

Personal Care Products

Understanding everyday toxicants and how you can minimize your exposure



Additional Resources

Learn more about the chemicals in your everyday products and environment:

The Environmental Working Group: www.ewg.org

Explore our website:
www.seed-program.org

Contact & Follow us:
SEED@hsph.harvard.edu
(Twitter and Instagram)
[@drmesserlian](https://twitter.com/drmesserlian)



SCIENTIFIC EARLY LIFE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



HARVARD T.H. CHAN
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

How can I minimize my exposure?



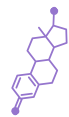
- Replace cosmetics with safer alternatives that are phthalate-, phenol-, and chemical-free
- Avoid chemical UV filters in daily moisturizers and use mineral-based sunscreens
- Try natural fragrance-free moisturizing agents (e.g., oils)
- Avoid hair sprays, dyes, plastic styling devices, and scented hair products (e.g., gels)
- Minimize use of perfume, cologne, candles, fresheners, and incense
- Use simple cleaning supplies and soaps; shop organic and read ingredient labels
- Look for these labels:



EDCs

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) interrupt normal hormonal activity by mimicking, blocking, or altering hormones and changing the way that they function in the body.

EDCs include phthalates, phenols, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and other toxicants. Some EDCs are rapidly removed from the body, while others can remain in the body for a long time. Most people are exposed to multiple EDCs daily, allowing these chemicals to remain at harmful concentrations.



These chemicals are harmful

Current research suggests that EDCs, including PFAS, lead to adverse health effects. These chemicals can:

- ✗ Increase the risk of reproductive disorders and adverse birth outcomes
- ✗ Impair neurodevelopment
- ✗ Alter immune function
- ✗ Increase cancers risk
- ✗ Alter metabolic function



One of the most common routes to EDC exposure is dermal absorption. Personal care products that are left on the skin, such as lotion, tend to contribute the most to internal concentrations. Replacing harmful products with healthier alternatives is key!

Which personal care products typically contain EDCs?



Cosmetics and makeup remover



Perfume, cologne, and other fragrances



Nail polish, nail polish remover, and acrylics



Scented lotion, facial moisturizers, and sunscreen



Antibacterial and antimicrobial soaps; cleaning supplies



Shaving creams and razors



Toothpaste, floss, and other dental products



Hairspray and hair products (e.g., gels, shampoo, dye)