

# Cosmetics Chemical No No's

## Parabens

**Uses:** Preservative, anti-microbial

**Found in:** Moisturizers, anti-aging creams, make-up (including eye shadow), facial cleansers, sunscreen and more

**Also called:** Benzoic acid, 4-hydroxy benzoic acid, Butyl ester, Parahydroxybenzoate ester, Methylparaben, Ethyl ester, Sodium 4-carbomethoxyphenolate, Isopropylparaben and hundreds of similar names

**Brands:** Coppertone, K-Y, Kiss My Face

Parabens are used as preservatives and anti-microbial agents in foods and cosmetics. Parabens are “xenoestrogens” — they mimic the hormone estrogen. Studies show they can interfere with your body’s production and use of estrogen. Plus, they can cause skin cancer, breast cancer, male fertility problems and DNA damage.

## Formaldehyde

### Formaldehyde

**Uses:** Preservative, biocide

**Found in:** Nail polish, styling gel and more

**Also called:** Formalin, Formic aldehyde, oxomethane, Methylaldehyde.

**Brands:** Wildroot, Nail Tek, OPI

Dangerous at very low concentrations. It can damage skin, liver and kidneys and it’s suspected to cause cancer in humans and accelerates DNA damage and cell death.

## DMDM Hydantoin

**Uses:** Preservative

**Found in:** Shampoo and conditioner, facial cleansers and body wash, hair color, hand soap and more

**Also called:** Dimethylol-5,5-dimethylhydantoin; 1,3-BIS (hydroxymethyl) -5,5- dimethyl-; and several other similarly confusing names

**Brands:** Huggies, Eucerin, Olay

DMDM hydantoin is one of several “formaldehyde releasers” — slowly releases formaldehyde.

Researchers discovered that DMDM hydantoin can release formaldehyde at concentrations of more than 200 parts per million. *That's 2,000 times higher than the level the EPA says causes bad reactions!*

## Triclosan

**Uses:** Preservative, biocide

**Found in:** Toothpaste, eye shadow, deodorant, facial cleansers, body wash and more

**Also called:** Phenol 5chloro2 (2,4dichlorophenoxy) – phenol; 2,4,4'-trichloro-2'-hydroxydiphenyl ether; and several other similarly confusing names

**Brands:** Clearasil, Revlon, Dial

Proven hormone-disruptor. In animal studies, triclosan altered levels of thyroid hormones (controls growth rate, body temperature, blood pressure) and lowers testosterone levels.

## BHA

**Uses:** Antioxidant, masking

**Found in:** Make-up, including eye shadows and liners, sunscreens, facial moisturizer and more

**Also called:** Antrancine, Embanox, Tenox BHA, Protex, Antioxyne B, Sustane 1-F, and several similar names

**Brands:** Preparation H, Cover Girl, Max Factor

BHA increases sensitivity to the sun. The MSDS calls it, "Harmful by inhalation, ingestion and skin absorption." It may even cause fetal damage in pregnant women.

## Phthalates

**Uses:** Plasticizer, solvent

**Found in:** Nail and cuticle products, blush, bath oils and more

**Also called:** Thylene glycol-terephthalic acid polymer; Dioctyl 2,6-naphthalate; Cellu ex DPB; Dibutyl 1,2-benzenedicarboxylate; and dozens of other names

**Brands:** Sally Hansen, Nutra Nail, Skincode Essentials

Girls are reaching puberty earlier and earlier, and one cause – according to a report from Texas Women’s University – is phthalates. They are xenoestrogens. Baby lotions, powders and shampoos expose infants to significant levels of phthalates. They also leach out of plastic products.

## Ammonia

**Uses:** Adjust pH, buffering

**Found in:** Hair colors and bleaches, facial moisturizers, wound-care products and more

**Also called:** Aqua ammonia; Ammonia solution, strong; Spirit of Hartshorn; Ammonium hydroxide

**Brands:** Clairol, Afterbite, Environ Skin Care

Of all the chemicals cosmetic companies use, ammonia stands out as one of the worst. As soon as it touches your skin or eyes, it reacts with the moisture there to form ammonium hydroxide ( $\text{NH}_3[\text{aq}]$ ). This new chemical causes cell death by damaging the cell membranes, leading to inflammation.

## Protecting Yourself and Your Family

Read product labels before you buy ... and avoid products that contain the ingredients listed here ... you’ll go a long way toward preventing unwanted health problems – for you *and* your family.

