

Made in the Image of God



Campaign for Safe Cosmetics

Everyday we use personal care products such as soap, lotion, shampoo, deodorant, shaving products, cologne, or makeup. These products can contain toxic chemicals because they are not regulated by the federal government. As people of faith our faith tradition provides guidance on why our choices for personal care products are a matter of justice and bodily stewardship.

WE ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD (GENESIS 1:26)

We are all made in the image of God and it's important to know that God loves us each the way we are made.

CARING FOR OUR BODIES AS TEMPLES TO THE HOLY SPIRIT (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20)

Everyday we apply products that are absorbed through our skin, inhaled, or ingested. We should be mindful of what is in the products we use. Many of them (especially the leading brands) contain at least one chemical that may be harmful in the long term. Note that "all natural" product labels should also be read carefully. Animal studies predict that the chemicals in personal care products can contribute to changes in childhood puberty, reproductive dysfunction, birth defects, and even cancer. Men, women, and children are all susceptible to these chemicals.

WE ARE ALL VULNERABLE, AND YET SOME ARE MORE AT RISK

Children are divine (Matthew 18:2-4; Canticles Rab-
bah 1.4), and yet most at risk. There are a number of
cosmetics products targeted to babies and children such
as baby shampoo, powder, lotion, and cream. A 2008
study found that after using baby cosmetic products,
the babies' urine showed detectable levels of a chemi-
cal family called phthalates. New research links phtha-
lates to early onset puberty in girls, testicular cancer,
and reproductive defects in baby boys. Fetal exposure
to phthalates, lead, mercury, and other chemicals may
also have both short and long term health effects.

We are taught to love thy neighbor as thyself (Leviti-
cus 19:18; Mark 12:31), but low-income commu-
nities and communities of color are more likely to
face greater exposure to toxic chemicals. Toxic waste
sites, trash transfer stations, and chemical production
facilities tend to be located in these communities,
increasing exposure to toxic material. Low-income
communities may also lack access to safer cosmet-
ics products. In addition, some products marketed to
people of color often contain particularly problematic
or toxic ingredients.

WHAT WE CAN DO

Become informed

Visit www.nccecojustice.org/cosmetics.html to learn
more about this issue and what you can do. Check out
the Skin Deep database to look up specific products:
www.cosmeticdatabase.com/. Visit the Campaign for
Safe Cosmetics to see which companies signed on to the
Compact for Safe Cosmetics and which organizations
are members of the campaign: www.safecosmetics.org.

Less is more

Products with fewer ingredients are more likely to be
safer for you. Look for unscented products or ones
only scented with essential oils. Avoid products with
a bunch of names that are hard to pronounce. Some
chemicals to steer clear of include:

- Placenta—Found in some hair conditioners or skin
treatments.
- Mercury—Often called thimerosal and is found in
some mascara, skin lighteners and eye drops.
- Hydroquinone—Frequently found in skin.
lightening products and in some hair dyes.
- Lead—Found in some lipsticks. One study tested
33 top brands of lipsticks and found lead in more
than half of them. Visit [www.safecosmetics.org/
your_health/poisonkiss.cfm](http://www.safecosmetics.org/your_health/poisonkiss.cfm).
- Phthalates—Often found in “fragrances,” hair spray,
and some nail polish.
- Toluene—Found in some nail polish.
- Formaldehyde—Found in some nail polish. A
contaminant found in several personal care products,
it is not often listed in the ingredients.

- In 2007 OPI and other leading nail polish
manufacturers agreed to remove phthalates, toluene,
and formaldehyde from their nail polish.
- 1,4 Dioxane—A common contaminant
found in products that contain the following:
“PEG,” “polyethylene,” “polyethylene glycol,”
“polyoxyethylene,” “-eth-” “oxynol” “cetareth,” or
“oleth.” It's linked in animal tests to cancer. It costs
pennies to remove it, and yet it is found in many
popular cosmetics, including baby washes.

Spread the Good News

Gather with friends and other members of your faith
community to learn more and to make non-toxic per-
sonal care products. Look for the upcoming *Made in
the Image of God: A healthy spa toolkit for congregations*.

We can't shop our way out of this problem

Safe and regulated products for consumers should be the
answer. We need elected officials to enact an updated
policy that will prevent toxic chemicals in personal care
products and provide us with healthy choices to care
for our bodies.

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