**Paraben – Dispel The Myth**

by Michael Jordan

Got a question from someone who recently purchased our products about an ingredient called “paraben”.  This client felt that products containing paraben are not “natural” or “holistic”.  So let me explain.

There are two members of the paraben family that some of our products contain:  Methylparaben and Propylparaben.  Both of these ingredients are added as preservatives.  Parabens allow for items to be stored for relatively long periods of time without spoiling.  their long history of use accompanied by studies that show them to be, for the most part, non toxic has increased the usage of parabens in most products requiring a preservative. We realize that our products may be on store shelves for a bit before being purchased and used.  As well, once you’ve purchased our product it will be some time before all of the product is used up.  For these reasons we add a preservative to the product so that it will last as long as you need it to and still be fresh and potent.

Research and health advocacy groups have started a rally cry for paraben-free and preservative-free skin care products and cosmetics. Several studies in recent past have *concluded* that in *some cases* detectable levels of parabens have been found in breast cancer tumors. The conclusion that has been drawn is that parabens from deodorants and other skin care products leach into the skin through repeated use over many years to eventually reach a threshold level. Eventually this level becomes one of the triggering agents in the development of cancer. Only with further research will these arguments bring forth a decisive conclusion on this topic.

Methylparaben is the methyl ester of hydroxybenzoic acid.  It’s an antifungal that is used widely in foods, drugs and cosmetics.  As an antifungal it is known to slow Drosophila growth rate in the larval and pupal stages.  It is readily absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract or through the skin.  Studies have shown that it is practically non-irritating and non-sensitizing; however allergic reactions to ingested parabens have been reported.

Propylparaben is the propyl ester of hydroxybenzoic acid and occurs as a natural substance found in many plants and some insects, although it can be synthetically manufactured.  It is typically found in many water-based cosmetics, creams, lotions, shampoos and bath products.

So the question is, “Is the product natural or holistic if it contains a paraben”?  The answer is *…  absolutely*!  To consider a product “natural” or “holistic” simply means that the products does not contain any harsh chemicals or known immediate allergens.  Generally we consider natural products those that are abundant in ingredients such as aloe vera, flower essences and fragrances, oils, purified water, fruits and berries and just so many things that are grown from mother earth!  There are several of Barry Fletcher Products that contain these natural ingredients.

If you’re concerned about using products that may or may not contribute to developing cancer, then certainly you’ll want to investigate the ingredients in everything you use and act accordingly.  For us its always about education and making an informed decision.  At the moment clearly there is evidence on both sides of this issue and the choice is yours.

You’ll find some form of paraben in most every beauty-related product you purchase – no matter who the manufacturer is!  For us, our entire approach to hair care is holistic; meaning that we are concerned not only with styling your hair but also growing your hair, managing its healthiness, and improving your overall physical and mental health.  We need Black Women to be beautiful inside and out and whatever we can do to help that along, we will.  Whether its through our products, our educational seminars, our private consultations, our vitamins, our wigs, or a Barry Fletcher Original styling we are here to help ensure that Black Women don’t lose their sexual hair!