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ANSWERS

How can I add a brand or employee user from my brand to Skin Deep's database?

The [Campaign for Safe Cosmetics \[link to: www.safecosmetics.org\]](http://www.safecosmetics.org) has distributed usernames and passwords for all brands and parent companies registered with the Compact for Safe Cosmetics. For quality control purposes, there is one user allotted to each brand/company, and each user's login can only access the information for the specific brand/company that signed the Compact. If you are from a brand that signed the Compact and would like to add another brand to Skin Deep, this brand must be registered separately with the Compact for Safe Cosmetics, and the Campaign will provide you with a password specific for that brand. If you are from a parent company registered with the Compact, you may add brands your parent company owns without registering them individually onto the Compact.

Your brand/company's point of contact and password may be updated at any time from the main [Compact Signer Menu \[←link to http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com/compact_signers/companyprofile.php\]](http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com/compact_signers/companyprofile.php).

Skin Deep lists an old formulation for a product we manufacture. Where do you obtain information on our products, and how can we update the listings?

EWG updates Skin Deep each year using information listed on major online retailer sources, so we encourage you to contact and update your information with the sources that market your products. (To see which online source provided the information for a product, click the "Where to Buy" link on the left side of the webpage for that product.)

Companies that sign the Compact for Safe Cosmetics receive additional access to edit and update your product formulations within our database. Just click on the link next to the formulation, in the "Review Products" menu.

*** Please note that new formulations may be added to the database, but unless an old formulation is displayed incorrectly (was never sold on the market as listed) or was recalled, it will also remain listed in Skin Deep because consumers may potentially still have access to that formulation.

I entered a product, when will I see it live on Skin Deep?

EWG conducts Skin Deep updates in bulk, on a quarterly basis. Please consult the [Compact Signer Menu homepage \[link to that, dunno url\]](#) for the current quarter's deadline for product submissions. After this date, the review time will depend on volume of entries that quarter and EWG staff availability. The Campaign will notify companies when the entries have been turned live in the site (please do not contact us, we'll contact you).

If some of your entered products appear live in Skin Deep and some have not yet, this is likely due to an ingredient requiring further investigation. You will either see these products become live in the future or be contacted by an EWG staff member when we arrive at that product in the queue for detailed analysis.

Can I re-edit it a product I've entered?

Yes, you may edit products as many times as you like before they are reviewed by EWG during the quarterly updates. Just remember to submit them for final review before the quarter's deadline (posted on the Compact Signer Menu).

Why can't I preview a draft scoring for a product I've entered?

The hazards matching for ingredients in products is a complex process. We would like to provide the most accurate information possible, and this is ensured by holding submissions for staff review before displaying the hazards associated with a product.

How do you score ingredients and products in Skin Deep? And why do the profiles look different than before?

Since Skin Deep launched in 2004, EWG has gathered information on ingredients in thousands of personal care products and has matched these chemicals with hazard data contained in more than 50 toxicity and regulatory databases.

In May 2007 EWG released a new update to Skin Deep. With this third edition, we gave the design a face-lift, but behind the scenes we also expanded nearly every aspect of the Skin Deep — more products, more companies, more toxicity databases. Our web design team crafted a new navigation scheme designed to help site users find products faster and make the complex information behind the analyses more clear.

You'll see a new dual rating system that includes both a hazard rating and a data gap rating.

* The hazard score represents a synthesis of known and suspected hazards from more than 50 definitive databases. The hazard rating of a product can be higher than for its individual ingredients — it adds up the hazards of all ingredients, and is scaled higher if the product has penetration enhancers or other ingredients that increase skin absorption. This score is similar to the rating previously shown in Skin Deep, but now accounts for more safety references and we show it on a 0-10 scale (with no decimals, 10 corresponding to highest concern).

* The "data gap" rating is a measure of how much is unknown about an ingredient. Not all ingredients have the same amount of safety data. For example, some ingredients may appear to have low hazards, but this may be due to the fact that they have not have been studied or assessed completely. Other ingredients may appear to have low hazards and have been thoroughly studied or assessed. This score helps differentiate between ingredients and products that have been studied to different degrees. So now you can see both what is known about the safety of an ingredient, and how complete the available science is behind that safety score.

Product rankings may have shifted with these updates. As always, scores are subject to change pending new science that we are able to integrate into Skin Deep.

For more details on the scoring and construction of Skin Deep, please see the [Methodology](#) section.

Why is there a range of scores for some ingredients?

Many ingredients are more toxic under some conditions than others. Silica (sand), a common cosmetic ingredient, is a good example. When small sand grains are inhaled, they can cause cancer and scarring of the lung tissue. These hazards don't exist when sand is applied to the skin, or even eaten. The hazards of ingredients also depend on the types of products in which they are used. For instance, many ingredient safety guidelines and regulations pertain only to certain types of products (for example, colorants that FDA has not approved for use around the eyes). On a product page in Skin Deep, we present ingredient hazard scores applicable to conditions for each particular product, while on an ingredient information page we present the ingredient's full range of scores across all types of products in which it is found.

Why should we be concerned about the safety of personal care products? Where does the government stand on this issue?

The unfortunate reality is that the government does not currently require health studies or pre-market testing for these products before they are sold. According to the [FDA's Office of Cosmetics and Colors \[link to: http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/cos-toc.html\]](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/cos-toc.html),

"FDA cannot require companies to do safety testing of their cosmetic products before manufacturing,"

and

"...a cosmetic manufacturer may use almost any raw material as a cosmetic ingredient and market the product without an approval from FDA." (FDA 1995)

The Cosmetics Ingredients Review (CIR), the industry's self-policing safety panel, falls far short of compensating for the lack of FDA oversight. An EWG analysis found that in its 30-year history, the CIR has reviewed the safety of just 13% of the 10,500 ingredients used in personal care products. FDA does no systematic reviews of safety. That means that nearly 90% of ingredients used in personal care products have not been evaluated for safety by any publicly accountable institution. And as people apply an average of 126 unique ingredients on their skin daily, these chemicals are raising concerns, for their potential impacts to human health and to the environment.

An ingredient is listed as possibly containing hazardous contaminants. How do I know these contaminants are actually in my product and if the hazard score applies?

Companies are not required to test ingredients for purity (contamination), even though many common cosmetics ingredients can contain hazardous contaminants, typically unintentional byproducts of manufacturing processes. We encourage companies to have their products tested by an independent, certified lab for the presence of the contaminants that are commonly associated with the ingredients they use, and to submit this data to EWG. We will review the data and reflect it on the site as appropriate. We always welcome the [submission of ingredient safety data \[link to: http://ewg.org/contact/contact.php\]](http://ewg.org/contact/contact.php), including independent laboratory testing or studies from government or scientifically peer-reviewed sources.

On an ingredient profile page, an ingredient my brand uses is scored for inhalation hazard [or other use hazard classification that can vary by type of product]. My product is not used in that form -- does my product still receive this hazard score for containing this ingredient?

In many cases, hazards for an ingredient may not be relevant for all types of products it is used in. We take usage information into account when scoring products. For example, asthmagens only contribute to a score if they are in a product that might be inhaled. Ingredient profile pages display all the hazards associated with an ingredient, while the product level pages will only show/score the ingredients' hazards accountable for that particular product.

My product contains only organic or plant-based ingredients, but still has a high hazard or data gap score in Skin Deep. Aren't organic or plant-based products better?

EWG supports organic farming, pesticide use reduction, and other practices that reduce risks to health and the environment. But even plant-based ingredients can be biologically active (look at poison ivy and the many plant-derived pharmaceuticals on the market for examples), and should be required to meet the same safety standards in cosmetics as ingredients derived from petroleum, mines, or animal products.

It is often difficult for us to identify which ingredients in products are truly organic, since "organic" is a generally marketing term used by many in the cosmetic industry to imply that the product is natural. However, we did note distinctions where possible — you can search for products that are labeled as containing organically grown ingredients from our "[Advanced Search](#)".

Why do you have progesterone listed as a possible carcinogen?

Progesterone is "reasonably anticipated to cause cancer in humans" as judged by the federal government's National Toxicology Program (NTP). Within Skin Deep determinations on ingredient hazards were based not on our judgment, but on evaluations by government, industry, and academic experts. For progesterone, we find no

independent, definitive assessments that conflict with NTP's cancer rating of the chemical. Some doctors continue to recommend progesterone cream to patients.

Although progesterone in personal care products is chemically identical to that produced in the body (Progesterone, CAS Registry No. 57-83-0), it is the disruption of the body's natural delicate hormonal balance by adding extra progesterone that can lead to health concerns. Please see our profile on [progesterone](http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com/ingredient.php?ingred06=705302&refurl=%2Fwordsearch.php%3Fquery%3Dprogesterone%26) [link to <http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com/ingredient.php?ingred06=705302&refurl=%2Fwordsearch.php%3Fquery%3Dprogesterone%26>] and the National Toxicology Program's 10th Report on Carcinogens (2002) for more information.

I've consulted the sources referenced on the product and ingredient level pages and still don't think the score for an ingredient is accurate.

Skin Deep's [Methodology](#) section details how our scoring system was constructed (http://www.ewg.org/reports/skindeep2/info_about.php). The hazards data cited on each ingredient profile page originates from over 50 publicly accountable toxicology and regulatory databases (from such agencies as U.S. EPA, International Agency for Research on Cancer, National Toxicology Program).

If after reviewing the source literature, you still disagree with the hazard scoring, please contact the source and send us details accompanied by scientifically peer-reviewed or government citations, and EWG will review the evidence. Skin Deep is intended to be a growing database, so we welcome new research that can be incorporated into our collection and analyses. Please note that we will not review ingredient comments that are not accompanied with peer-reviewed or publicly accountable research studies.

If consumers have not noticed having reactions to my company's products, should I still be concerned? Aren't the levels of chemicals used in products are too low to matter?

Research shows there may be long term, gradual effects linked to chemical ingredients used in cosmetics. The components of a product are not trace contaminants like those found at part-per-million or even part-per-billion levels in food and water. These are the base ingredients of the product, just as flour is an ingredient in bread. We are finding that many chemicals associated with health hazards are stored and accumulate in the body, many passing onto unborn children. [Read our report on the chemicals found in newborns to learn more](#) [link to:

<http://www.ewg.org:16080/sites/humantoxome/participants/participant-group.php?group=in+utero%2Fnewborn>].

EWG is advocating for more protective health standards. Skin Deep has begun to connect the dots, but we really need research on the safety of personal care product ingredients to be required before the bottles ever hit store shelves — and ultimately full toxicity screening of all chemicals we are exposed to before they enter the market.

Are ingredients in personal care products actually harmful?

While some companies make products that are safe to eat, other companies choose to use known human carcinogens or developmental toxins. Nearly all these chemicals can penetrate the skin, and some we ingest directly from our lips or hands. More than one-third of all personal care products contain at least one ingredient linked to cancer. When risky and unstudied chemicals are used in cosmetics, the stakes can be high — unlike trace contaminants in food or tap water, chemicals in cosmetics are base ingredients.

If a product's or ingredient's scoring is low for hazards, can I say EWG considers it "safe"? Can you provide a list of products/ingredients that are considered safe?

No, we don't necessarily consider low-hazard ingredients safe. Scores in Skin Deep are based on safety information in publicly available toxicity databases, but since safety studies aren't required by law, for many ingredients we find no publicly available information at all. One major finding of our research is that further study is needed on ingredients safety (nearly 90% of ingredients have not been assessed for safety even by the industry's own safety panel). Skin Deep is packed with information on known and suspected hazards, but we aren't able to give people complete certainty that low-hazard products are safe. We hope that the body of knowledge about ingredients used in personal care products grows, and Skin Deep's data will grow with it.

Does EWG endorse products or brands?

No. Skin Deep was designed for educational purposes only. EWG does not sell or endorse any brands or products. Product ratings are brand-blind, based on a hazard classification scoring system that applies product by product, and are subject to change as scientific data develops and becomes public.

Can EWG provide suggestions on how to formulate product with safer alternatives for ingredients?

One of the goals of the [Campaign for Safe Cosmetics \[link to: www.safecosmetics.org\]](http://www.safecosmetics.org) is to develop a body of knowledge that can help companies create substitution plans for hazardous ingredients. Currently, there is very limited information available on alternatives, but we look forward to working with you to change that. Skin Deep is intended to be a growing database of information for formulators, but, in general, EWG cannot provide individual advice or product formulation consultation for companies.

We don't test on animals, but you list our animal-testing policy as unknown.

We use records from [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals \(PETA\) \[link to: http://www.caringconsumer.com/searchcompany.asp\]](http://www.caringconsumer.com/searchcompany.asp) for company pledges on animal testing and update our database during the quarterly updates. If you are on PETA's lists and classified on Skin Deep incorrectly, please contact us and we will update your listing.

What does EWG think about animal testing?

Ideally, a consumer could find a safer product that wasn't tested on animals. Unfortunately, research shows that many products use ingredients that are linked to cancer, birth defects, and other disorders and health hazards... not just for people and our pets, but in wildlife and the environment as well. Our research also reveals that over 99 percent of products contain ingredients that have not been assessed for safety by the government, the industry's safety panel, or any other publicly accountable institution. It is an important question — how do we protect human, environmental, and animal health, while reducing unnecessary testing?

EWG supports uses of non-animal testing methods where available and effective. We also support initiatives that call for funding toward animal testing alternatives research. Unfortunately, for now there are safety studies crucial to measuring the toxicity of chemicals impacting environmental, wildlife, and public health, for which there are no known alternative study methods. Until scientists develop alternatives, EWG supports reduction of the overall numbers and impact of unnecessary or duplicate animal testing across the industry, by advocating for making public the science already conducted by private sources. With more efficient testing protocols, reduction in unnecessary or duplicate testing, broadening of publicly available studies on chemicals safety, and ongoing research of alternatives, an overall goal of reducing animal testing while protecting health and safety could be achieved.

Consumers concerned about animal welfare should be able to access information on how public health safety data and animal testing positions overlap in the cosmetics industry. We incorporated companies' animal testing pledge information from [People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals \(PETA\)](#), and we update our database according to PETA's lists. We have also incorporated PETA's data on potentially animal-derived ingredients into Skin Deep. You may search for products and brands based on these criteria using Skin Deep's "[Advanced Search](#)" feature.

What is EWG's role in the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics?

Environmental Working Group is a small non-profit, non-partisan organization, and a founding member of the [Campaign for Safe Cosmetics \[link to: www.safecosmetics.org\]](#). We created Skin Deep in 2004 to help companies, organizations, lawmakers, and consumers find information on the safety of personal care products. EWG updates Skin Deep each year, and provide special access to features in the database for companies that have signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics.

How do I submit comments and questions regarding Skin Deep?

Please click here to [contact EWG](#).