



Chemicals In Our Products

What's In YOUR Moisturiser?

If you do not suffer from flaky skin, eczema or unexplained rashes the chances are that you know someone who does. Have you ever wondered why?

There are several causes of these conditions which range from stress and anxiety, hereditary factor, climate changes, hard water, synthetic or wool fibres etc. One other factor which is often overlooked are the cosmetics that we use on a daily basis i.e. soaps, creams, oils, lotions, deodorants etc. Through extensive research, I discovered to my horror that many of the ingredients found in high street cosmetics contain a cocktail of toxic chemicals that should be avoided at all costs. Here are some interesting facts :

- **The typical adult uses 9 cosmetics/personal-care products a day with an average daily load of around 126 chemicals**
- **Over 90% of all ingredients in commercially available cosmetics are of synthetic origin**
- **60% of what we use on our bodies is absorbed into the skin**

It is clear that we need to know which ingredients should be avoided - understanding the ingredients lists on your favourite products is another matter. The easiest thing to understand is that all ingredients are listed in order of quantity in the product. Water (*aqua*) is usually the main ingredient in commercial creams and lotions. This 'moisture' is quickly absorbed into dry, wrinkled skin. As the water enters the skin, it expands the tissues, like filling a balloon with water, so that wrinkles fade away and the skin feels smoother. But this is only temporary. As soon as the water evaporates or is carried away by the blood stream, the dry, wrinkled skin

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returns. No matter how hard you try people will never be able to permanently cure dry, wrinkled skin with any commercial body lotion or body care products.

How many of us grew up using a well known brand of Petroleum Jelly on our bodies and on our hair? How many Mothers use baby oil, lotions and powder in the belief that they are protecting their babies skin?

Talcum powder (Magnesium Silicate) is a known carcinogen linked to ovarian cancer and breathing difficulties and even death in infants. A safe and perfectly acceptable alternative is cornstarch which is now widely used as a substitute and something which you could buy and adapt yourself by adding a drop of essential oil of choice.

The main lubricants in petroleum jelly, baby oils and most creams will be noted as one of the following : *liquid paraffin (paraffinum Liquidum)*, *petrolatum* or *mineral oil*. (Baby Oils are pure mineral oil) These are by-products from the petrol refinery that are 'dumped' in huge quantities in the cosmetic industry. They are cheap and stable and don't go off easily. These are the reasons why they are found in vast amounts of cosmetics. They do not nourish the skin, and can disrupt the body's own moisturising system resulting in dryness and premature aging by blocking the pores. Think of it as cling-film for the skin. The skin is unable to breathe and release toxins naturally. Your skin gets addicted to it and literally peels if you stop using it. Prolonged use of cosmetics containing these ingredients destroy the natural oily barrier of the skin allowing other chemicals to be more easily absorbed into the skin and bloodstream.

Besides the water, most lotions have an oil of some type. This oil is almost always a highly refined vegetable oil devoid of all natural protective antioxidants. One product in our food supply and in body care products that leads to a great deal of free radicals is oxidized vegetable oils. When buying natural skin care products, always look for ingredients that contain unrefined cold-pressed virgin oils or butters as they will retain all their vitamins, proteins and essential fatty acids which will nourish your skin.

The cosmetic industry have cottoned on to the fact that more and more of us are looking for 'natural' ingredients. They are therefore using ingredients such as aloe vera, shea butter, cocoa

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butter, olive oil to name just a few to 'sell' their products. Sadly not only are these ingredients used minimally (indicated by their position on the ingredients list) but they will always be of the refined variety - a process which removes all the natural goodness and antioxidant properties.

I have suggested below a few alternative oils and butters for your skin and the properties which make them ideal for feeding and nourishing you skin the natural way.

What's in your Soap?

Have you ever wondered why for every shampoo that you buy there is also a conditioner to go with it? And also why your skin feels so taut after a bath or shower? The answer lies in the main ingredient of these shampoos, soaps and shower gels and toothpaste - Sodium Laurel Sulphate (SLS) or Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES). They are used as engine degreasers and industrial detergents to clean factory floors and in car washes. They are used as a thickener and foaming agent in 90% of our Shower Gels and shampoos. The following was cited in a study by the Wall St Journal, 1st November 1998 regarding the dangers of SLS/SLES.

- **Retards healing and keep children's eyes from developing properly.**
- **Causes cataracts in adults**
- **Easily absorbed by the body and builds up in the heart, liver and brain which can cause major problems in these areas**
- **Causes skin to flake and causes roughness of the skin**
- **Dysfunction of the biological systems of the skin**
- **It is such a caustic cleanser that it actually corrodes the hair follicle and impairs the ability to grow hair.**

...a conventional showergel takes 800 years to fully wash away. (Observer 2/7/06)

All the natural oils which have been 'washed' away from your hair and skin by these harsh ingredients need to be replaced, hence the need to condition hair and moisturise the body after washing. Natural alternatives are **African Black Soap** and **Castille Soap**

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Virgin Olive Oil

Olive oil is high in antioxidants, including vitamin E which protects against age-accelerating free radicals. Olive oil also promotes a smooth radiant complexion maintaining elasticity of skin. It is also very good for dry brittle nails and cuticles as well as an excellent conditioner for hair.

Unrefined Coconut Oil

Coconut oil helps protect against skin cancer and other blemishes and helps prevent premature aging and wrinkling. It is also excellent as a hair conditioner.

Sweet Almond Oil (Cold Pressed) - *Prunus dulcis*

Rich in Vitamins E, A B & D , proteins, glucosides and linoeic acid it has beneficial effects on hair, dry skin and brittle nails and is suitable for all skin type and sensitive skin.

Unrefined Shea Butter - *Butyrospermun parkii*

Shea Butter is rich in Vitamin A & E as well as complex fatty acids which are essential for healthy skin. They help to restore natural elasticity to the skin and promote regeneration of damaged skin cells which is why it is used extensively in Africa for blemishes, wrinkles, dermatitis, rashes, eczema, sunburns, wounds and insect bites.

Unrefined Cocoa Butter *Theobroma cacao*

Cocoa Butter is naturally rich in Vitamin E as well as a number of other vitamins and minerals. Vitamin E helps to soothe, hydrate, and balance the skin and also provides the skin collagen which assists with wrinkles and other signs of ageing. Since Cocoa Butter absorbs so quickly, it immediately relieves dry and irritated skin.

African Black Soap

Black Soap originates from West Africa and comes from plantain skin mixed with palm kernel oil to form the soap. It is a natural source of vitamins A & E and iron. The colour of this soap will vary depending on how long the plantains skins have been roasting for but it will range from somewhere between light to dark brown and resembles speckled rocks.

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This soap has been used in Africa for the treatment of rashes, eczema and also as a natural hair shampoo to prevent itchy dry scalps.

Castille Soap

Castille soap is made exclusively from vegetable oil rather than animal fat or synthetic substances. There is a wide variety of castile variants that use oil from plants such as coconut, olive and jojoba. The simple nature of the soap means a lesser environmental impact due to reduced waste stream during manufacture and also faster biodegradability.

While castille soaps can have additional synthetic ingredients, usually you'll find if it's marketed under that name, it's a fairly natural sort of product. They will often contain glycerine - a moisturising ingredient which is usually taken out of commercial soap.

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