

"One of the greatest gifts you can give yourself, right here, right now, in this single solitary monumental moment in your life is to decide, without apology, to commit to the journey, and not to the outcome."

- Joyce Didonato

This is great quote because I believe that getting on the road to health and wellness is first a CHOICE and then it becomes a journey. Once you make the decision to get on the path, follow it, to wherever it leads you. It's a commitment you must stick with in order to get your desired results. Sometimes, you may just take baby steps and that's okay. But you must take that first step.

As most of you know, I got on that path quite a while ago and I lead a healthy lifestyle by eating well, exercising pretty much daily, getting enough sleep and drinking my wine. But over the last few months, I've tried to take it to another level and have chosen a little different path. Many of the products we put on our skin and hair are quite toxic and unless you're a label reader like I am, you would have no idea. So this month, I'm going to teach you about some toxic ingredients that you should try to avoid. I found an amazing recipe for lotion and made my first batch, which turned out great. Friends who tried it loved it. I guess I know what I'll be handing out for Christmas this year. If you want the recipe or if you have questions or need help getting on your path, please contact me.

Yours in health,



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What's Lurking in Your Products?



I don't think many people take the time to read labels on things like lotion, makeup and shampoo, like they do for food. If they did, they'd be quite surprised by what they found. One of the biggest problems is that you may see an ingredient and have no idea what it is, what it does or if it's toxic. So, here is a list of some of the worst offenders, with some additional detail about them.

Phthalates – These chemicals are used in many different types of products, typically to increase the flexibility in plastic. The main ones used in skin-care products are dimethyl, dibutyl and diethyl phthalates. They've been linked to breast cancer and are thought to be endocrine disrupters.

Fragrance – If you see this on an ingredient list, there's a reason you don't know what it is. It's a term often used to allow a company to protect its "secret formula." But it can also mean there's a harmful ingredient lurking inside that could cause allergies or some other side effect.

Parabens – These have properties that mimic estrogen. That means they have the ability to increase the risk of breast cancer. One study found parabens in the breast tissue of 18 out of 20 breast cancer patients studied. Because parabens can penetrate the skin and be traced in the blood minutes after applying products containing them, they most likely will have negative effects on the body. Avoid them.

Synthetic coloring – Look for the letters FD&C or D&C. They will always precede a number and a color like D&C red 1. Choose products without it.

Propylene glycol – This ingredient found in engine coolant, antifreeze, paint and varnish (to name just a few) is a form of mineral oil that unbelievably shows up in lotions and shampoos as well as many food products. Its Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) lists that skin, liver and kidney damage can result from contact with it and it provides safe handling instructions. It's referred to as a hazardous substance, yet it's allowed in products we put on our skin and in our bodies. Avoid it at all costs.

Triclosan - You'll find this toxic chemical in antibacterial soap, makeup, deodorant and toothpaste. It's an antibacterial and anti-fungal agent that gives many cleaning products their ability to kill bacteria and germs, but not viruses. Even my least favorite governmental agency has expressed concern about whether it disrupts the body's hormone system and whether it helps create bacteria resistant to antibiotics because of its antimicrobial properties. A study by the School of Public Health found young people overexposed to items containing triclosan may suffer more allergies and hay fever. It may even affect the development of the immune system in children. It's also impacting our environment. Scientists are calling for the removal of triclosan from consumer products because it's building up in our oceans. A 2009 study showed that 25% of bottlenose dolphins off the Florida coast and 33% of those tested off the South Carolina coast carried traces of this chemical in their blood. The amounts found in these dolphins (my favorite animal) are known to disrupt hormones, growth and development. How does it end up in the ocean? Simple. It gets washed down the drain, ends up in sewer plants and then goes into freshwater or oceans. Not only are we slowly being poisoned, but so is marine life.

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) - This is the ingredient that makes your shampoo lather up when you wash your hair. When used, it can dry out and ultimately dull the hair by removing its natural shine. It's really a harsh cleaner and while it doesn't affect some people, according to the Mayo Clinic, it can increase the risk of canker sores. SLS has been identified as one of the primary skin irritants used in body care products. It has the ability to easily be absorbed through the skin and enter the blood stream. This chemical has been found in brain, liver and heart tissue as well as other vital organs. There is evidence that these tissues can retain it long term. It's also found in most toothpaste and mouth rinses. Please buy products without it.

This is a lot of scary stuff so what can we do? Look for labels that say things like: ***Free of parabens, petroleums, coloring, sulfates, propylene glycol.*** They're out there. Products that don't contain them proudly display that fact right on the front label. You just have to take the time to look. Refuse to buy anything that contains toxic chemicals. If enough of us start doing this, perhaps manufacturers will take notice and start making changes to their products' ingredients. Remember, change takes time, but change will NEVER happen if we don't at least try. So please be one of the people who try. Your body will definitely thank you.

Have a wonderful month.