

The Busy Mom's Ultimate

Label Reading Guide



Learn to decode product labels like a pro so you can protect your family, without spending hours scouring the internet or memorizing obscure chemical names.

Hi there my friend, Sharon Mahan here!

Anyone can provide you with a list of ingredients to avoid. However, my mission is to empower you to understand the issue at hand, why certain chemicals are widely used, and what to look for on labels... even if you can't pronounce those obscure ingredient names!



That's why this guide is organized by type of ingredient, as opposed to a handful of specific chemicals. With well over 80,000 chemicals in commerce, it's simply impossible to know what each one is, and whether or not it should be avoided.

Before we dig into ingredients, take a look at some of these surprising facts...

Did You Know? ...

- Cosmetics (which by government definition includes personal care products) are one of the least regulated industries in the country. The FDA cannot even mandate a recall if a product is found to be unsafe!
- There's no standard definition of words like "natural", "chemical free", "clean", "hypoallergenic", "non-comedogenic", "cosmeceutical", etc.
- The European Union has banned more than 1,300 chemicals from cosmetics, whereas the U.S. has banned only 11.
- Your skin absorbs much of what you put on it. Think about it ... you don't wash your lotion off at the end of the day, do you?
- Many health conditions are suspected to be linked to chemicals in everyday products.
- According to research, 20% of the general population reports that they're irritated by fragrance on others. If you knew you were doing something that bothered your friends, wouldn't you want to know?



As you read through this guide, take note of the red STOP sign and the green GO to see common ingredients to avoid, and what to look for instead on product labels.

1. Trade Secrets

Secrets are great between friends, but not in shampoo. A loophole in the labeling laws enables companies to hide the chemicals in the fragrance portion of their products. Meanwhile, testing has shown that most products with "fragrance" contain chemicals known to mimic hormones in the body. These chemicals are linked to low sperm count, male reproductive birth defects, allergies, asthma and eczema. This trade secret loophole applies to anything that can reasonably be considered proprietary to a manufacturer.



Fragrance, Natural Fragrance, Fragrance Oils, Preservative, 'Other Ingredients'



Pure Essential Oils (preferably organic)

2. Surfactants

Surfactants are foaming agents that break the surface tension of liquids, making them slippery and giving them functionality as a detergent. They're found in liquid soaps, cleansers, shampoos and toothpastes.



Prolonged exposure to any surfactant can irritate and damage the skin because they disrupt the outermost layer that protects skin cells, or really any cells. Some surfactants are more irritating than others. In seeking to innovate upon existing options, formulators discovered that they could alter surfactant chemicals to create more gentle compounds. However steps involved in manipulating these compounds puts them at risk for being contaminated with 1-4-dioxane or ethylene oxide, both of which are known carcinogens.



Sodium Lauryl Sulfate, Sodium Laureth Sulfate, Cocamidopropyl Betaine



Coco Glucoside, Decyl Glucoside, Lauryl Glucoside and Coco Betaine



3. Preservatives

Almost without exception, you will find one or more preservatives in products across the board, due to retail distribution channels' need for long shelf life, and manufacturers' desire to take advantage of economies of scale by producing large batches at a time. Concerns linked to common preservatives: endocrine disruption, contact allergen, formaldehyde releasers.



Parabens, Methylisothiazolinone (MI), Quarternium, Methylchloroisothiazolinone (MCI), Benzisothiazolinone, Potassium Sorbate, DMDM hydantoin



Leuconostoc/Radish Root Ferment, Rosemary Oil Extract, Grapefruit Seed Extract
(And ... look for shorter shelf life products!)

4. Petrochemicals



Petrochemicals are used in a wide variety of personal care products as a moisturizing agent. With a melting point close to body temperature, they soften upon application and form a water-repellent film that acts as a barrier against evaporation of the skin's natural moisture.

Petrochemicals have no known health concerns when properly refined, however, they're often not fully refined in the US. When less than fully refined, these compounds can be contaminated with toxic chemicals called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are reasonably considered by the US National Toxicology Program to be carcinogenic. This means that these substances promote the development of cancer.



Petroleum Jelly, Petrolatum, Mineral Oil, PEGs



Aloe, Shea Butter, Olive Fruit Oil, Coconut Oil, Castor Oil, Seed Oils and Beeswax

5. Chemical UV Ray Filters

Chemical UV ray filters block rays of the sun by interacting with the skin's top layer to absorb UV rays and convert their energy to heat. These compounds break down quickly and absorb into the blood stream. This is concerning because many of these chemicals have been linked to hormone disruption.

Some global communities are banning chemical UV ray filters. For example, Hawaii, the Pacific nation of Palau and Key West, Florida, have recently banned sunscreens containing oxybenzone and octinoxate because they may cause coral bleaching.



Avobenzone, Octisalate,
Octocrylene, Homosalate,
Octinoxate, and Oxybenzone



Non-nanoparticle Zinc Oxide
and/or Titanium Dioxide

And that's a wrap! I hope the information I've provided you with has helped empower you to make safer choices. It's not easy being a mom these days, and we all need to compromise at one point or another. With so many things that we cannot control, it just makes sense to control the things that you can. And bringing products for everyday use into your home is one of the easiest changes that you can make for your family, once you know what to look for!

FINALLY ... TOXIC-FREE PRODUCTS THAT REALLY WORK AND DON'T BREAK THE BANK!



As a busy mom, I found that even knowing what to look for on product labels didn't make the task of finding safe products that actually work as simple as I would have liked. Take advantage of the 15+ years of research I did before finding a truly safe line of personal and home care needs.

Learn More: <https://www.sharonmahan.com/nextstep/>

Sharon
MAHAN

About Sharon Mahan

After my older son was born and I learned that he had special needs, I decided that he needed me to be home more than I needed to work. Then after my younger son was born almost 3 years later, I decided that I would start looking for work when he was in Kindergarten. That was the year I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

While recovering from chemotherapy, I found a company that made truly safe products, not the greenwashed garbage in the organic aisle at your local grocery store. It happened to be a direct sales company, but I didn't plan to start a business. However a month or two into getting amazing products at a discount, I decided to give the business a try. I figured, what do I have to lose?

I plugged into my company's simple system for sharing the products, and my business grew. Looking back on my employment journey, I know that I never could have gone back to working in the food industry where I spent my post-MBA and pre-mom years. It simply wasn't aligned with my personal values and desire to do better for my family's health.

But this ... sharing value, making a difference in people's lives, introducing families to truly safe products, and connecting with like-minded people. This is where I belong. Maybe you do too?



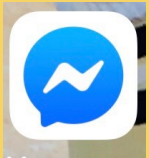
Did You Get Value?

I sure hope so! It is my passion to help busy moms simplify their healthy lifestyle choices, without making their family crazy. Check out the ways you can connect with me online:



For more information about healthy living choices, join my Facebook group: **Toxic Free Friends**

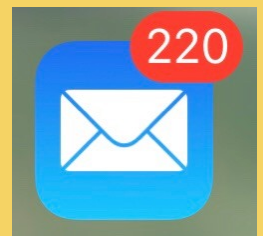
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