



BRIGHTON PEACE & ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

TOILETRIES AND COSMETICS

Brush - gargle - rinse - floss. Wash - exfoliate - moisturise. We all know how; but what about 'where'? The ingredients of ubiquitous toiletries such as toothpaste and soap have often been the subject of intense debate. Brighton's own Body Shop founder Anita Roddick is certainly one of the better known advocates of ethical beauty. A legacy of ethical consumption which may now seem quotidian has its roots in questions still relevant today: how was this made? Did it involve animal testing, potentially harmful chemicals, or unsustainable sources? Most importantly, what can I do as a consumer? The answer – probably a lot more than you might first think...

Toxic and Problematic Chemicals

- **Artificial musks** (often labelled 'perfum') are used for fragrance and are bioaccumulative. Some are suspected of being carcinogenic
- **Phthalates** are thought to disrupt hormone systems
- **Triclosan**, used in some antibacterial products, is toxic to several aquatic species; may increase bacterial resistance and create 'super-bugs'; and has been shown to accumulate in human breast milk
- **Parabens** are used in many toiletries. Research indicates that they mimic oestrogen and penetrate the skin. They have also been found to accumulate in breast tumour tissue
- Natural toiletries and cosmetics, on the other hand, do not contain any hazardous man-made chemicals

Palm Oil

Palm oil is used in many products including soaps, lipsticks and perfumes. Areas of rainforest are cleared for these single crop plantations. **Unilever** is the world's biggest user of palm oil. **The Body Shop** was one of the first companies to source sustainable palm oil.



Picture courtesy of Greenpeace/Solness

Animal Testing

The **British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV)** logo indicates cosmetics and toiletries that have not been tested on animals. For a regularly updated list of companies who do not test on animals and for BUAV's wallet-sized '*Little Book of Cruelty Free*' - for free! - visit www.gocrueltyfree.org.



Soap

- **Lush, Caurnie, Suma, Faith** and **Body Shop** soaps are all suitable for vegetarians; **Caurnie, Faith** and **Suma** (except their honey soap) are suitable for vegans
- To reduce waste, buy soap in bars rather than in bottles. **Suma's** soap is sold loose wrapped in a brown envelope, and other sellers such as **Caurnie** have committed to using minimal packaging
- The best rated soaps by *Ethical Consumer* are **Natural Organic Soap, Soap Box, Faith in Nature, Caurnie, Honest, Palm Oil-Free** and **Zaytoun**

Toothpaste

- Triclosan is found in Colgate Total, Crest, Mentadent P, and Sainsbury's, Asda and Tesco own brands
- Many types of toothpaste contain sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS) which has been linked to recurrent mouth ulcers. However, a little bit of toothpaste used for a short time, followed by a thorough rinsing, should be harmless for most people. For those with a recurring mouth ulcer problem, **Green People** and **Weleda** toothpastes are SLS-free

- Tooth decay has fallen by 75% since the introduction of fluoride toothpaste. But there are health concerns, so manufacturers warn against ingesting toothpaste, particularly for children. For those concerned about fluoride, **Green People, Kingfisher, Tom's of Maine** and **Weleda** toothpastes are fluoride-free.
- The highest rated toothpastes by *Ethical Consumer* are Green People, Urtekram, Kingfisher and Weleda
- You can use bicarbonate of soda instead of toothpaste, especially for removing cigarette tar stains from teeth

Deodorants

- There are two main types of deodorant: those that mask odours and anti-perspirants which contain ingredients (usually aluminium) which block pores to reduce sweating. Studies have tentatively linked the latter to breast cancer. Also many deodorants contain parabens
- If you are concerned about aluminium and parabens, then the following brands are aluminium and parabens free: **Crystal, Dr Hauschka, Green People, JASON, Lush, PitRok, Tom's of Maine, Urtekram** and **Mitchum** (parabens-free only)
- With regard to packaging, favour roll-ons; the **Lush** deodorant range which is sold in bars; or glass bottles rather than plastic, such as **Dr Hauschka, PitRok** (spray) and **Urtekram**
- Another alternative is the Amazing **Body Stick**, which has a disc of high-grade stainless steel which destroys odour molecules when in contact with moisture

Shampoos

- Anti-dandruff shampoos contain potentially toxic chemicals. Instead, try **Dr Hauschka Neem Hair Lotion**
- **The Karma Komba** from **Lush** is a solid shampoo bar, which saves on packaging and is made from natural ingredients
- The best recommended shampoos by *The Good Shopping Guide* are **Organic Blue, Neal's Yard Remedies, Green People, Weleda** and **Lush**

Cosmetics and Make-Up

- According to Pat Thomas, author of *'What's in this Stuff?'*, a study of eyeshadows found that 75% contained amounts of heavy metals above recommended safety levels
- *Ethiscore* recommend for eyeliner **Dr Hauschka, Barry M** and **Logona**; for eyeshadow **Dr Hauschka, Logona** and **Sante**; and for lipstick **Green People, Logona, Sante, Dr Hauschka** and **Lavera Trend Sensitive**. Finally, for mascara they endorse **Dr Hauschka, Barry M, Logona, Sante** and **Lavera Trend Sensitive**

Many of these products are available locally at:
Infinity Foods, 25 North Road, Brighton.
www.infinityfoods.co.uk, Tel: 01273 603563.

Skincare

- Most skincare creams use man-made chemicals and some are potentially toxic
- To avoid skin irritation use fragrance-free skincare lotions and those which are made from certified natural ingredients
- *Ethiscore* recommend **Faith in Nature** moisturisers, **Organic Blue** body lotion, **Honesty** skincare, **Weleda** skincare, **Dr Hauschka** moisturising day cream, and **Green People** skincare

Sunscreens

Honesty's sunscreen contains no animal-derived ingredients; **Green People** sells organic sunscreen; and **Weleda's** sunscreen is packaged in an aluminium tube so it can be recycled. Other sunscreens recommended by *Ethical Consumer* are **Dr Hauschka, Urtekram, Weleda, Green People** and **Lavera**.

Perfumes and Aftershaves

Most perfumes and aftershaves contain a variety of chemicals which, under current legislation, do not require listing on their packaging. Until these laws are revised, use products with a higher proportion of essential oils.

What you can do right now.....

Make your own lip balm by melting one teaspoon of beeswax in one teaspoon of oil in a pan over a low heat. Add a few drops of essential oil such as geranium and pour in a little pot to set.

Resources & Further Information

'A Life Stripped Bare' by Leo Hickman
 Eden Project Books, 2005

Ethical Consumer: 99 Mar/Apr 2006;
 102 Sep/Oct 2006; 105 Mar/Apr 2007;
 109 Nov/Dec 2007; 110 Jan/Feb 2008

'Green Living' by Sarah Callard & Diane Millis,
 Carlton Books Ltd, 2001

'The Good Shopping Guide',
 Ethical Marketing Group, 2006

'The New Green Consumer Guide' by Julia Hailes,
 Simon & Schuster, 2007

'The Rough Guide to Ethical Living' by Duncan Clark,
 Penguin Books Ltd, 2006