

# GOING NON-TOXIC with personal care products

CONTRIBUTOR // WELLNESS

BY SHARYN WYNTERS, ND

**A**s a former actress, and someone who is still in the public eye, it's important for me to look my best. But looking good doesn't mean I succumb to mainstream personal care products filled with toxic ingredients that will undermine my health. In today's world there are dozens of alternatives. The average individual uses nine different personal care products each day. I use more than that. The difficulty lies in the fact that traditional personal care products are loaded with toxic ingredients—everything from lead and formaldehyde (which are not required to be included on the list of ingredients)—to solvents, plasticizers, preservatives, antimicrobials, dyes, and bonding agents. No matter how small the amount, many of these substances mimic hormones and they accumulate with daily use.

People don't give a second thought to things they put on their bodies. But 'skin' is our largest organ. Applying products such as lotions, deodorants, moisturizers, fragrances, lipstick, and shampoos are injected through our skin and carried to our bloodstream even though they do not go through our digestive system. Consider the ingredients in your shampoo or in your moisturizer. Would you want to eat them?

The personal care industry is allowed the broadest "playing field" of any industry when it comes to choice of ingredients. It makes recommendations to the FDA, telling the FDA what is safe and what is not. (Sort of like the fox guarding the henhouse.) In 2000, researchers discovered that the cosmetics industry had cooperated in concealing the fact that many ingredients they habitually used were known to cause cancer, birth defects, and reproductive damage. We would like to believe that the products we purchase are safe, but the truth is, often they are not.

#### For example, did you know:

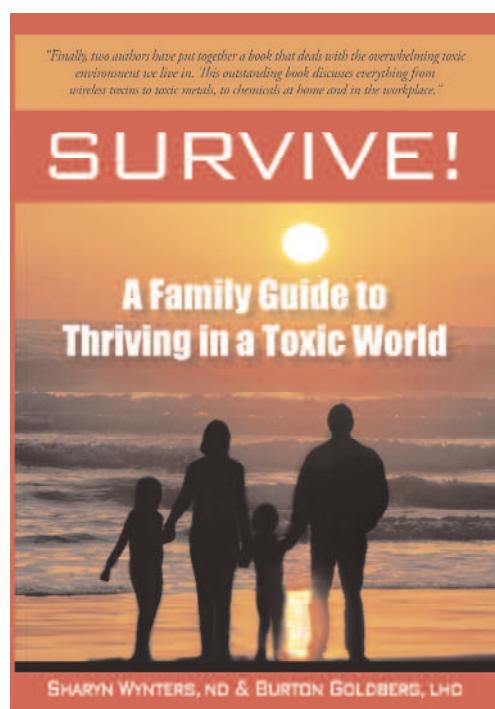
- The term fragrance indicates the possible presence of up to 5,000 different chemicals. Compounds included under the term fragrance are human toxins and suspected or proven carcinogens. Exposure to fragrances can

affect your central nervous system, causing depression, hyperactivity, irritability, and other behavioral changes. You can avoid these chemicals by choosing products fragranced with botanicals and essential oils.

- Artificial colorings are certified colors listed on labels as FD&C or D&C. The letters F, D, and C stand for food, drugs, and cosmetics, indicating their approved uses. Besides being made of coal tar and petroleum, artificial colorings may have heavy metals such as lead and mercury.
- The paraben family of chemicals (including methyl paraben, ethyl paraben, propyl paraben, butyl paraben, and isobutyl paraben), are used as preservatives and are included in numerous products. These chemicals are nicknamed gender-benders because they mimic the female hormone estrogen. They are thought to be partly responsible for decreased male fertility and increase in early puberty for girls. Grape seed extract and rosemary extract are natural alternatives to the paraben preservatives.
- The same germ killers used in bathroom disinfectants (phenol, cresol, and ethanol), are often used in mouthwash. Some mouthwashes and toothpastes list a 1-800 number to a poison control facility in case of swallowing—a good clue to the toxicity of the ingredients.
- 'Nontoxic' can mean that less than half of the laboratory animals died within two weeks when exposed during laboratory trials. The term hypoallergenic only minimizes the occurrence of well-known allergens. The word natural is meaningless. The term is entirely unregulated.

Most people are still unaware of the hazards of the toxins in health and beauty products. There are lots of things to watch for and it can be overwhelming. To make it easy for people, I have provided a list of companies and products for the discerning consumer in the sources section in my latest book, *SURVIVE! A Family Guide to Thriving in a Toxic World*. The chapter on personal care products contains information on skin and hair products, cosmetics, deodorants,

sun protectants, insect repellants, exfoliants, feminine hygiene products, wrinkle treatments, and more. When it comes to looking and feeling my best, personal care products can make a big difference. I look for the very best and so should you. Going non-toxic may be easier than you think. ●



**Sharyn Wynters is a naturopath and author with more than 30 years experience in health and wellness. She has a degree in Natural Healing and Massage Therapy. Sharyn has studied dozens of disciplines including, Acupuncture, Metabolic Nutrition, Rolfing, Heller work, Gestalt therapy, Primal Therapy, Mind Dynamics, Breathwork, Pilates, Hypnosis, Vocal Bio Matrix, Sound therapy, Emotional release, Cranial Sacral, Reflexology, Myotherapy and others.**

**In the prime of her career Sharyn was diagnosed with cancer. Refusing to accept the medical profession's grim portrayal of her future, she enlisted the help of Dr. William Donald Kelly. Her healing journey not only left her cancer-free, but also gave her a new passion. As a naturopathic doctor, motivational speaker, author of three books, and advocate of an internationally recognized regenerative program based on whole food nutrition and toxin-free living, she helps thousands enjoy optimal health.**

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*SURVIVE!, A Family Guide to Thriving in a Toxic World***