

Safer Skincare: Say Goodbye to Unnatural Chemicals

How do the everyday cosmetics and creams we use impact on our health? Following her cancer diagnosis, **Martina Orr** looks at some of the more natural beauty and skincare options available on the market, and explains why we should ditch the parabens



CHEMOTHERAPY plays havoc with your beauty routine. Hair loss, black fingernails and dehydrated skin have been just a few of the outward side effects I have had to deal with.

Wearing make-up most days and pampering myself with luxurious face and body treatments is a great way of feeling human again and dealing with the stress of having a chronic disease. However, after my cancer diagnosis, I discovered that almost all toiletries and beauty products contain parabens, phthalates and other chemicals which some scientists believe increase our risk of cancer. Government watchdogs claim that in small amounts these chemicals are harmless, but there is growing evidence that suggests otherwise and a groundswell of public opinion for them to be removed from everyday products.

Parabens are chemical preservatives that extend shelf life and inhibit the growth of bacteria. They are found in almost all cosmetics and personal care products. Parabens are also xenoestrogens, or chemicals that act like oestrogen in the body, which is especially worrying as many tumours of the breast, ovary and prostate for instance, are oestrogen-driven. All of these cancers are on the increase in the UK.

A comprehensive study of women with breast cancer published in the January 2012 issue of the Journal of Applied Technology found parabens in nearly 100 per cent of all cancerous breast tumours. Researchers from the University of Reading also found that virtually all of the tissue samples collected from women participating in the study contained at least one paraben, and 60 per cent of the samples contained five or more.

Johnson & Johnson, the global toiletries giant, bowed to public pressure and recently removed parabens from all of their baby products, but they won't do the same with their adult products until 2015. Other cosmetic companies have been slow to follow suit, as finding alternatives and changing product lines is an expensive business.

I HAVE SPENT A FORTUNE in getting rid of my usual foundation, lipsticks and skincare products after finding them full of oestrogen-mimicking chemicals which I was concerned could affect my health. I did, however, find US cosmeceutical company Image Skincare – one of the few global skincare manufacturers that does not use any parabens or unnatural chemicals in their luxury product ranges. This includes their anti-ageing Ageless range which uses patented stem cell

technology to turn back time, and their best-selling Vital C range for all skin types.

Image Skincare have recently introduced the Ormedic range to skin clinics and salons across Scotland. This is a range of face creams, serums, and night repair creams that mix organic plant extracts with medically effective active ingredients. The range has been specially formulated for people who are going through cancer treatment, have chronic illness or who are undergoing fertility treatment and other medical procedures. The range is also complemented by in-salon facials and peels for extra pampering, which is great when your skin has been damaged by chemotherapy.

All Image Skincare products are formulated by US plastic surgeon, Marc Ronert. "People are exposed daily to parabens in food and other products such as deodorant, soap and hair products, and we don't want to be a part of increasing this exposure to oestrogens. Instead, Image Skincare uses phenoxyethanol as a preservative, which is derived from rose or sage oil and potassium sorbate, which is derived from the Mountain Ash tree. These are plant-based, food-grade preservatives," says Ronert.



Image Skincare also offer a great foundation range called iConceal, which is great for day or nighttime wear, plus they have sunscreens, anti-cellulite creams and a range of bodycare products which really work. In terms of other beauty ranges, Dr Hauschka natural cosmetics have excellent make-up, while Weleda are great for natural hair products. I have also been using Jason soaps and deodorant while Faith in Nature do lovely shower gel.

So, HOW CAN YOU CHECK whether your make-up, shampoos and skincare products contain unwanted chemicals? First, check the ingredients on your make-up and toiletries for butylparaben, isopropylparaben, methylparaben and propylparaben, which are the most popular in the personal care market. You can also email the company that makes your favourite brand to find out if their products contain phthalates or parabens.

You can also visit your local health food store where you can test out make-up and toiletries made from natural ingredients. Alternatively, visit www.renaissance-skincare.com to find your nearest Image Skincare stockist, to try out their range of iConceal foundations, Ormedic, Ageless and other luxury skincare regimes. **SW**

Image Skincare Ormedic and other ranges are available at the following Scottish clinics: La Belle Forme, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Clinetix, Glasgow and Bothwell. Surface Beauty, Edinburgh. Etrebeau, Stirling. Aesthetic Spirit within Cherrybank, Edinburgh. Renaissance Aesthetics, Edinburgh. Dr Lauren Jamieson, Glasgow. our little secret, Newmains. Monifieth Dental Clinic. Stay Beautiful, Edinburgh. Cream, Ayr. Tamore Beauty, Eaglesham. Time Out, Stranraer. Flawless, Stenhousemuir. Cream Beauty Boutique, Glasgow. Lifestyle, Bridge of Weir. OneZone Beauty, Carnoustie. The Brow Studio, Glasgow. The Mind and Body Salon, Milngavie. Lyndsay McKay Beauty at The Nuffield, Aberdeen. Fantasia, Inverness. Dermalclinic, Edinburgh. Medeaesthetique, Glasgow. Kirriemuir Dental Practice, New Beginnings, Ayr. The Parlour, Newton Mearns. KAM salon, Kinghorn Fife. Shirley's Temple of Beauty, Bearsden.