

truth in beauty;)

How to find **REAL** organic body-care products

Many “organic” creams and cleansers have ingredients that may surprise you. Here’s what to look for when you shop.

Cocamidopropyl betaine. Methylparaben. Phenoxyethanol. These hardly sound organic—and they’re not. They’re synthetic substances and they’ve got health or safety issues surrounding them. But they show up in many products that sound like they’re pure and natural, such as Alba Organics Deep Sea Facial Mask and Kiss My Face Obsessively Organic Big Body Lavender & Chamomile Shampoo.

“There’s anarchy in the world of organic labeling,” says Craig Minowa, a spokesman for the Organic Consumers Association. One problem is that some so-called organic personal-care products don’t meet the same government standards required for organic foods. While some ingredients may be certified as organic, the product itself may not be. What’s more, these products may contain unapproved synthetic ingredients.

Some manufacturers confuse the issue by including the word “organic” in their brand name, even though it isn’t clear how much of their product is actually certified as organic. Others promote certified organic ingredients on the label when in fact they may only make up a small

percentage of a chemical-heavy formula.

So how do you pick out the real organic cosmetics or at least those that don’t include potentially harmful ingredients? First, look for an organic certification seal. Then see whether the product is labeled “100% organic” (it must contain only organically produced ingredients); “organic” (it must consist of at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients); or “made with organic ingredients” (it must have at least 70 percent organic contents). Also see whether water is the first ingredient. It may not be worth paying extra for an organic product that’s mostly water.

It’s fairly easy to find soaps and body lotions worthy of the organic label (see facing page). But makeup is tricky. Go to www.ewg.org/reports/skindeep to find safety ratings on all kinds of products, including nonorganic ones that may still be worth considering if you’re determined to avoid slathering your body with potentially harmful chemicals. Several companies told us they’re phasing out parabens and other chemicals and replacing them with natural preservatives. In the meantime, watch out for “organic” products that really aren’t.



These “organic” products have questionable synthetic ingredients.

THE WRONG STUFF

Labels may lie, but ingredient lists are pretty straightforward, and yet many of those we found on so-called organic products (like those at left) were eye opening. Along with ingredients like organic aloe juice and tea tree oil were potentially unhealthy chemicals, although the amounts at which these substances become problematic are generally unknown. Parabens, which we found in many products, may among other things disturb the endocrine system. Other examples include cocamidopropyl betaine, which can trigger allergic reactions, and phenoxyethanol, which can irritate skin and eyes. These and other synthetics such as disodium EDTA and sodium myreth sulfate that aren’t approved by the government’s organic program just shouldn’t be in “organic” products. So before you buy, read the labels front *and* back!

We give these products the **green light**

The items below don't contain questionable chemicals and are loaded with organic and natural ingredients



Aubrey Organics
Natural Spa Sea
Wonders Relaxing
Massage Oil,
\$14.95, www.aubrey-organics.com



Terressentials 100%
Organic Fragrance-Free
Moisture Cream,* \$16
www.terressentials.com



Vermont Soap Organics,
\$4.29 per bar
www.vermontsoap.com

Coco Zum Chocolate
Body Butter,* \$12
www.indigowild.com



Terressentials 100%
Organic Flower Therapy
Flower Acid Facial
Masque,* \$16.50
www.terressentials.com

Aubrey Organics Natural
Spa Sea Wonders
Relaxing Bath Salts, \$17.95
www.aubrey-organics.com



The Merry Hempsters
Organic Hemp Balm,
\$2.49 per tube
www.merryhempsters.com

Nourish Organic
Cucumber & Water-
cress Face Wash, \$9.95
sensibilitysoaps.com



Dr. Bronner's
& Sun Dog's
Magic Lavender
Coconut
Organic Lotion,
\$9.99
www.drbronner.com



* Product is not certified organic, but all the ingredients are natural and/or certified organic.