



## Talking Points

### What is the Campaign?

**The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics is a national coalition** of health and environmental groups working to protect our health by eliminating chemicals linked to cancer and other health problems from personal care products. We want the government and cosmetics companies to make sure products are safe for our long-term health before they hit store shelves.

### What is the problem?

- Products we use every day -- including shampoo, deodorant, lotions and make-up -- contain chemicals linked to cancer, birth defects, reproductive problems and learning disabilities. Hazardous chemicals do not belong in products we use on our bodies.
- **The FDA is failing to protect our health.** Cosmetics are among the least regulated products on the market. Major loopholes in federal law allow companies to put unlimited amounts of nearly any chemical into cosmetics -- even chemicals that are known to harm human health, such as lead and formaldehyde.
- Worse, an industry-funded panel called the Cosmetic Ingredient Review panel—not the FDA—is currently in charge of reviewing the safety of cosmetics!
- **Americans are less protected than consumers in other countries.** The European Union has banned more than 1,100 harmful chemicals from cosmetic products. In the U.S., only ten ingredients are restricted.

### What does the cosmetics industry say?

- The industry argues that there is nothing to worry about because personal care products contain just small amounts of toxic chemicals. But none of us are exposed to just one product. **A little bit of carcinogen in the bubble bath, shampoo and body wash – day in and day out – can add up to harm.**
  - Scientific research shows that **even tiny doses of chemicals can disrupt hormones, interfere with development and cause disease**, especially when exposures occur during critical times of growth such as infancy and puberty.
  - **American girls as young as seven use make-up and 90% of girls 14 and older use it on a regular basis.** Recent research also shows that American girls are entering puberty earlier, and hormone-disrupting personal care products may be a factor. See [www.SafeCosmetics.org](http://www.SafeCosmetics.org)
- **American women use about 12 personal care products a day, and men use an average of six products daily. On average, adults are exposed DAILY to 126 unique chemical ingredients from personal care products alone.** And, we're exposed to toxic chemicals from many different sources, like our food, air and water. These chemicals are adding up in our bodies, and we're passing them on to our kids.

### The Good News Is...

- **Companies are responding to consumer demand for safer products.** Due to pressure from the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and our supporters, major multinational companies have agreed to remove certain hazardous chemicals from their products. This is a good first step but we still have a long way to go.

- **Cosmetic companies already know how to make safer products.** More than 800 companies have signed the **Compact for Safe Cosmetics**, pledging to remove hazardous chemicals and replace them with safer alternatives.
- **Skin Deep**, the world's largest consumer database, is a powerful tool consumers can use to choose safer products. Skin Deep rates products for toxicity and identifies safer alternatives in every product category. You can get there from our website [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org).

### **What are the worst chemicals; what should I avoid?**

There is no easy answer to this question. Thousands of synthetic chemicals are used in cosmetic products; many of these chemicals are problematic and many others have not been studied for their health impacts at all. And, some do not appear on ingredient labels. For a list of some of the worst offenders, please refer to our FAQ page, our Unmasked brochure, or the Skin Deep "What Not to Buy" webpage.

- A couple of ingredients to steer clear of:
  - Mercury, often listed as thimerosal on ingredient labels, found in some eye drops and mascaras
  - Placenta, sometimes found in hair relaxers
  - Phthalates, often found in "fragrance," nail polishes and hair sprays
  - Hydroquinone, often found in skin lightening products

### **So what should I buy?**

- Due to the lack of federal safety standards and unclear labels, there is no simple way to identify safe products. Until we pass laws that require companies to make safe products, consumers must take it upon ourselves to research the products we use and the companies we support. Skin Deep and the list of 800 Compact signing companies on our website are excellent places to start your research.
- **We can't just shop our way out of this problem.** We must change the laws and require companies to stop using hazardous chemicals and to invest in safer alternatives.
- Companies are already making safer products in Europe, due to the EU's stronger environmental and health protections. **Americans deserve safer products too!**  
**Chemicals linked to cancer and birth defects don't belong in cosmetic products – period.**

**There are many ways to take action to protect yourself and your loved ones. Together we can give the cosmetics industry and the government a makeover!**

- Use the Skin Deep database to research your favorite products and find safer alternatives. You can link to Skin Deep from our [www.SafeCosmetics.org](http://www.SafeCosmetics.org). If you decide to change brands, let companies know you're switching and why! Consumer pressure is one important way to make change.
- Go to our website, [www.SafeCosmetics.org](http://www.SafeCosmetics.org). Sign up to receive Campaign action alerts, visit our Materials and Resources for simple action ideas, read through our FAQs, and more.
- Contact the Campaign and local environmental groups to find out what your state is doing to get toxin chemicals out of consumer products like cosmetics.
- And most importantly, spread the word. This is an issue that affects women, men and children everywhere!