

Be ahead of the crowd

Breaking news, style solutions and shopping picks delivered to your inbox

SKIN

Are you naturally checking the beauty label too?

Katy Young BEAUTY EDITOR
10 AUGUST 2015 • 10:30AM

Last time you bought a beauty product, did you catch yourself reading the label before you hit go? Chances are that you did - that's if the latest bit of research into the natural beauty habits of our American counterparts across the pond is anything to go by.

A new study in the US, aptly named [The Green Beauty Barometer](#) by eco-luxe brand Kari Gran, has unearthed a shift in the way we shop for beauty, and it's a 'responsible revolution' if you will.

[Kari Gran](#) reports that a whopping 60 per cent of women will now check a beauty label for nasties before purchase, with 40 per cent promising to up their spend on natural products over the next few years.

And it's a trend the beauty world has been expecting, apparently; "For the last several years shoppers have become more conscious about what they put in their body through food consumption, and that's spilled over to a greater awareness for what they put on their body," Kari Gran co-founder, Lisa Strain told [WWD](#). "We started the Kari Gran brand with an intent to fill a niche, but really, it's no longer a niche. This is mainstream. This is where beauty is going. Consumers are more aware and cautious as ever about chemical ingredients, and it's not going to be business as usual."

According to the study, which polled 1,000 women, it's 35-to-54-year-olds who are most likely to uphold their green credentials by watching what goes into their products, but we're all catching up – with 18-to-34-year-olds in fact spending the top green dollar. One in four said that it is "very important" that skin care product purchases are all natural.

Anecdotally, founder of the UK-based Organic Pharmacy, Margo Marrone, agrees that British women are taking their green duties more seriously too: "More and more consumers are becoming aware of the ingredients that they apply onto their skin, and that unlike previous myths that the skin does not absorb, it is in fact a living organ and does absorb molecules that are small enough to penetrate the thin barrier and go straight into the bloodstream. We have noticed a rise in new customers – around a 15 per cent this year."

So if you, like us (and our American beauties), are beginning to take note of what lies beneath the beauty label, here's the list of the top seven ingredients that you might want to avoid according to our organic expert, Imelda Burke.

Imelda Burke's Seven Chemical Culprits:

Parabens: “Widely used as a preservative, while I’m in favour of our beauty products being tested on humans rather than animals, a study at Brunel University did bring to light some interesting results. Concerned with the inadvertent estrogenic affect of certain synthetic chemicals, and their subsequent effects on the endocrine system of humans and wildlife, the authors showed that parabens when administered orally to rats, were inactive. However, subcutaneous administration of butylparaben, the most potent, produced a positive uterotrophic response in vivo. The study’s authors suggested that the safety of these chemicals be reassessed due to the use of parabens in a wide range of topical products. If you’re not one for waiting around for industry reassessments, parabens are easily avoided. Look for a natural or organic certification stamp, as this will automatically rule them out of the formulation or simply check the ingredients list for anything ending in paraben.”

Synthetic SPF: “Sunscreen may pose problems for rosacea sufferers and sensitive skin types - many find they react to sunscreens. If this is you, look to avoid commonly used ingredients such as para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA), dioxybenzone, oxybenzone, or sulisobenzone. Switching to a mineral based sunscreen, which combines a mix of titanium dioxide and zinc oxide to reflect the suns rays away from the skin, often provides protection without irritation.”

Mineral oils and petrolatum: “Mineral oil is a clear, odourless oil derived from petroleum that is widely used in cosmetics because it rarely causes allergic reactions and it can’t become solid and clog pores. It comes in several forms - mineral oil and petrolatum (a semi-solid form - think Vaseline) and is used as a moisturiser. It sits on the surface of the skin stopping the skin from ‘breathing’. Mineral oil, a byproduct of the petroleum industry, is refined and processed to use on skin. It isn't actually doing much for your skin and is generally used as a cheap alternative to plant oils.”

Propylene glycol: “Found to provoke reactions in those prone to irritation and eczema. Often people who have developed a reaction on normally well-behaved skin have unwittingly switched to a cleanser or product containing this ingredient.”

Bismuth oxychloride: “Widely used in mineral make-up, this is one of my own personal sensitivities. For me it causes redness, itchiness and stinging, almost instantly. If you find mineral make-up doesn’t agree with you, check for this ingredient. In store we often find that people who think they can’t use mineral powders have been using a product containing this ingredient.”

Sodium lauryl sulphate/Sodium laureth sulphate: “A surfactant, detergent, and emulsifier. These foaming agents in general can be quite tough on skin, as they can upset the protective layer of oils on the skin and corrode the ‘cement’ that holds the skin cells together making the skin itself more permeable to other ingredients.”

Methylisothiazolinone/Methylchloroisothiazolinone (MI): “Synthetic preservatives that have gained lots of media attention from 2013. Long remained on our list of what to avoid, UK Doctors have highlighted this nasty as the trigger of one of the worst skin allergy outbreaks, causing dermatitis and rashes, ever seen. Many GP’s are calling for a ban on its use.”