

# The Natural Way

*There is much debate about whether toxic ingredients in skincare are absorbed into our bodies. But regardless of the arguments for and against, Sophie Chamings advises to err on the side of caution and go as natural as you can*

**W**e need to be careful with what we put on our skin, especially as skincare – as opposed to make-up – is actually created to be absorbed. I've listed some toxic ingredients below that are regularly used in daily skincare products. Although used in very small quantities, imagine what the build up of these damaging ingredients might be doing?

## MINERAL OIL

*(Paraffinum Liquidum)*

Part of crude oil – and often used in moisturisers – mineral oil creates a non-absorbent layer over the skin, preventing it from breathing, blocking pores and stripping it of its natural oils, eventually breaking down the skin's normal function.

## TRIETHANOLAMINE (TEA)

## DIETHANOLAMINE (DEA)

## MONOETHANOLAMINE (MEA)

An emollient used in a range of skincare products, these ingredients have been known – in extreme cases – to cause liver damage in humans. To animals they are carcinogenic.

## ALPHA HYDROXY ACIDS (AHAs)

AHAs – commonly found in exfoliating and peeling products –

destroy the skin's protective barrier resulting in long-term skin damage.

## LANOLIN

Included in rich moisturisers, lanolin (if not organic) is full of chemicals. In its natural form, it is harmless but coming from sheep tends to be full of pesticides from 'sheep dipping' activities. Organic lanolin is safe, but check the ingredients list first to ensure it is organic.

## PARABENS OR PABA

Artificial preservatives (found in most skincare products on the market): methyl, ethyl, butyl, isobutyl and propylparaben. Parabens can cause skin irritation and contact dermatitis. Mimicking oestrogen, they have been found in breast cancer tumours – although conclusive evidence has not yet been found and research is ongoing. Preservatives by their very nature are designed to kill living organisms.

## SULPHATES

Sulphates are cleansing agents found in shampoos and washes. Strong and cheap, sulphates can be highly irritating and there are question

marks over their long-term safety.

## SYNTHETIC FRAGRANCE

Synthetic fragrances are the biggest cause of allergies and can also affect the nervous system causing depression, hyperactivity, irritability and other behavioural changes.

## ALCOHOL OR ISOPROPYL

A poisonous solvent found in body rubs, hand lotions, and fragrances, it dries skin and hair, eventually creating cracks and fissures.

These are just a handful of harmful ingredients and there are many more. ■

**Sophie Chamings is a Cheltenham based natural skincare specialist**  
[www.sophiechamings.co.uk](http://www.sophiechamings.co.uk)

