Cosmetics marketed to women, particularly women of color, contain some of the most toxic chemicals in the beauty industry.

A European standard of beauty has penetrated all racial groups and encouraged skin whitening and hair straightening, which poses long term health problems and worsens health disparities, such higher rates of breast cancer.

These products cause disproportionate harm to women of color and must be banned!
WE OFTEN THINK ABOUT HOW THE FOOD WE EAT AFFECTS OUR BODY, BUT HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT HOW THE PRODUCTS YOU PUT ON YOUR SKIN OR HAIR ALSO IMPACT YOUR HEALTH?

WHAT IS A TOXIC PRODUCT?
Toxic products contain substances, like chemicals, that can be harmful to a person's health, often depending on the dose.

WHY SHOULD I CARE IF A PRODUCT IS TOXIC?
Being exposed to dangerous chemicals leads to health effects, like hormone disruption, early-onset puberty, organ damage, developmental delays, and even cancer.

HOW AM I EXPOSED TO TOXIC CHEMICALS?
Routes of Exposure

- Ingestion
- Skin Absorption
- Skin Contact
- Inhalation
# Examples of disproportionate beauty product exposure among women of color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External factors</th>
<th>Product use</th>
<th>Chemical Exposures</th>
<th>Potential Adverse outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorism (among Dark-skinned women globally)</td>
<td>Skin-lightening creams</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Mercury poisoning, damage to nervous system and kidneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair texture preferences (African American U.S.)</td>
<td>Hair relaxers and other hair care products</td>
<td>Parabens and estrogenic chemicals</td>
<td>Uterine fibroid tumors, early puberty, and hormone disruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odor Discrimination (African American U.S.)</td>
<td>Vaginal douches and other feminine care products</td>
<td>Phthalates and talc powder</td>
<td>Cancer in female reproductive organs and hormone disruption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


## Not-So-Fun-Facts

- Black consumers purchase 9x more ethnic beauty products than other groups
- Latino/a/x are the fastest growing ethnic group in the beauty market
- Workers in the beauty industry are predominantly women of color and immigrant women
TAKE ACTION

AVOID THE DIRTY DOZEN

Harmful ingredients found in most products:

- BHA & BHT
- Coal tar dyes
- DEA-related ingredients
- Dibutyl phthalate
- Formaldehyde
- Parabens
- Sodium Laureth Siloxanes
- Parfum (a.k.a. fragrance)
- PEG compounds
- Petrolatum
- Triclosan

DOWNLOAD THESE APPS

Several phone apps have been developed to make checking for harmful ingredients easy.

RESOURCES

- Toxic Beauty by Dawn Mellowship
- Terrible & Toxic Makeup by Anita Croy
- Not just a pretty face by Stacy Malkan
- The Ugly Truth by Katherine Ellen Foley

- Toxic Beauty (2019) by Phyllis Ellis
- Vice Presents : Skin Bleaching in Jamaica (2017)
- The Story of Cosmetics (2010) by The Story of Projects
- The Ugly Truth about Makeup (2016) by AJ+
4. **SAFER ALTERNATIVES**

- **Shea Moisture** - $10-$25
  - Haircare, Bath and Body, Skincare, Baby and Kids, Men
  - Found in Local beauty supply stores

- **Savor Beauty** - $15-$90
  - Face & Body
  - Found at 327 W 11th St, New York, NY 10014

- **Blac Minerals** - $20-$50
  - Makeup: Face, Cheeks & Lips
  - Found in Sephora & Online

5. **Natural Styles**

- Shorter Styles
- Protective Styles
- Natural texture
- Locs

6. **Do-it-yourself Hairmask**

- Egg and Mayonnaise
  - *For coarser hair that's lacking shine*

- Yogurt and Honey
  - *For dry, frizzy and brittle hair*

- Banana and Olive Oil
  - *For damaged hair from chemicals, styling tools, chlorine and sun exposure*

7. **Relaxers Alternatives**

- Diva Smooth Hair Smoothing Agent with Honey - $35

8. **Spread the word**

Inform others about toxic ingredients in cosmetics by talking with your family, friends and colleagues.
WE ACT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (WE ACT)

WE ACT is a community based non-profit organization based in Harlem that aims to build healthy communities by ensuring that people of color and/or low-income residents participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and fair environmental health and protection policies and practices.

To learn more about this campaign visit: weact.org/beauty

Thank you to our funders and collaborators who support this project!

PASSPORT FOUNDATION
Community: Collaborate and Innovate

Yale SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH