

NON-TOXIC PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Consumers have seen an increase in the availability and amount of “natural” and “organic” products, ranging from fresh produce to hygiene products. While the food industry has had more success in developing specific regulations concerning the labeling of products as “natural” or “organic,” there have been fewer regulations concerning the marketing and distribution of personal care products in regard to designating them as “natural.” Some manufacturers create “natural” beauty products by adding ingredients such as honey, herbs, and jojoba oil without removing the artificial colors, fragrances, and preservatives. Despite the ambiguity in labeling guidelines, there are many nontoxic personal care products we can easily incorporate into our busy lives.

Avoiding Synthetics in Skin Care and Hygiene Products

Pampering oneself is often equated with splurging -- indulging in extravagant expense or luxury. Splurging on personal care products containing no synthetic or potentially hazardous ingredients is easy to do.

Awareness and concern are increasing about the purity of what we put *on* our bodies as well as what we put *in* them. Preference for truly natural ingredients in personal care products can be discerned by **READING THE LABEL**. Many products use non-renewable petrochemical ingredients in the manufacture and require aerosol propellants for their application. Common synthetic ingredients found in personal care products include:

alcohol	BHA and BHT	paraffin	phenol	ammonia
EDTA	ethanol	fluoride	formaldehyde	fragrance
glycerol	glyceryl	hexachlorophene	isopropyl alcohol	mineral oil
methylethyl ketone	nylon	artificial colors and flavors		

Paying attention to a product’s ingredient list assists consumers in deciding if and when more natural products are desired for themselves and their families.

Substitute Synthetics with Herbs

Commercially-available herbs and their extracts are becoming increasingly easier to find. Natural food stores, bath and body shops, and specialty boutiques are more frequently offering their patrons a line of perfumes, lotions, insect deterrents, and other personal care products derived from herbs.

Herbal-based products can be found pre-packaged or can be prepared at home. Herbs no longer are confined to the treatment and prevention of illnesses. The ability of herbs to relieve stress and provide relaxation are just as important in helping to achieve whole body health. Gradually incorporating herbs into a personal care regime can be done slowly and over time. Start small -- substitute one synthetically-derived product with one herbal-based product. From head to toe, here are some simple, quick herbal recipes designed to soothe, smooth and pamper.





Facial Steamer

1/4 c. (or handful) dried chamomile flowers
or 3 bags chamomile tea
1/2 qt. boiling water

Sit comfortably with a large bowl in front of you on a towel-covered surface. Place the chamomile in the bowl and pour in boiling water. Use a second towel as a tent to trap the steam, close your eyes, and breathe in the herbal vapors. Other herbs conducive to facial steamers are mint, lavender and rosemary. Consult an herb book for your particular skin type.

Lavender and Marjoram Bath

2 Tbs. almond oil
7 drops lavender oil
3 drops marjoram oil

Mix all ingredients in a cup.
Pour into running bath water.
Settle in for a long, soothing
soak.

Mint Footbath and Massage Oil

Mint Bath:
12 large sprigs mint
1/2 cup cold water
10 c. boiling water

Massage Oil:
1 Tbs. Almond oil
1 drop Mint essential oil

Puree mint and cold water in a food processor. Pour into a large bowl with the boiling water. Soak feet until the water is too cool to be comforting. Afterwards, dry your feet with the oil mixture into both feet to smooth and soften

Herbs have been employed for thousands of years primarily in the form of the whole plant. When distilled or cold pressed, essential oils are extracted from the herb - producing concentrations 100-fold or more. This process allows certain properties of the herb to become very pronounced in its oil.

Maintaining a herb garden is *not* a prerequisite to obtaining successful results from nontoxic products. Here are some classic examples of quick and simple nontoxic treatments:

- Exfoliating Scrub: Mix a handful of uncooked oatmeal with water to make a paste. Massage gently into clean skin. Rinse with cool water.
- Moisturizing Mask: Peel an avocado leaving a bit of the flesh in the rind. Rub on your face and leave it on for 10 minutes. Rinse with cool water.
- Puffy, Tired Eyes? Slice a fresh cucumber into coin-sized medallions. Place over closed eyes. Take a time out!

Resources/References

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