

Fact Sheet for Nurses

Due to poor regulation and racialized beauty standards, Black women and girls are overexposed to toxic chemicals in the beauty products they use every day.



Toxic Chemicals in Black Beauty Products are Harming Black Women's Health

Black women are disproportionately exposed to toxic chemicals in their workplace, communities, and from the beauty and personal care products they use on a daily basis. Beauty products marketed to Black women and girls often contain the most toxic ingredients used by the industry, including ingredients linked to breast, uterine and ovarian cancer; fertility issues, reproductive harm, endocrine disruption, and more. This is particularly concerning because Black people often don't have equitable access to quality healthcare.

Stats and Facts

This toxic exposure is magnified by the fact that Black women purchase and use more beauty products per capita than any other demographic— spending more than \$7.5 billion on beauty products a year and nine times more on hair products than the average consumer. Black women experience a 40% breast cancer mortality rate, the highest of any U.S. racial or ethnic group. Compared with white women, women of color have higher levels of beauty product-related environmental chemicals in their bodies, independent of socioeconomic status. Even small exposures to toxic chemicals during critical periods of development (like pregnancy) can trigger adverse health consequences (such as impacts on fertility and pregnancy, neurodevelopment, and cancer). Sexism, Eurocentric beauty norms (e.g. societal preferences for light skin and straight hair) and racialized beauty practices all play a role in the elevated exposure to toxic beauty product chemicals that Black women experience, and can have long term consequences on their health and wellbeing.

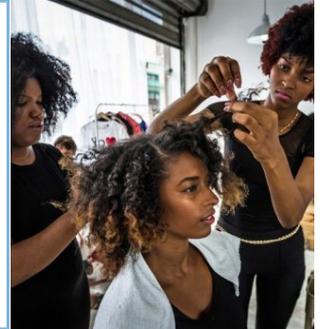
How Nurses Can Help

If you are a nurse who wants to help your patients understand how the toxic chemicals in their beauty products may be contributing to an increased risk of disease and serious health conditions, consider: (1) educating yourself about this issue; (2) sharing the following key messages with your patients; and (3) offering your patients resources and information about safer alternatives so they can make healthier choices.

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KEY MESSAGES TO SHARE WITH PATIENTS

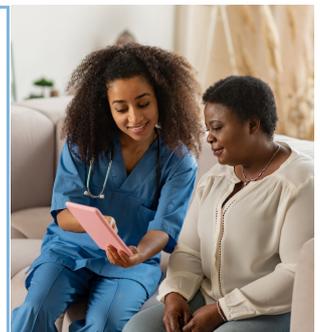
Do you know Black women who regularly dye their hair have a 60% increased risk of breast cancer? And Black women who regularly straighten their hair double their risk of uterine cancer? The scientific literature also links toxic chemicals in some Black beauty products to ovarian cancer, uterine fibroids, polycystic ovarian syndrome, early puberty in girls and more.



Black women should be able to shop with confidence that their beauty products are safe. Unfortunately, that's not always the case. More and more science is showing us that beauty products marketed to Black women - and other women of color - contain more toxic chemicals than other products.



I have resources that I would like to share with you if you are interested in learning more about the chemicals of concern in beauty and personal care products that could harm your health - and the health of your children - and where and how to find safer alternatives.



WWW.SAFCOSMETICS.ORG/BLACK-BEAUTY-PROJECT

Visit us online to find downloadable fact sheets, tip cards, a glossary of chemicals of concern in cosmetic products, an overview of the science, a searchable database of 80 Black-owned beauty brands, and the 700 non-toxic personal care and beauty products they make and sell. Other helpful resources include the websites of Black Women for Wellness and Made Safe, and apps like EWG's Skin Deep and Clearya.

