

Greening Your Personal Care

Reconsidering what you put on your body each day could help not only your health, but the health of the planet. Read on about some advice from the Mother Nature Network on what you need to avoid in your personal care products:

1. Lip balm—made from petroleum-derived ingredients and synthetic fragrances and parabens, lip balms contains more than moisturizer and, remember, we often lick our lips. Look for more natural balms that use a base of shea butter, cocoa butter or beeswax.
2. Shampoos & soaps—love a good sudsy wash? Well, all those suds don't love you. Watch out for sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) or sodium laureth sulfate (SLES). Not only can this be harmful to you, but when it flows down your drain and into our waterways, marine life can suffer. Look for sulfate-free shampoos and soaps and deal with a little less bubble.
3. Perfume—who doesn't like to smell good? But the hidden hazards of scents, whether from a bottle or in your favorite soap or shampoo, are lovely chemicals called neurotoxins, phthalates and synthetic musks. Plus, fragrances are one of the top five allergens. Try essential oil-based scents instead.
4. Deodorants/antiperspirants—what you slather on under your arm may contain a laundry list of potentially dangerous ingredients: triclosan, formaldehyde, fragrance, parabens, phthalates, aluminum and petroleum distillates. Nice. Go for natural and organic brands when you can or at least choose a product without a huge, unrecognizable list of ingredients.
5. Lipstick—yes, you knew this was coming. A swipe of color on your lips could leave traces of lead and other chemicals like petroleum-based waxes, synthetic colors and man-made oils. Look for lipstick that is labeled "lead-free"—many cosmetic companies are coming around.

This is only half the list—look for part two next week. A friend of mine, when I told her what I was writing about, complained, "Oh, no! Don't tell me. I don't want to know!" I know the feeling. But wouldn't you rather be aware than not? I realize ignorance is bliss, but when there are other alternatives to the standard care products readily available, why not make the effort? Or at least cut down on your use of certain products that contain a lot of chemicals. I always think of my grandmother and her generation: keep it simple.

Source: www.mnn.com (11 Beauty Products That May Be Ruining the Planet). Tuesday Trippier lives in Delaware, is a writer and mother of three and a member of Sustainable Delaware.