

NOT IN MY HAIR!



Black women are the largest cosmetics consumers of any US demographic, spending \$7.6 billion annually—51% higher than the national average. Many hair care products and processes are known to contain chemicals of concern that can negatively impact our reproductive, developmental and overall general health. There has been little research, literature, and awareness about the health impacts of toxic chemicals on both beauty care workers and consumers.

The following factsheet was developed by Black Women for Wellness to educate and enlighten beauty workers and consumers on toxins in personal care products.



Top Harmful Ingredients Found

Ethanolamine

Sodium Hydroxide

Calcium Hydroxide

DMDM Hydantoin

Fragrance

Paraben Sulfate



Why are they so harmful?

Sodium/Calcium Hydroxide



- Found in relaxers and hair straightening products
- Use: Used to loosen curl pattern of hair
- Problem: Can cause hair breakage, **skin burns and lesions**, and possible links to uterine fibroids
- Alternative: Try using heat as a straightening tool or experiment with wigs, weaves, or go natural!

Parabens

- Found in shampoos, conditioners, and many other personal care products
- Use: Used to *preserve* personal care products
- Problem: Can cause **reproductive and developmental harm** (Studies have linked parabens to low sperm count)
- Alternative: Look for **paraben-free** on labels. Look for products containing **Vitamin E** which can help products last longer on the shelf



Sulfates



- Found in shampoos, hair creams, and many other personal care products
- Use: Used to make products **bubble and foam**
- Problem: Cause allergic responses as well as skin and eye irritation
- Alternative: Keep your eye out for **sulfate-free** on labels. Also try creating your own shampoo using natural ingredients such as coconut milk and castille soap

For information on the additional harmful ingredients listed please visit BWWLA.ORG



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