

Simple Steps for Avoiding Parabens

What are parabens?

Cosmetics and other personal care products, including lotions, deodorants, and shampoos, commonly contain parabens—chemicals used as preservatives to increase the product's shelf life. However, parabens are estrogenic, meaning they mimic the function of the naturally-occurring hormone estrogen. Exposure to estrogens has been associated with an increased risk of breast cancer and reproductive problems.



How can I reduce my exposure?

- ✓ **Read the label.** Look for personal care products labeled “paraben-free.” Avoid products that contain methylparaben, ethylparaben, propylparaben, butylparaben, and other ingredients ending in “-paraben.”
- ✓ **Try DIY.** Labels aren't always accurate, so to be sure you're avoiding parabens, try some DIY alternatives at home. For example, to soothe dry skin, try using organic unrefined oils such as safflower oil, sunflower oil, or shea butter.
- ✓ **Keep it simple.** The best way to avoid chemicals is to reduce the number of products you use. Re-evaluate your daily routine and ask yourself which products you can do without.
- ✓ **Take action!** Join efforts to help eliminate toxic chemicals from our everyday lives and demand safer personal care products from industry and lawmakers. Check out the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and other organizations like Women's Voices for the Earth for ways to get involved.