



CHEMICALS IN PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS AND BREAST CANCER

Chemicals and Breast Cancer

Throughout a lifetime, the average person is exposed to thousands of chemicals. However, over 85% of the chemicals in everyday products have never been tested by the government for their effects on human health. Research shows that there may be a link between many of the chemicals used in personal care products and breast cancer. A few places that these chemicals might be found are in shampoos, hair treatments, lipstick, nail polish, lotions and fragrances.

What can you do to protect yourself and your family?

Over the past 40 years there has been a great increase in the number of breast cancer cases. During that same time, the number of untested dangerous chemicals in our air, food, water, household and personal care products has also greatly increased. So what can you do to protect yourself, your family, and your community? Below is information to help make safer choices.

Take the time to read labels

Before buying, make sure to take the time to read the labels of your personal care products. Even products made for children such as baby shampoo can contain dangerous chemicals.

What about personal care products?

Personal care products such as shampoo, deodorant, make-up, and lotions contain chemicals that are linked to serious health problems. Large cosmetics companies are able to put unlimited amounts of chemicals in their products without testing them for their effects on human health. Some of the dangerous products and chemicals are listed below but researchers are learning about new ones every day.

Fragrances

Chemicals used in fragrances such as phthalates, ethylene oxide, xylene and ketone have been linked to breast cancer. Fragrances contain many chemicals so it is important to read all labels and know your risk. Even the fragrances in baby lotions and shampoos can be dangerous.

Cosmetics

Several chemicals such as benzene, parabens, phthalates, and BHA are found in common cosmetics. Nail polish is a common cosmetic that may contain DBP, formaldehyde, and toluene. Lipstick often contains lead. These chemicals are linked with increased cancer risk and are known to disrupt hormones in the body, which may lead to breast cancer.

Hair Products

Many hair products contain placenta and can greatly increase breast cancer risk. The placenta is an organ that develops in females during pregnancy and creates hormones. In hair products with placenta, these hormones may be absorbed into your body and increase your risk of breast and other cancers.

Skin Lighteners and Sunscreens

Skin lighteners that contain the chemical hydroquinone may increase the risk for breast and other cancers. Hydroquinone lightens skin by preventing the creation of the substance that creates the skin's color. Many sunscreens contain chemicals called phthalates and parabens such as oxybenzone and benzophenone that are also linked to breast cancer.

Look for products that are free of these ingredients and don't hesitate to ask your local stores to sell products that are free of these toxins. There are many other inexpensive, healthier products on the market. Your questions and demands help to bring about change!

Safer choices can start at home but, let's
make government protect us!

Visit our website, www.mbcc.org, for information to support
the Safe Cosmetics Act.

Information provided by the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition