

DR. MIKE'S 10 STEP GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING COSMETICS LABELS

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INTRODUCTION

Ingredient labels on cosmetic products can be like reading a foreign language. Most consumers have no idea what the technical names mean, or even what function they perform. However it is not necessary to have a chemistry degree to work out whether what you are buying is going to work, that you are getting what you think you are buying, or whether you are being ripped off with an overpriced product.

By reading the product labels and applying some simple rules you can start to distinguish good from suspect products.

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#1

PRODUCTS CLAIMING TO BE NATURAL

Products that claim to be natural are not necessarily free of artificial ingredients. The term "natural" is often used to let consumers know that a product contains natural ingredients, and not that the product is totally free of synthetic substances. So while you may think you are buying 100% natural cosmetics, you cannot know for certain unless you read the ingredients list.

Confused by the ingredient list? Then don't rush to buy the product, apply the rules discussed below, take a photo of the ingredients list or jot them down, then go home and Google the ingredients to determine which are natural and identify those that are synthetic. Learn about the synthetic ingredients, and then decide if the product is for you.

#2

PRODUCTS CONTAINING PARFUM / PERFUME / FRAGRANCE

In one word, avoid these, especially if the product claims to be "100% Natural."

Products that claim to be "100% Natural" or "Made from Botanicals" are not trustworthy if they include any of these terms in their list of ingredients.

What many consumers do not realise is that perfumes are considered to be trade secrets, and companies are under no obligation to divulge these ingredients. Therefore you have no idea what makes up this "parfum" ingredient, and you may end up with some synthetic ingredient in the product without your knowledge.

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#3

LOOK FOR (LAYMAN TERMS) IN PARENTHESES

Under the cosmetics regulations in most countries, ingredients must be listed using the International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients (INCI) format. Therefore a simple ingredient such as Lemongrass essential oil becomes *Cymbopogon flexuosus* oil using INCI.

Ethical companies want their customers to be knowledgeable about ingredients, and understand that most people won't know that *Cymbopogon flexuosus* is the Latin and INCI name for Lemongrass essential oil. Look for products with the layman terms in parenthesis to help you understand what is in the product. An easy to read label should look like this:

Sodium Palmate (palm oil), Sodium Cocoate (coconut oil), Aqua (water), *Cymbopogon flexuosus* (Lemongrass) oil, *Curcuma longa* (Turmeric) powder, *Cymbopogon flexuosus* (Lemongrass) leaf powder.

#4

AVOID PRODUCTS WITH INGREDIENTS HAVING CAPITAL LETTERS & NUMBERS

Typically these include ingredients such as PEG, MEA/DEA/TEA, ALS/ALES/SLS/SLES, EDTA, etc. Often these sorts of ingredients may have potential health risks, and you should research these before using these products.

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#5

ALCOHOL FREE?

Is it really? A personal care product claiming to be "alcohol-free" may only be telling part of the truth. There are many different types of alcohol, and when a label says "alcohol-free" it is most often referring to ethyl alcohol free (this is the alcohol we drink).

The product may still contain other types of alcohol, such as cetyl, stearyl, or cetearyl alcohol.

#6

BEWARE IF THE INGREDIENTS LIST IS LONG

Body care products with a long list of ingredients raise the potential that firstly the product or its ingredients have been tested on animals, and secondly that a number of the ingredients are synthetic.

You will notice that organic and natural body care products usually have short ingredients lists, and the reason is that these products are less processed and more holistically based.

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#7

PRODUCT TESTING

If a body care label says its “cruelty-free” or “not tested on animals,” it can mean that the product, and not necessarily its ingredients, have not been tested on animals.

You might think that you are buying a product that is cruelty-free, but the ingredients may have been animal tested.

#8

THE ORDER OF INGREDIENTS IS IMPORTANT

The ingredients in cosmetics products must be listed in order of concentration by weight. Therefore the first listed ingredient is the most concentrated ingredient in the product. Knowing this, you can easily determine the relative concentration of each ingredient in the product.

For example, you may find a product that boasts it contains an exotic Shea Butter, and has a lot to say about the wonders of this ingredient. However, if you examine the list of ingredients and find that the Shea Butter is listed behind some synthetic ingredients, then you know that the product contains more of these synthetic ingredients than Shea Butter.

Using this knowledge is a great way for customers to separate reality from marketing hype.

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#9

WHERE DOES THE PRODUCT COME FROM?

You should be concerned where your product comes from, therefore look for the manufacturer and distributor info on the label. Determine if the company that sells it manufactures the product? If it says, "distributed by" this means the company does not manufacture the product, someone else does, and the company that sells it is just the distributor. Under these circumstances it may be difficult to determine exactly where or who manufactures the product.

If the manufacturer and distributor information is not provided, do not buy the product, it is could be suspect. You should also be aware that distributors of cosmetic products are not liable for any claims, it is the cosmetics manufacturer, and therefore why this information is important to consumers.

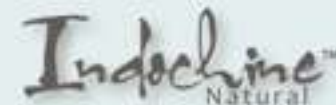
#10

LOOK FOR THE EXPIRY DATE AND LOT NUMBER

This information is required by cosmetics authorities, and if it is not shown then the product is in contravention of cosmetics laws and should not be purchased.

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DO INDOCHINE NATURAL PRODUCTS PASS THE 10 POINT TEST?

We invite you to visit the Indochine Natural online store or any JustLife outlet and put our product labeling to the test.

Any queries or suggestions about our labeling, I would love to hear from you.

Thanks.

Dr. Mike

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ABOUT US & WHERE TO FIND US

The founders of Indochine Natural, a Vietnamese fashion designer and an Australian scientist, have merged their talents to create a unique dynamic that embraces the rich exotic fragrances and ingredients of the Orient to enhance the essence of healthy clean skin and hair.

www.indochinenatural.com

please contact us if you have any queries:

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INDOCHINE NATURAL is a member of the
World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO)

