

THE NEVER LIST

Our Never List is robust. You should familiarize yourself with these ingredients but no one expects you to memorize the contents of this list. We have done our homework to make recognizing, understanding, and avoiding these ingredients easier for you. We will never use these ingredients:

Animal fats, oils, and musks: tallow, rendered beef or mutton fat, oils or musks from animals like mink, emu and sharks that are procured after an animal has been killed. Found in: soap, salve, shaving products, lubricants, paints, and all types of cosmetics.

Benzalkonium chloride: a disinfectant used as a preservative and surfactant associated with severe skin, eye and respiratory irritation and allergies. Found in: sunscreens, moisturizers.

Benzophenone and derivatives: a possible human carcinogen and hormone disruptor used as a fragrance ingredient and to absorb ultraviolet light. Found in: nail polish, sunscreen.

Bisphenol A (BPA): a hormone disruptor that may also alter DNA, used in plastics and resins. Found in: plastic bottles, lining of aluminum food cans, possibly in eyeshadow and styling gel.

Butoxyethanol: a solvent used to control viscosity, or a “fragrance” additive. It irritates skin and may cause cancer and reproductive toxicity. Found in: fragrance, hair color.

BHA and BHT: synthetic antioxidants used to extend shelf life. They are likely carcinogens and hormone disruptors, and may cause liver damage. Found in: lipsticks, moisturizers, diaper creams, and other cosmetics.

Coal tar hair dyes and other coal tar ingredients: a byproduct of coal processing that is a known carcinogen. It is used as a colorant and an anti-dandruff agent. Found in: hair dye, shampoo.

1,4-dioxane: a by-product of manufacturing that is a probable human carcinogen (a known animal carcinogen) as well as toxic to organs and the respiratory system, and a skin irritant. Likely to be present where ethoxylated ingredients like sodium laureth sulfate, PEGs, and cetareth are listed on ingredient labels. Found in: shampoo, body wash, bubble bath.

Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA): a chelating (binding) agent added to cosmetics to improve stability. May be toxic to organs. Found in: hair color, moisturizers.

Ethanolamines (MEA/DEA/TEA): surfactants and pH adjuster linked to allergies, skin toxicity, hormone disruption, and inhibited fetal brain development. Found in: hair dyes, mascara, foundation, fragrances, sunscreens, dry cleaning solvents, paint, pharmaceuticals.

Formaldehyde: used as a preservative in cosmetics. A known carcinogen that is also linked to asthma, neurotoxicity, and developmental toxicity. Present where quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin, imidazolidinyl urea, diazolidinyl urea, sodium hydroxymethylglycinate, 2-bromo-2-nitropropane-1,3 diol (Bronopol) and several other preservatives are listed. Beautycounter does not use any of these formaldehyde-donating preservatives. Found in: shampoo, body wash, bubble bath.

Hydroquinone: a skin lightening chemical that inhibits the production of melanin and is linked to cancer, organ toxicity and skin irritation. Found in: skin lightening creams.

Methyl cellosolve: fragrance ingredient and solvent that is an irritant and a possible neurotoxin, developmental toxin, and cause of DNA mutations that could lead to cancer. Found in: anti-aging creams.

Methylisothiazolinone and methylchlorisothiazolinone: chemical preservatives that are among the most common irritants, sensitizers and causes of contact skin allergies. Found in: shampoo, conditioner, body wash.



Mercury and mercury compounds (also listed as Thimerosal): metallic element used as a preservative and antiseptic known to damage brain function. Found in: ear and eye drops; may be used in mascara.

Mineral Oil (also listed as liquid paraffin; liquid petrolatum; paraffin oil): a by-product of petroleum distillation that may cause contact dermatitis. Found in: baby lotions, cold creams, ointments.

Oxybenzone: sunscreen agent and ultraviolet light absorber linked to irritation, sensitization and allergies, and possible hormone disruption. Found in: sunscreen, moisturizer.

Parabens (methyl-, isobutyl-, propyl- and others): a class of preservatives commonly used to prevent the growth of bacteria and mold. Parabens are endocrine (or hormone) disruptors, which alter important hormone mechanisms in our bodies. Specially, parabens mimic estrogen; they can lock on to our cell's own estrogen receptors and mess with important natural signals. They may play a role in triggering breast cancer. Found in: shampoo, face cleanser, body wash, body lotion, foundation.

Phthalates (DBP, DEHP, DEP and others): a class of plasticizing chemicals used to make products more pliable or to make fragrances stick to skin. Phthalates disrupt the endocrine system and may cause birth defects. Found in: synthetic fragrance, nail polish, hairspray.

Polyethylene glycol (PEG compounds): PEGs are widely used in cosmetics as thickeners, solvents, softeners, and moisture-carriers. Depending on manufacturing processes, PEGs may be contaminated with measurable amounts of ethylene oxide and 1,4-dioxane, which are both carcinogens. Found in: creams, sunscreen, shampoo.

Resorcinol: a colorant and fragrance ingredient that is a skin irritant, toxic to the immune system and organs, and suspected to cause hormone disruption. Found in: hair color.

Retinyl palmitate and Retinol (Vitamin A): a nutrient that may damage DNA and speed the growth of skin tumors when used topically. Found in: moisturizer, anti-aging skincare.

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLS and SLES): SLS and SLES are surfactants that can cause skin irritation or trigger allergies. SLES is often contaminated with 1,4-dioxane, a byproduct of a petrochemical process called ethoxylation which is used to process other chemicals in order to make them less harsh. Found in: shampoo, body wash, bubble bath.

Synthetic flavor or fragrance: an engineered scent or flavoring agent that may contain any combination of 3,000+ stock chemical ingredients, including hormone disruptors and allergens. Fragrance formulas are protected under federal law's classification of trade secrets, and therefore can remain undisclosed. Found in: all types of cosmetics.

Toluene: a volatile petrochemical solvent that is toxic to the immune system and can cause birth defects. Found in: nail polish.

Triclosan and Triclocarban: antimicrobial pesticides toxic to the aquatic environment; may also impact human reproductive systems. Found in: liquid soap, soap bars, toothpaste.

Beautycounter will never test our finished products on animals, nor do we ask others to. Sources include: EWG Skin Deep Database, Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, David Suzuki Foundation

