

# Organic and Chemical Free alternatives for personal care products/cosmetics:

## Some Top common chemicals to avoid:

<i>Chemical</i>	<i>Uses &amp; Some Places They're Found</i>	<i>Health Concerns</i>
1,4-Dioxane	Contaminant in SLS/SLES, DEA/TEA/MEA, PEG ingredients; not always disclosed in products	Carcinogen; suspected kidney/liver/lung toxicant, neurotoxin
Pthalates (& Bisphenol A/BPA)	Plasticizer; plastics, cosmetics, shampoos, lotions, hairspray, nail Polish	Endocrine disruptor; genital birth defects; possible carcinogen
Parabens (methyl, propyl, butyl, & ethyl)	Germicide/Preservative; lotions, hair products, cosmetics	Endocrine disruptor; carcinogen; most commonly connected w/ breast cancer
Fragrance/Parfum <sup>1</sup>	Almost everything (it's a blanket term for any number of diff chemicals)	Allergen; hormone disruptor; carcinogen
Triclosan (Degrades into dioxin)	Antibacterial (originally a pesticide); soaps, toothpaste, deodorant	Endocrine disruptor; possible carcinogen; eyes/skin irritant ; damages internal organs/immune system
SLS & SLES (Sodium Lauryl Sulfate & Sodium Laureth Sulfate)	Foaming agent/emulsifier; toothpaste, shampoo, body wash	Allergen/irritant
Formaldehyde <sup>2</sup>	Disinfectant, germicide, fungicide, defoamer, preservative; hair products, lotions, cosmetics; Aspartame	Carcinogen; eyes, nose & throat irritant (inhalation exposure); headaches; nausea; can affect brain function
MEA, DEA, TEA (Mono-, Di-, Tri-ethanolamines)	Emulsifier, pH adjuster, preservative, foaming agent; hair products, cosmetics, coconut oil	Carcinogen; endocrine disruptor
PEG & PG (Polyethylene Glycol & Propylene Glycol)	Humectant, cleanser, emulsifier; skin creams/cleansers, shampoo, conditioners (PG is in antifreeze) (Often contaminated with 1,4-Dioxane)	Possible carcinogen; lowers immune system; brain, liver, kidney abnormalities

1 Common chemicals: ethanol, acetaldehyde, benzaldehyde, benzyl acetate, a-pinene, acetone, benzyl alcohol, ethyl acetate, linalool, a-terpinene, methylene chloride, styrene oxide, dimethyl sulphate, a-terpineol, camphor, and limonene

2 Diazolidinyl urea, 3-diol Imidazolidinyl urea, DMDM Hydantoin , Quaternium-15, Nitropropane-1, Formalin , Methanal , Methyl aldehyde, Methylene oxide, Morbicid acid, Oxymethylene

## Tips on Switching to Chemical-Free and Organic Products:

- Read the bottle: Learn basic toxics to avoid so you can scan labels and quickly evaluate a product's safety
- Do your homework: Research companies (ingredients, certifications, company values, etc...)
- Always check ingredients of products, even if you've bought from the company before. Never assume every single product from a company is safe.
- Prioritize switching products: switch those you use most often and stay on your skin longest first (like lotion)
- Remember that toxic-free more natural products have shorter shelf lives

## Green-Washing:

One of the biggest problems in finding safe cosmetic and personal care products is "green-washing" or "organic fraud". Many companies make their products to trick people into buying them by advertising them as "natural" and "organic", simply by putting current buzzwords on labels and using green or floral designs. This is why it is important as consumers not to be tricked – read labels and be a scrupulous shopper. In the box to the left is a list of buzzwords companies often use to get consumers to buy products that aren't that safe by making them appear wholesome and good for you. This problem

- Made with organic essential oils
- Contains organic ingredients
- Made with nontoxic ingredients
- 100% natural
- Essentially nontoxic
- Earth friendly
- Environmentally safer

stems from the lack of regulation concerning person care products and toxic chemicals, along with a lack of official definition for terms such as "organic" and "natural". The follow section addresses some certification programs and agreements that companies can participate in voluntarily.

## Certified Organic<sup>†</sup> and Chemical Free brands

### Have Tried Products

Acure  
Bare Escentuals  
Coastal Classic Creations  
Deep Steep  
Gabriel Cosmetics, Inc<sup>†</sup>  
Honeybee Gardens  
Juice Organics  
LUSH  
Maia's Mineral Galaxy  
Pangea Organics<sup>†</sup>  
Terra Firma  
Zosimos Botanicals

### Have Not Tried

Acquarella  
Alima Pure  
Brigit True Organics  
Cargo  
Dr. Hauschka Skin Care  
Green People (UK)<sup>†</sup>  
Herbs of Grace  
Jane Iredale  
John Masters Organics<sup>†</sup>  
Jurlique (Australia)<sup>†</sup>  
Lavera  
Monavé  
Rejuva Minerals<sup>†</sup>  
RMS Beauty  
Suki  
Vashon Organics

## Certification Systems and Consumer Assurance Logos:

Certification systems hold companies accountable for their green claims and make it easier for customers to feel confident in their purchasing choices. It is important to remember that not all programs are created equal or are all-inclusive. An organic seal may not mean the company is committed to sustainability or condones animal testing. It is important to understand what seals to look for and what it means when a product bears one of these seals. Here is a selection of common certifications.

### USDA's Certified Organic:

As part of the USDA's National Organics Program, products can display this seal. 100% organic certification means all ingredients and processing aids are organic, and must be marked as such on ingredient lists. Products can also be "organic", but not 100% organic and can include certain pre-approved non-organic ingredients. *More details:* <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/nop>



### National Sanitation Foundation (NSF/ANSI 305):

Specific requirements are similar to the USDA's. Products can be certified "100% organic" or "organic" if they contain at least 95% organically produced ingredients. A product can also be certified "contains organic ingredients" if it contains between 70-95% organic ingredients. Must be certified through QAI. *More details:* <http://www.nsf.org/index.asp>



### Leaping Bunny Seal:

Not for organic certification. A comprehensive program against animal testing under the founding of the Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics. *More details:* <http://www.leapingbunny.org/indexcus.php>



### Soil Association:

UK-based non-profit organization that certifies farms and businesses as organic by their own set of standards. *More details:* <http://www.soilassociation.org/certification>



### Quality Assurance International:

QAI is an agency that certifies products to the USDA and NSF requirements. They operate under NSF International. *More details:* <http://www.qai-inc.com/index.asp>



### Oregon Tilth:

They are a nonprofit organization whose one of many functions is certifying agricultural and manufacturing agents as organic. This seal represents "Oregon Tilth Certified Organic". *More details:* <http://tilth.org/certification>

### The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics

[www.SafeCosmetics.org](http://www.SafeCosmetics.org)



### Compact for Safe Cosmetics:

This is a voluntary campaign that companies can take part in, committing to disclosing all ingredients used in products and working towards safer alternatives. This is part of an attempt to bring transparency to the industry along with making products safer and eliminating toxics. *More details:* <http://safecosmetics.org/article.php?id=284>

### Organic Trade Association's Coming Clean Campaign:

The Coming Clean Campaign works to bring integrity to organic claims and labeling. *More details:* <http://www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/index.cfm>

## Resources/Further Reading:

<http://www.thegreenguide.com/personal-care/dirty-dozen/1>: Information on dirty dozen chemicals

<http://www.egg.org>: The Environmental Working Group provides a lot of information on body burdens and choosing safe products.

<http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>: Created by EWG, this is a cosmetic database to find information regarding the safety of ingredients and products.

<http://www.greenlivingonline.com/article/six-makeup-chemicals-avoid>: Chemicals to avoid, uses, health effects

<http://www.health-report.co.uk/natural-skin-care.htm>: More details on synthetic VS natural ingredients

<http://www.breastcancerfund.org/reduce-your-risk/tips/choose-safe-cosmetics/>: Information on safer cosmetics

<http://www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/index.cfm>: Coming Clean Campaign: Green washing and USDA information

<http://blog.nurturenatureproject.com/2008/12/11/usda-certified-organic-cleaning-brands-the-cleaning-products-that-really-work/>: USDA certified brands (Nurture Nature Blog has a wealth of information, this is just one specific post)

<http://www.greenpeople.org/OrganicSkinCare.html>: Shopping for organics, refine list by zip code, link at top of page

*The Green Beauty Guide* by Julie Gabriel

*Slow Death by Rubber Duck* by Rick Smith and Bruce Lourie