.12333>
- (5) Cronkleton, E. (2018, June 18). How Does Crystal Deodorant Work and Does It Have Any Side Effects? *Healthline*. Retrieved from <https://www.healthline.com/health/crystal-deodorant>
- (6) <https://www.healthline.com/health/beauty-skin-care/sulfates#controversy>