

Skincare



Skin. It's the largest organ that the human body has. It's bombarded by ultra-violet rays from the sun, repels water, but breathes and has an amazing ability to repair itself. It also holds us all together, whilst being elastic enough for our joints to move. So why do some people cover this amazing stuff with chemicals?

What's On Your Skin Today?

Maybe you grow your own food or buy organic? So why undo this good work by applying toxins directly onto your skin!?

Every day we apply numerous skincare products to our skin. But do we really know what we're using?

Organic and natural products are always a preferred choice, as such products can actually be more effective than those that contain harsh chemicals, preservatives or toxic additives, as you would expect. But how do we know what's safe and what isn't?

Basically, commercial creams are all very similar, regardless of the price tag. They are made up of around 90% water, with a petroleum derived base, and then other added ingredients and fragrances to make them appear different to the next product along the shelf.

Studies have shown that around 60% of what is applied to the skin enters the bloodstream via pores and follicles. Synthetic petroleum bases, however, do not absorb into the skin; they merely sit on the surface acting in much the same way as clingfilm, which raises its own problems by clogging and suffocating the skin, thus preventing its natural function.

The main concern, however, is the vast number of added synthesised chemicals which can enter the bloodstream and in some cases are speeded on their way by yet more additives, such as polyethylene glycol – PEG. Once they have entered the blood, our bodies have no way of getting them out again as they have no method of removing or excreting these unwanted modern synthetic chemicals, so they build up within the fat cells around our internal organs, remaining there and accumulating for many years to come.

It is this toxic cocktail of residual chemicals which is most alarming, and may indeed be the reason why allergies, cancers and all manner of ailments are on the increase in the population year on year.

So what can we do about it?

Synthetic chemicals are everywhere; not only in the products we use on our skins and in our environment, but also in our food and water supplies. Yet many of these chemical additives are cancer triggers and hormone disruptors, and many of them are already well documented as such! However, it can take much careful investigation to discover what you should look out for.

Surely we would expect that manufacturers wouldn't knowingly harm us.... Would they?

The problem is that current guidelines do not recognise that cosmetics are absorbed into the skin – unlike drugs, which are subject to stringent testing before launch. If they did, then the cosmetics market would be in real trouble. With this in mind, it is clearly in the interests of the cosmetic manufacturing giants to ensure that the law is not reviewed any time soon.

Products are increasingly formulated with synthesised chemicals for their ease of manufacture and low cost. With around 1000 new synthetic chemicals introduced yearly, not all have been thoroughly tested as yet. Some of you may remember how DDT was meant to revolutionise pest control, or how Thalidomide was once given to pregnant women to help control morning sickness. Both were later banned, but only **after** the devastating side effects of their use had been realised. Sadly this was not before every living organism on the planet had ingested traces of DDT, and many babies had been born with severe physical disabilities due to the prescribing of Thalidomide.

So how do you know what to look out for?



The number one tip is to ignore the advertising blurb and check the ingredients list first.



Be aware that even terms like 'natural' and 'organic' can be used to mislead. Many products are derived from nature but this doesn't ensure they are safe, and 'organic' can be used to refer to an ingredient so long as it contains just one molecule of carbon. The use of the word 'organic' in food production is strictly regulated, but in cosmetics the guidelines are far more open to misuse. Only the phrase 'certified organic' should be recognised, but even this does not mean that the product is 100% organic, so always check the ingredients list for content.



Avoid products using synthetic fragrances under these cover-all terms: fragrance, aroma or parfum. These are often the cause of allergic reactions. Seek out essential oil content for scent instead.

As we become more aware of the increased use of harsh chemicals in our daily lives, the demand for natural skincare products is growing. So, too, are the marketing skills of the multi-million-pound skincare manufacturing giants.

Invest your money in known, good quality, natural ingredients rather than fancy packaging and convincing hype. Most importantly, **always check the ingredients list.**