

If you knew your **Cosmetics** were putting you at **risk for Breast Cancer** wouldn't you change them?

Fact: A compound in cosmetics products has been banned by the European Union for its links to cancer and fetal deformities. US Health Advocates are pushing for a similar ban here and are challenging all cosmetic companies to comply by May 3rd, 2005. (By Molly Ginty, News Correspondant)

So what is this compound?

The compounds are phthalates (pronounced THA-laytes) DPB and they help cosmetics adhere to the skin without smudging. The Cosmetic Industry Safety Panel determined that cosmetic companies can continue to add these reproductive toxins to cosmetics marketed to women of childbearing age. In addition, further study of other suspect ingredients: parabens, formaldehyde, and coal tars have also been linked to cancer. Astonishingly, 1/3 of products tested contain one or more ingredients that are known, probable or possible human carcinogens.

According to Breast Cancer Action, many cosmetic companies are sending mixed messages as they claim to be large corporate supporters of the breast cancer cause. To name a few.....

- AVON markets itself as "the company for women." Many products contain parabens, according to its own website. However, AVON will be removing dibutyl phthalates from its product lines and is applauded for this first step.
- REVLON sponsors an annual Run/Walk for Women's Cancer Research, meanwhile "The safe shoppers bible" and the Skin Deep Report warns of several carcinogenic ingredients in several Revlon products. Over 80% of the Revlon products tested in the Skin Deep Report were rated 7.2 or higher (products were rated 0-10 based on health concerns associated with their ingredients). Revlon High Dimension 10 minute permanent hair color scored a 9.6 and contains both known and suspected carcinogens.
- ESTEE LAUDER states its mission as "prevention and a cure in a lifetime" sponsoring many breast cancer efforts, yet their products contain parabens and phthalates with the exception of a recent reformulation to remove phthalates from their Clinique and MAC nail polish only.
- MARY KAY is "committed to eliminating cancers affecting women" however they do not make it easy for consumers to find out if its products contain harmful ingredients. Their product guide with ingredients is housed on a part of their website restricted to Mary Kay sellers only. Also, in 2004 Breast Cancer Action co-sponsored important California legislation (AB 2012) regarding the public right to know about carcinogenic and reproductive toxins in cosmetic and personal care products. Mary kay was a vocal opponent of the bill.

Representatives of the billion dollar cosmetic industry are balking at the proposed ban. Controversy surrounds the safety level for phthalate exposure. Currently set at 2,800 milligrams per kilogram of body weight, this is a threshold that many critics say is too high. While others say it is an acceptable level of hazardous chemical. The cosmetic industry does not have to list phthalates on ingredient labels, so the general public has no idea of their amount of exposure and they may be using 10 or 20 of these products a day, and the cumulative exposure is going to add up.

Most consumers would be surprised to learn that the government does not require health studies or pre-market testing for cosmetics and other personal care products before they are sold. **Educate yourself and see if your cosmetics are putting you or your children at risk!**

For more information:

Breast Cancer Action--
Think before you pink
<http://www.thinkbeforeyoupink.org>

Environmental Working Group--
"Are common Chemical Ingredients in Cosmetics Posing Risks to Human Health?"
<http://www.ewg.org/issues/cosmetics/index.php>

Because We're Worth It! The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics:
<http://www.safecosmetics.org>

The Environmental Working Group
Skin Deep, a report on the safety of cosmetics and personal care products (June 2004)