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## REAL BEAUTY 101

Written by Randi Reagan

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By avoiding the ten most toxic base ingredients that show up in about 99% of all beauty products – even the super expensive, most high-falutin’ European/ imported, \$150 per oz of the latest, greatest formula is full of toxins - you can be incredibly pro-active, AND vote with your dollars and support small owner-operated businesses who carry the purest products. The large, multi-national cosmetic manufacturers are the most egregious producers of these products. However, even though it might not be a big-name brand, it doesn’t mean there isn’t “green washing” going on in the product: there is a Swiss made skin-care line out there making the rounds of the tiered “Home Distribution” networks that claims to be all botanical, all the way through, yet upon inspection of their list of ingredients, quite a few of the 10 offenders can be found lurking in the ingredients.

**The Top 10 Ingredients to Avoid:**

1. **DEA (diethanolamine), MEA (momoethanolamine), TEA (triethanolamine): often appear on labels as Cocamide DEA** and are commonly found in cleansers, shampoos and body washes as emulsifiers and foaming agents. According to a 1998 research study by the National Toxicology Program, these chemicals affect hormone function and are **known to produce cancer-causing nitrates and nitrosamines** in laboratory animals. The FDA is currently in the process of evaluating the link between DEA and cancer in humans.
2. **FD&C Color Pigments: often made from coal tar**, these artificial colorings can cause skin sensitivity and may be carcinogenic.
3. **Fragrance:** can be very sensitizing to the skin. Many of the compounds in fragrance are toxic and can cause headaches, dizziness or nausea.
4. **Midazolidinyl Urea & DM Hydantoin:** these are the most commonly used preservatives after parabens. They are the second most identified cosmetic preservatives causing contact dermatitis according to the American Academy of Dermatology. **These preservatives also release formaldehyde**, a chemical that can cause skin irritations as well as health problems such as migraines, allergies and asthma.
5. **Isopropyl Alcohol:** a petroleum-derived solvent found in hair rinses, hand lotions and shaving products. **Also used as antifreeze** at industrial strengths.
6. **Mineral Oil:** a petroleum-derived oil that is sensitizing to the skin and can inhibit the ability of the skin to breathe. Baby oil is 100% mineral oil.
7. **Paraben Preservatives:** Developed in the 1930’s, synthetic Methyl, Ethyl and Propyl Parabens were derived from benzoic acid and were considered effective and economical since they were inexpensive to use as both a cosmetics and food grade preservative. However, recently this preservative system has come into question as these substances have been **found in cancerous tissues, especially breast tissue**.
8. **PEG:** is an abbreviation for polyethylene glycol and is used to break down oil or help thicken products. PEGs are **often used in oven cleansers** and are irritating to the skin.
9. **Propylene Glycol (PG):** an alcohol that can be manufactured synthetically, usually from petroleum or naturally, from corn. Synthetically derived, it is used as a surfactant or wetting agent and **is an active ingredient in industrial antifreeze**. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on propylene glycol warn users to avoid skin contact as it is systemic and can cause kidney and liver abnormalities. Propylene glycol may damage cell membranes causing rashes, dry skin and surface damage to the skin.
10. **Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) & Sodium Laureth Sulfate:** are used as detergent surfactants to remove dirt from the skin. These compounds are **also found in car wash soaps and engine degreasers** and yet are commonly found in many shampoos and shower gels. SLS is very irritating to skin and can be toxic to eyes.

**After eliminating toxic ingredients from your beauty products, there are other simple steps you can take to nurture your natural glow:**

1. Healthy hair, skin and nails come from a pure diet free from additives, preservatives, and fillers; eat as many fresh fruits and vegetables every day that you can, avoid white sugar and caffeine in large amounts, (everything in moderation), exercise – sweat it out to purify the blood and get rid of toxins, rest/meditate.
2. Thin, ridged or split nails, dry hair and skin, dark circles under eyes, skin imbalances such as acne or eczema, bloating, and red or watery eyes can be symptomatic of the need for a better diet, a little detox time, and a switch to purer skin care and cosmetics.
3. Regular therapeutic bodywork, and facials which incorporate lymphatic draining and light massage, help to increase circulation and blood flow to tissues, while also helping to eliminate congestion – a root cause for dull, lifeless, skin and hair.
4. Take water cures: steams, saunas, Jacuzzis, hot soaking baths – all are incredibly great for promoting natural beauty. Better yet, alternating hot and cold waters increase blood flow to the surface of the skin which nourishes it and makes it soft, full of color and glow.
5. Cultivate peace and love in your life: the kind you give away, as often as possible. Nothing nourishes your inner beauty – which shows up on your skin – than the healing power of love and kindness.

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