

Organic Skincare: Ingredients to Look For in Natural Beauty Products

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Organic Skincare: Ingredients to Look For in Natural Beauty Products

You eat organic and use organic products around your home, but what about your skincare routine and beauty products? For many years, people have advocated for better ingredients and practices surrounding the creation of beauty products. Organic skincare products are now another important aspect of living a natural life.

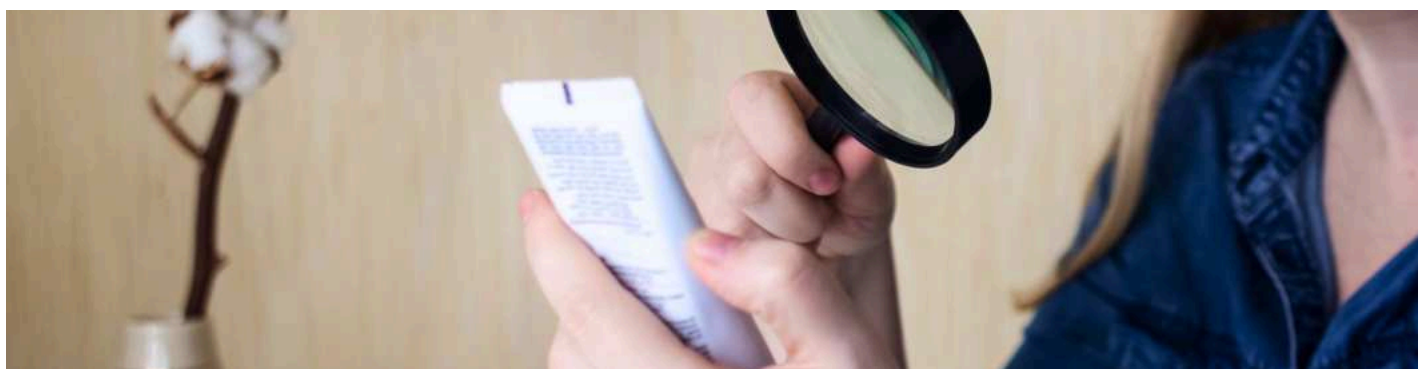
So, what ingredients should you look for when selecting organic skincare products? And which ingredients should you avoid? Read on to learn more about organic skincare and how to determine if you've found a reputable product.

Top Reason to Opt for Organic Skincare Products

Adverse health effects are the number one reason to eliminate artificial ingredients from your skincare products. Many people go about their normal routines unaware of the potential side effects of the products they use. Considering that some of the effects can occur over a long period of time, aren't immediate, and the source may go unnoticed, it's understandable that consumers would remain in the dark.

One such adverse health effect that can occur comes from parabens, a popular artificial ingredient used to extend the shelf life of cosmetic and body care products. Six different types of parabens act like estrogen in the body and have been linked to hormone and endocrine disruption and issues with fertility and birth outcomes in males and females. They can also interfere with the production of hormones. Propylparaben and butylparaben, in particular, are connected to increased estrogen activity.





Parabens also can harm reproductive organs and increase the risk of cancer, especially breast cancer in women, according to the Environmental Working Group (EWG). University of California-Berkeley found that even in low doses, butylparaben worked with cell receptors to activate cancer genes and increase the growth of breast cancer cells. Parabens are commonly used in shampoos and conditioners, as well as moisturizers, sunscreens, deodorants, makeup, and many other products. Moreover, the EWG explains that “products can be made without these chemicals.”

Another adverse health effect is linked to phthalates in skincare products. Phthalates, known as “The Everywhere Chemical,” can also harm reproductive health. Phthalates are plasticizers that can be found in a wide range of products. In the beauty industry, they are often used in nail polish, hair spray, perfumes, deodorants, body lotions, shampoos, and hair gels. The most common forms can be identified on a label as BBP, MBzP, DBP, MBP, MiBP, DEHP, MEHP, DEP, MEP, DiDP, DiNP, DnHP, and DnOP or by the long forms of these names. If an item is recyclable and has the number 3 and “V” or “PVC” stamped on it, it likely contains phthalates. According to The International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health:

At the hormonal level, phthalates can modify the release of hypothalamic, pituitary, and peripheral hormones. At the intracellular level, phthalates can interfere with nuclear receptors, membrane receptors, intracellular signaling pathways, and modulate gene expression associated with reproduction.

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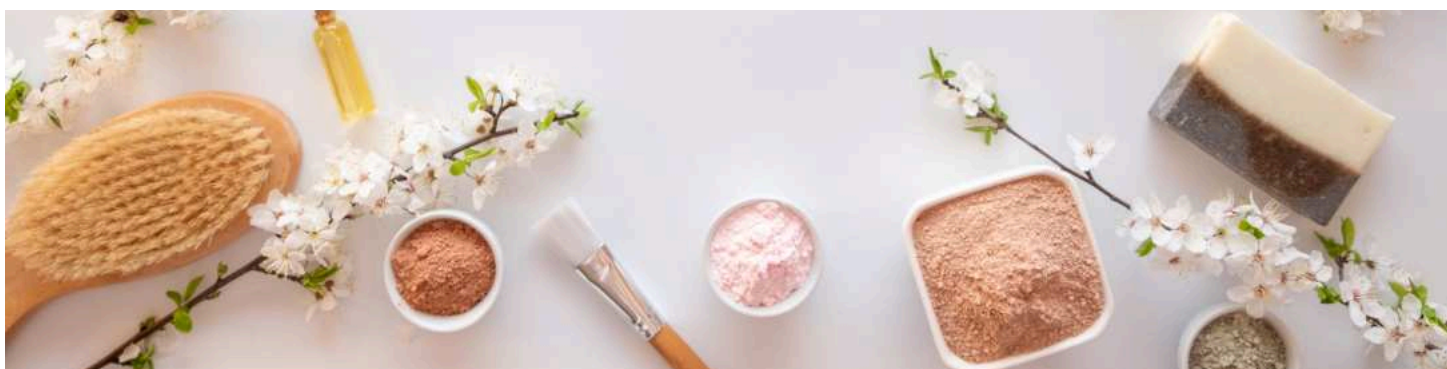
Two other preservatives to watch out for are formaldehyde and BHT/BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole/butylated hydroxytoluene). Low levels of formaldehyde can be found in cosmetics, shampoos and conditioners, liquid hand soap, eyelash glue, cream cleansers, skin moisturizers, salon and hair straightening products, and more. When reading a label, you should also look for its other names, including formalin, morbidic, methylene oxide, methyl aldehyde, and methylene glycol. Cosmetic products that contain high levels of formaldehyde can cause breathing difficulties, asthma, and even cancer when there is high chronic exposure. To be cautious, always opt for organic products.

BHT and BHA are commonly used in lipsticks and eye shadows. They can also be found in moisturizers, hair products, sunscreen, deodorant, and other cosmetics to extend shelf life. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has identified BHA as a possible carcinogen. There is also evidence that it interferes with hormone function and may act like estrogen in the body, resulting in harmful reproductive effects. Organ toxicity is also a concern with butylated chemicals. However, they are judged as “safe” in cosmetics with low concentrations. To be on the safe side, opt for organic skincare and beauty products instead to avoid these risks.

Other chemicals that you should watch out for include:

- Synthetic Fragrances (i.e., sodium lauryl sulfate)
- Sulfates
- Artificial Colorants (i.e., FD & C dyes)
- Silicones (i.e., dimethicone & cyclopentasiloxane)
- Petrochemicals (i.e., paraffin & mineral oil/petrolatum)
- Triethanolamine (TEA)
- PEGs (polyethylene glycols)
- Synthetic Emollients (i.e., propylene glycol)

When in doubt, ask yourself how easy the ingredient is to pronounce. Generally, if the ingredient is hard to pronounce, it is likely a chemical or synthetically created ingredient.



Organic Skincare: Ingredients to Look For

You can find an array of organic skincare products online and in some stores. From blush and eye shadow to lotion, body wash, and foundation, organic options are available on the market. To determine if the product you've found is truly organic, look for some of the following ingredients. While this is not an exhaustive list, it should give you an idea of commonly used ingredients. Before committing to any product, read the ingredient list completely to ensure you aren't allergic or sensitive to any components. We also recommend researching the company to verify that their products aren't just "natural" but also organic. Look for labels with the USDA Organic seal, which guarantees products meet rigorous standards, and be cautious of other organizations that certify a product is organic.

- Essential Oils (i.e., lavender, tea tree, and frankincense oils)
- Carrier Oils (i.e., jojoba, argan, rosehip oils)
- Plant Extracts (i.e., aloe vera, green tea extract, chamomile extract)
- Hydrators (i.e., hyaluronic acid and glycerin)
- Natural Exfoliants (i.e., lactic acid and fruit enzymes)
- Antioxidants (i.e., vitamin C and vitamin E)
- Herbs and Flowers (i.e., calendula, rose)
- Moisturizers (i.e., shea butter, cocoa butter)
- Natural Preservatives (i.e., rosemary extract, vitamin E)
- Natural Emulsifiers (i.e. beeswax, cetearyl alcohol)
- Clay and Mud (i.e., kaolin clay, bentonite clay)

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Beyond Organic Skincare Products

In addition to opting for organic skincare products, you can include other natural skincare routines. Some of these practices include:

- **Dry-Skin Brushing:** To apply this technique, gently brush your skin with a dedicated dry-skin brushing brush. This practice helps remove dead skin cells, allowing living cells to multiply and move upward. It can help aging skin appear less dry and leathery. Dry skin brushing also supports lymphatic drainage and venous circulation and can reduce muscle tension, which can lead to improved lung capacity, bowel movements, and clearer thinking. This practice can also help strengthen the bioenergetic system.
- **LED Light Therapy:** LED Light Therapy is typically conducted by a dermatologist, but many at-home options are available. Popular at-home products, which aren't as strong as medical-grade products and procedures, include light facial masks and light wands. LED Light Therapy utilizes low levels of different wavelengths of red, blue, amber, and green light. Acne is typically targeted with blue light to help kill the bacteria responsible for the condition and lessen oil production, which can cause the hair follicle to become clogged, resulting in acne. Red and blue light combined can help ease inflammation and redness. Red light alone can stimulate collagen production to help tighten, smooth, and soften skin, help heal wounds, and reduce the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines. Speak with your doctor to ensure light therapy is right for you, especially if you are taking antibiotics or acne medication or have eye problems, and always wear eye protection when utilizing light therapy.
- **Gua Sha:** This technique utilizes a smooth, flat stone or metal tool to scrape areas of the body. This method is rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine and can help blocked energy or "qi" to flow through the body, promoting better circulation and healing. Gua sha can be conducted by an acupuncturist or at home. When done at home, gua sha can help relieve facial tension and sinus pressure, help with puffiness and inflammation in the face, and reduce the appearance of fine lines.





To perform gua sha on your face, gently move the tool (shown above) along the bony structures of the face, such as the jawline, cheeks, and forehead, while pressing down lightly. Use organic oil, lotion, or a serum to help the tool glide more easily across the face. Avoid any severely swollen areas entirely so bruising doesn't occur. Check with your doctor to ensure gua sha is right for you, especially if you have diabetes, circulation issues, or are taking blood thinners. Always let a gua sha practitioner know about any conditions you have so they can adjust the amount of pressure used during your session.

Conclusion:

Going organic may mean you have fewer options, but we hope organic personal care items will become the new mainstream as the market grows. Until that happens, look for organic products online or in beauty and health food stores. While extra effort may be required at first to eliminate chemicals from your home and personal care products, the long-term benefits of avoiding substances with adverse side effects can outweigh the initial hassle.

Consider enrolling in our Certified Natural Health Professional program to learn more about the chemicals present in common items and the importance of opting for organic products. For program details, visit trinityschool.org/program/cnhp or call 800-428-0408, option 2, to speak with an Enrollment Specialist.

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