Ingredients to Avoid:

Shampoo & Beauty Products:

1. Parabens
2. Synthetic Colors
3. Fragrance
4. Phthalates
5. Triclosan
6. Formaldehyde
7. Toluene
8. Propylene glycol
9. Sunscreen chemicals
10. Retinyl Palmitate

Food:

1. Palm Oil
2. Shortening
3. High Fructose Corn Syrup
4. Artificial Sweeteners
5. Sodium Benzoate and Potassium Benzoate
6. Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA)
7. MSG
8. Potassium Bromate
9. Sodium Chloride
10. Artificial Coloring

Information about each Ingredient:

Cosmetic Ingredients:

Parabens

Parabens are widely used preservatives that prevent the growth of bacteria, mold and yeast in a wide variety of cosmetic products from shampoos to makeup and face cleansers to toothpaste. They can also be found in food and pharmaceutical products.

Unfortunately, parabens possess estrogen-mimicking properties that are associated with increased risk of breast cancer. These chemicals are absorbed through the skin and have been identified in biopsy samples from breast tumors.

Synthetic colors

If you take a look at your product label and notice FD&C or D&C, they represent artificial colors. F — representing food and D&C representing drug and cosmetics. These letters precede a color and number (e.g., D&C Red 27 or FD&C blue 1). These synthetic colors are derived from petroleum or coal tar sources. Synthetic colors are suspected to be a human carcinogen, a skin irritant and are linked to ADHD in children. The European Classification and Labeling considers it a human carcinogen and the European Union has banned it.

Fragrance

According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG) Skin Deep Database, fragrance mixes have been associated with allergies, dermatitis, respiratory distress and potential effects on the reproductive system. It can be found in many products such as perfume, cologne, conditioner, shampoo, body wash and moisturizers.

Phthalates

A group of chemicals used in hundreds of products to increase the flexibility, softness, durability and transparency of plastics. They are known to be endocrine disruptors and have been linked to increased risk of breast cancer, early breast development in girls, and reproductive birth defects in males and females. Unfortunately, it is not disclosed on every product as it's added to the fragrances. They can be found in deodorants, perfumes/colognes, nail polishes, perfumes, hair sprays and moisturizers.

Triclosan

Tricolson is a widely used antifungal and antimicrobial chemical that's found in toothpaste, soaps, and detergents. It's a known endocrine disruptor and presents a whole host of other concerns.

Formaldehyde

Formaldehyde is used in many cosmetic products (including shampoos, soaps, lotions and sunscreens) to help prevent bacteria growth. Formaldehyde also occurs naturally in the environment. Humans and most other living organisms make small amounts as part of normal metabolic processes. It can cause skin irritation, burning sensations of eyes, nose, and throat, coughing, wheezing, and nausea. The National Toxicology Program lists formaldehyde as "known to be a human carcinogen." It can be found in nail polish, body washes, hair gels, conditioners, shampoos, cleansers, lotions, and eye shadows.

Toluene

A petrochemical derived from petroleum sources. You may see it on labels listed as benzene, toluol, phenylmethane, methylbenzene. Toluene is a potent solvent able to dissolve paint and paint thinner. It is a potent neurotoxicant that can irritate skin, impair breathing, and cause nausea. Expecting mothers should avoid exposure to toluene vapors as it may cause developmental damage in the fetus. Toluene has also been linked to immune system toxicity. It can be found in nail polish and various nail products.

Sunscreen chemicals

These chemicals function as a sunscreen agent, to absorb ultraviolet light. These chemicals cause cellular level changes, Endocrine disruption, Irritation (skin, eyes, or lungs) and are believed to be easily absorbed into the body. They may also cause cellular damage and cancer in the body. Common names are oxybenzone, benzophenone, PABA, avobenzone, various parabens, and octisalate. They can be found in sunscreen products.

Retinyl Palmitate

A form of vitamin A, can speed the development of skin tumours and lesions when skin is exposed to sunlight, making it a possible carcinogen. Causes reproductive toxicity and organ system toxicity.

Food ingredients:

Palm Oil

When a regular fat like corn, soybean, or palm oil is blasted with hydrogen and turned into a solid, it becomes a trans fat. These evil anti-nutrients help packaged foods stay "fresh," meaning that the food can sit on the supermarket shelf for years without ever getting stale or rotting. Eating junk food with trans fats raises your "bad" LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and lowers your "good" HDL. These fats also increase your risk of blood clots and heart attack. Avoid palm oil and use an oil that is liquid at room temperature such as olive oil instead.

Shortening

Ditch any food that lists shortening or partially hydrogenated oil as an ingredient, since these are highly processed trans fats. Trans fats clog your arteries and cause obesity. Choose healthier monounsaturated fats, such as olive, peanut and canola oils and foods that contain unsaturated omega-3 fatty acids instead. Shortening is typically used in baking to give pastries a tender texture or to fry foods. Instead of using shortening, use butter, coconut oil or other healthy plant oils.

High Fructose Corn Syrup

The evil king of all refined grains is high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). High Fructose Corn Syrup is bad because it gives the body an unnaturally large amount of fructose, which the human body has not evolved to be able to process properly. Instead of converting fructose to quick energy for the cells and various body functions, fructose is converted into fat before it can be used as energy. Thus, high fructose corn syrup is an inflammatory food, which increases your risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

Artificial Sweeteners

The FDA currently approves 5 artificial sweeteners (saccharin, acesulfame, aspartame, neotame, and sucralose) and one natural low-calorie sweetener (stevia). Unfortunately, these low-calorie or no-calorie sweeteners may do more harm that good. Studies suggest that artificial sweeteners trick the brain into forgetting that sweetness means extra calories, making people more likely to keep eating sweet treats rather than limiting them. Further, people who routinely use artificial sweeteners may start to find less intensely sweet foods, such as fruit, less appealing and unsweet foods, such as vegetables, downright inedible.

Sodium Benzoate and Potassium Benzoate

According to Leslie Bonci, R.D., "Sodium and potassium benzoate are added to some diet soft drinks and fruit drinks. They can form benzene, which is a carcinogen when combined with vitamin C, the ascorbic acid in juice or soda." These preservatives are sometimes added to soda to prevent mold from growing. However, you're still not safe if you don't drink diet soda. They can also be ingredients found in apple cider, low-fat salad dressings, syrups, jams, olives, and pickles. Be sure to check labels!

Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA)

BHA is another potentially cancer-causing preservative, although the FDA has claimed it is safe. BHA is in tons of foods, food packaging, cosmetics, animal feed, rubber, and petroleum products. It's often included in fragrance. BHA can be listed under many names, including ANTIOXYNE B and ANTRANCINE 12.

MSG

Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is a processed "flavor enhancer." While glutamates are present in some natural foods, such as meat and cheese, lab-created MSG are used in Chinese food, canned vegetables, canned soups, and processed meats. While the jury is still out on how harmful MSG may be (or if it may be harmful at all), the fact remains that it is a lab-created, highly processed additive that our body doesn't need. Stay safe by staying away from chemically-enhanced food flavoring by flavoring your foods naturally.

Potassium Bromate

This food additive is banned in China, the European Union, Canada, Brazil and more because it causes thyroid and kidney cancer in rats and mice, as shown by a series of studies conducted in Japan. The state of California requires all foods that contain potassium bromate to contain a label letting consumers know. It most often occurs in bread products because potassium bromate is used to help create fluffy, soft bread.

Sodium Chloride

Known by most people simply as "salt", sodium chloride is a manufactured form of sodium, more commonly called table salt. The only thing table salt (sodium chloride) has in common with naturally occurring rock, sea or Himalayan salt is a similar flavor.

Sodium is necessary for our bodies to keep good bone density, maintain proper circulation and stabilize blood sugar levels. However, table salt only mimicks the flavor of the real thing (rock, Himalayan or sea salts) while actually posing health risks. Naturally occurring salts are alkaline minerals that help keep us hydrated, balance our sodium-potassium ratios, as well as fill the body with important electrolytes. They also contain all of the trace elements needed for proper immune, thyroid and adrenal function (that are completely stripped out of table salt). Table salt causes blood pressure to rise rapidly because the blood is attempting to move the toxic elements rapidly away from the heart. Moreover, excessive table salt causes us to retain waters and other fluids. Table salt is particularly hard on both the circulatory system and nervous system. It is also highly addictive.

If a food label lists salt, or sodium chloride as an ingredient, that's the bad stuff - avoid it when you can.

Artificial Coloring

It is also important to understand that some people are affected to a greater degree by food dyes than others, especially children. Some colors, such as Orange 1 & 2, Red 4, Red 32, Yellow 1, 2, 3 & 4 have been removed from the market by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) due to known carcinogenic reactions, and severe allergic reactions. Orange 1 & 2 and Red 32 were also removed.

The current, most popular dyes found in food include Citrus Red 2, Red 3, Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1, Blue 2 and Green 3. It is important to note the Yellow 5 is currently under investigation for possible removal from the FDA approved dye list and Red 2 has teeter-totted off and on the approved list over the last four decades. Research regarding food dyes are concerned with their carcinogenic properties complications with reproductive health in men and women and negative effects on embryos.

Food colorings still on the market are linked with cancer. Avoid whenever you can in food and medicines. Shop at stores that offer many organic food options such as Whole Foods or Sprouts.

It’s impossible to avoid every single man-made chemical, but you can do a great deal to limit the amount of toxins your expose yourself and your family to.

If you want to avoid chemicals, eat as clean as possible, buy products that are certified organic, and avoid processed foods.

The EWG’s Skin Deep Database is a fantastic resource to research toxic chemicals that could be in your cosmetic and personal care products.