

EWG'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR CHOOSING SAFER COSMETICS FOR KIDS



From shampoo to lotion, from baby oil to body wash, we apply cosmetics or personal care products every day to our skin, hair and nails. Many contain troubling ingredients, including ones linked to harm and many that have not been assessed for safety. Learn how to choose safer products for your family and reduce harmful chemicals in your bodies with these tips.

1. KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BUYING

Learn as much as you can about a product before you purchase it. Read labels and pay attention to ingredient names. **Help is available: Research more than 70,000 products in EWG's Skin Deep® Cosmetics Database to see if your products contain any hazardous ingredients.**



2. INGREDIENTS TO WATCH OUT FOR IN KIDS' PRODUCTS

Here are six worrisome ingredients in body care products for kids:

PARABENS

These hormone-disrupting preservatives are in many types of products. Avoid products with propyl-, butyl-, iso-propyl, and iso-butyl parabens.

ISOTHIAZOLINONES

These preservatives can cause serious skin rashes and are banned in other countries, yet they are still in products—even those advertised as “hypoallergenic.” Look for and avoid products with “methylisothiazolinone” or “methylisochlorothiazolinone” on the label.

FRAGRANCE

The term “fragrance” is shorthand for a complex mixture of scented ingredients and ingredients that make a scent last on skin. Some ingredients are irritating or allergenic, and others can disrupt the body’s hormone systems. Although some forward-looking companies are starting to disclose ingredients in their fragrances, for many products, shoppers don’t know what’s hiding behind the label “fragrance.”

RETINYL PALMITATE AND OTHER TOPICAL RETINOIDS

This form of vitamin A can be used in sunscreens, lotions and lip products. Look out for retinyl palmitate and other retinyls, such as retinyl acetate. When exposed to the sun on skin and lips, retinyls can break down and damage skin.

TALC

Lab tests commissioned by EWG and other public interest groups **detected trace amounts of the notorious carcinogen asbestos in talc-based makeup marketed toward children and teens.** Geologically, asbestos can be commonly found in the same rock that is mined for talc. **There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos,** which can lodge deep in the lungs and cause mesothelioma or other fatal diseases decades after exposure.

FORMALDEHYDE RELEASERS

The preservative ingredients can cause skin sensitization and allergies. Ingredients include DMDM hydantoin, diazolidinyl urea, imidazolidinyl urea and sodium hydroxymethylglycinate, among others.



3. KEEP IT SIMPLE FOR BABIES

Babies' tiny bodies are especially vulnerable to harsh, toxic chemicals. Protect your baby by:

AVOIDING BABY WIPES WITH THESE HARMFUL OR IRRITATING INGREDIENTS: parabens, methylisothiazolinone, formaldehyde-releasing preservatives, and fragrance.



CHOOSING ZINC-BASED DIAPER CREAMS, and avoiding those with BHA and boric acid.



AVOIDING SCENTED PRODUCTS. The term “fragrance” may include ingredients that cause skin irritation or allergic reactions.



SKIPPING BABY POWDER.

Just like auto exhaust or secondhand smoke, tiny airborne particles can damage a baby's delicate, developing lungs.

SOOTHING DRY SKIN WITH A FOOD OR MASSAGE-GRADE OIL RATHER THAN LOTIONS.

Try almond or coconut oil, but avoid olive oil.



TREATING CRADLE CAP BY WASHING WITH A GENTLE SHAMPOO INSTEAD OF HARSH CHEMICALS.

See a doctor for advice for a serious case, which occurs infrequently.



INFANTS UNDER 6 MONTHS SHOULD BE KEPT OUT OF DIRECT SUN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. Their skin is not yet protected by melanin. When you take them outside cover them up with protective clothing and a sun hat, and find shade whenever possible.



4. GET A GOOD SUNSCREEN FOR YOUR KIDS AND TEENS

Shade and protective clothing provide the best protection from the sun, but a good sunscreen can help save you from serious sun damage. Look for active ingredients zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, with SPF 15 to 50; then apply whenever you go outside. Read tips for kids in our Sun Safety Guide for Children, ewg.org/sunscreen.



5. IGNORE MARKET CLAIMS

Many products on the market carry labels such as “natural,” “safe,” “gentle,” “hypoallergenic” and “green”—yet such claims may mean very little. **The Food and Drug Administration does not approve labels before products are sold, and manufacturers often use these terms just for advertisement purposes.**

Making smart, informed choices about the products you bring into your home is an essential step toward protecting your family from harmful or irritating personal care products.