

## Petroleum-based cosmetics and skin care products found to contain cancer-causing chemical 1,4-dioxane

by M. T. Whitney

A recent study by the non-profit Environmental Working Group showed that many cosmetic products -- including more than half of all baby soaps -- contained a carcinogenic chemical. Internal studies in the cosmetics industry show that many of their products can be contaminated by a carcinogenic impurity called 1,4-dioxane, and the EWG's independent study showed that 1,4-dioxane is fairly widespread among cosmetic products.

### What you need to know - Conventional View

- The study found 22 percent of all cosmetic and [skin care products](#) may be contaminated with 1,4-dioxane.
- It also found that 80 percent of all [cosmetic products](#) may be contaminated with one or more carcinogenic impurities.
- In addition to 1,4-dioxane, six other major impurities are hydroquinone, ethylene dioxide, formaldehyde, nitrosamines, PAHs, and acrylamides.
- The EWG analysis found 1,4-dioxane in a wide variety of cosmetic [products](#) on the market, including almost all brands of [hair](#) relaxers and more than half of the [baby](#) soaps on the market. Contamination levels found were as follows:
  - 97% - hair relaxers
  - 82% - hair dyes and bleaching
  - 66% - hair removers
  - 57% - baby soap
  - 45% - sunless tanning products
  - 43% - [body](#) firming lotion
  - 36% - hormonal creams
  - 36% - facial moisturizers
  - 35% - anti-aging products
  - 34% - body lotion
  - 33% - around-eye creams
- The analysis assessed the ingredient lists of 15,000 cosmetics and other [personal care](#) products.
- Another impurity, hydroquinone, can potentially contaminate the products used daily by 94 percent of all women and 69 percent of all men, the EWG reported.
- To avoid 1,4-dioxane, read ingredient labels and avoid any of the 56 cosmetic ingredients that can contain the contaminant, including "sodium laureth sulfate" and ingredients that include the clauses "PEG," "xynol," "cetareth," and "oleth."
- "One of every five adults is potentially exposed every day to all of the top seven

carcinogenic impurities common to personal care product ingredients," the EWG said regarding a 2004 study.

## What you need to know - Alternative View

*Statements and opinions by Mike Adams, executive director of the [Consumer Wellness Center](#)*

- Common, brand-name [skin care](#) products often contain multiple chemical contaminants known to cause cancer, liver [disorders](#) and neurological disorders.
- I strongly advise consumers to avoid using non-organic [cosmetics](#) or skin care products. Switch to trusted, [organic](#) products from companies like Dr. Bronner's ([www.DrBronner.com](http://www.DrBronner.com)) or Pangea Organics ([www.PangeaOrganics.com](http://www.PangeaOrganics.com))
- Remember that any creams or cosmetics you put on your [skin](#) get absorbed into your blood. **Don't put anything on your skin that you couldn't safely eat!**