

# 10 MOST COMMON TOXIC CHEMICALS TO AVOID



by Dr. Karen Lee

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There are over 80,000 chemicals we come into contact with and only a handful have been tested for human and environmental safety, and 20% are kept as trade 'secret.' Here are the 10 most common toxic chemicals you'll find on product labels and why you should avoid them.

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**Phthalates** are a group of industrial chemicals that add flexibility to commonly used products that have the ability to migrate or off-gas into the air. Phthalates are known hormone disruptors that can negatively affect development and fertility, and they're found in PVC, synthetic fragrances and many flexible plastic products like shower curtains, inflatable swimming pools and children's toys.

**Parabens** are ingredients added to inhibit the growth of microbes, and are most commonly found in personal care products like shampoo and cleanser. Parabens have been found to mimic estrogen in the body which causes hormone disruption with the possibility of future breast cancer development.

**Lead** is a proven neurotoxin that can cause learning, language and behavioral problems such as lowered IQ, reduced school performance and increased aggression as it builds up in the body after multiple exposures. Lead is found in garden hoses, some lipsticks, and older ceramic bowls, vases, painted toys and furniture.

**BPA (Bisphenol-a) and BPS (Bisphenol-s)** are widespread endocrine disruptors found in hard, clear plastics, can linings, cash register receipts and #7 recyclables. BPA and BPS leach from plastics during use and can cause early puberty, reproductive tract lesions and system abnormalities.

**1,4 Dioxane** is a byproduct of a petrochemical process called ethoxylation used to make other chemicals less harsh. Irritating to the eyes and respiratory tract, 1,4 dioxane is a probable human carcinogen commonly found in laundry detergents that can cause damage to the central nervous system, liver and kidneys.

**SLS (Sodium Laurel Sulfate)** is a common synthetic detergent and foaming agent used in soaps and shampoos that when formulated can produce the byproduct 1,4 dioxane. SLS is frequently contaminated with 1,4 dioxane and is a known skin and eye irritant.

**PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride)** is a hard plastic that contains extremely high levels of chlorine which is very toxic to humans and produces dioxane when manufactured. It often contains phthalates to make it more flexible for use in products like rain boots, raincoats, garden hoses and pool toys. The use of PVC can cause developmental problems and reproductive system damage.

**Triclosan** is a ubiquitous chemical used as an antibacterial agent often found in soap, personal care products and cutting boards. It's been linked as a cause in creating antibiotic resistant superbugs, and human liver toxicity with thyroid dysfunction.

**Oxybenzone** is commonly found in sunscreens as well as nail polish, lip balm and hair care products, oxybenzone is highly absorbable and bioaccumulative, and it can cause endocrine disruption, cellular or biochemical changes, and endometriosis.

**Diazolidinyl and Imidazolidinyl Urea** are used in cosmetics as preservatives. Similar in chemical structure, both have been found to release formaldehyde, a classified carcinogen. They're found in skin care products, shampoo, conditioner, bubble baths, baby wipes and detergents.

Dr. Karen S. Lee  
Wholistic Vitality

