



## ENVIRONMENT

### Bathroom Detox©

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Words are explained alongside the text

Stressed syllables are underlined and in bold\*

In the past few years, we've **witnessed** the slow **emergence** of the no-culture. What used to be an **undercurrent** is now more and more **mainstream**. From no-**gluten** to no-**paraben**, from low-fat to low-**poo**, from **lactose**-free to **phthalate**-free, it's all about what's NOT in what you buy. While it can quickly get annoying and easy to make fun of, this no-culture has got some things right.

In the last half-century, thousands of **products** full of new **molecules** have **colonized** our kitchens and bathrooms. Their names are **unpronounceable** **although** a few families such as parabens or **BPA** have made it into everyday language, after health **scandals** accused them of being **carcinogens** or **hormone disrupting**.

This week we'll talk about what we put into our bodies through our skin. **Indeed**, when **applying** a cream or **makeup** or any product in your daily **hygiene routine** you may be adding a bit more than just a simple touch of color or **moisture** to your body. Between **metal** in **lipsticks**, **herbicide** in **tampons** and **endocrine disruptors** in baby products, we have seen quite a few scandals recently in the hygiene **industry**. All of them hiding behind **reassuring messages** such as **hypoallergenic**, no-something, **natural** or extra-soft. Those "dirty" **ingredients** are especially dangerous if not **rinsed off** - such as **moisturizing** creams, makeup or **wipes** - because they go through our skin and into our blood. Some people are more at risk than others for

**to witness** (vb.) to observe

**undercurrent** (n.) characteristic of a situation that is hidden but that has some effect

**mainstream** (adj.) common and shared by most people

**poo** = shampoo

**BPA** = Bisphenol A

**carcinogen** (n.) cancer-causing substance

**to disrupt** (vb.) to cause disorder

**makeup** (n.) cosmetics

**moisture** (n.) small amount of a liquid (such as water) that makes something wet

**to rinse off** (phrasal vb.) to wash away

**wipe** (n.) towelette

example **pregnant** women, babies and children. **However** all of us should have a look at what we put on our skin and hair, and be aware of the risks **associated** if some of those ingredients get into our bodies.

**Identifying suspicious substances** is quite an **intimidating** and lengthy **process** at first... take just one of your daily products and have a tiny **peek** at the ingredients' list... Quite scary... **Italic** Latin names are natural ingredients such as plant **extracts**. Names in your language are **minerals** or **chemicals**, which doesn't mean they're good or bad. To **distinguish** the good from the bad some health or **environmental agencies** have **shortlisted** the worst **offenders**. For example the Environmental Working Group has identified 12 basic but dangerous items also called the Dirty Dozen that you can find in all sorts of everyday products.

However the easiest way to get into the process of **evaluating** your products is to **download** one of the free **apps** made to **facilitate** your shopping choice, such as Skin Deep, Think Dirty, or the French **collaborative** version "Notéo". They **rate** products on **criteria** like **cancer** threats, **allergens**, and **developmental** or **reproductive toxicity**, but also environmental **impact**, social **responsibility** or **budget**.

So what do I do if my **favorite shampoo** is on the **no-go** list? Again those apps are quite friendly as they **suggest alternatives** to the product you've just researched. Another option is to look for products under one of the well-**established labels** that fight **greenwashing** and false marketing in industry. Several are emerging with "Slow Cosmetic" well ahead. This **Belgian** organization has a **francophone** website that **indexes** all the products that have made it under the label, most of which you can buy **online**. They also give **advice** on how to **detoxify** your routine. You'll be surprised at how easy it is to **adopt** a healthier routine and how much you, your health and your **wallet** can **benefit** from small changes!

**pregnant** (adj.) carrying a foetus

**peek** (n.) quick look

**to shortlist** (vb.) to put on a list of a small number of people or things that have been selected from a larger group

**offender** (n.) criminal

**app** = application programme

**to rate** (vb.) to judge the quality or ability of someone or something

**no-go** (adj.) referring to something that should be avoided by all cost

**to greenwash** (vb.) to make people believe that your company is doing more to protect the environment than it actually is

**wallet** (n.) small folding case that holds paper money, credit cards, etc.

**\*Tip!** Note the change in the stress patterns:

**extract, impact** (nouns) / **extract, impact** (verbs)