

Dangerous Ingredients Sold as *All Natural Ingredients*

By Caryn Summers, R.N.

Just what are those “all natural ingredients” listed in many cosmetic products? This ad online purports to be all natural:

A powerful, healing serum with all natural ingredients,

One full ounce for a mere \$148.00, one time purchase.

The product ingredient list contains, "Water/Aqua/Eau, Ascorbic Acid, Laureth-4, Alcohol Denat., Pentylene Glycol, Propylene Glycol, Olea Europaea (Olive) Leaf Extract, Zinc Sulfate, Tocopherol, Polyporus Umbellatus (Mushroom) Extract, Arbutin, Glycerin, Bioflavonoids, Retinol, Polysorbate 20, Phenoxyethanol."

While a few of the ingredients are actually good (ascorbic acid, olive leaf extract, tocopherol: vitamin E, arbutin and glycerin), the other ingredients listed in this “all-natural” and very expensive skin care product can be considered potentially dangerous for your skin and health. Let me explain.

Laureth-4: EWG’s natural cosmetic database explains that “Laureth-4 is a synthetic polymer composed of lauryl alcohol and PEG (polyethylene glycol). Due to the presence of PEG, this ingredient may contain potentially toxic manufacturing impurities such as 1,4-dioxane.”

[Source: <https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/ingredient/703422/LAURETH-4/#>]

And how natural is **Pentylene Glycol**? *Truth in Aging*, a website that is known to provide honest analysis about skin care products, states that “Pentylene Glycol is a synthetic humectant used in cosmetics and beauty products that is secondarily used as a solvent and preservative.... High doses have shown neuro and organ toxicity in animals, as well as skin irritation.” It also indicates that “recent studies have been published showing Pentylene Glycol to be an irritant that causes contact dermatitis, suggesting this skin care product ingredient could be an emerging allergen.”

[Source: <https://www.truthinaging.com/ingredients/pentylene-glycol>]

The next ingredient is **Propylene Glycol**. According to Dr. Axe, who founded one of the most visited natural health websites in the world, “Propylene glycol is found in industrial-grade levels in products like antifreeze, polyurethane cushions, paints and the like.” He goes on to say, “Many people are extremely concerned by the presence of an ingredient in antifreeze (one that’s used to de-ice airplanes, no less) in their food and skin care products, which has sparked uproar in recent years, especially when three European countries pulled a popular alcoholic drink off the shelves for an illegal level of propylene glycol.” He further lists the dangers of Propylene glycol:

- Skin irritation and allergic reactions
- Toxicity to the kidneys and liver
- Not safe for infants or pregnant women
- Neurological Symptoms: including stupor, convulsions and other unspecified “severe mental symptoms”

- Cardiovascular Problems: One patient was an 8-month-old baby, who suffered a heart attack after four doses of topical medication to treat a burn
- Respiratory Issues: In rats, some scientists have found rapidly enlarging cells in the respiratory tract, as well as nasal hemorrhaging
- Potentially Bio-accumulative: those suffering from kidney or liver issues that may affect their body's ability to process organic compounds, or are chronically ill, are highly recommended to limit their exposure to this compound as much as possible.
- May be a Pathway for More Harmful Chemicals: Perhaps the most concerning part of propylene glycol exposure is the way that it may provide other chemicals a free pass into the bloodstream. *Propylene glycol increases the skin's propensity to absorb whatever it comes into contact with.* Considering the large number of dangerous chemicals, we encounter on a regular basis, this may be of even more danger than the compound itself.

So how does Dr. Axe recommend avoiding skin care products that contain propylene glycol? *He suggests purchasing cosmetics free of harmful chemicals and preservatives. A great number of cosmetics include propylene glycol, and in the U.S, cosmetics are not well-regulated. "Since ingredients do not have to appear on cosmetic products, you should purchase only from companies who list all ingredients on their packaging and do not include propylene glycol on that list."*

[Source: <https://draxe.com/propylene-glycol/>]

Next ingredient in this "all-natural skin care product" is **Polysorbate 20**. According to the Anne Marie Skin Care Ingredient Watch List, "In its original form, polysorbate is a harmless sorbitol, which is a sugar alcohol. For its use in personal care products, however, it's treated with ethylene oxide—thus, the name 'polysorbate 20', because it's treated with 20 parts of ethylene oxide. The result is an ingredient used as an emulsifier in cosmetic creams (to help mix oil and water), lotions, cream deodorant, baby oil, sun lotion, etc. The problem is that is treated with ethylene oxide (or "ethoxylated"). *This is easily contaminated with 1,4-dioxane, a potentially dangerous by-product. In fact, 1,4-dioxane is a known animal carcinogen that penetrates readily into the skin. This ingredient has also been linked with skin allergies. There is so much concern about this contaminant that a class-action lawsuit was filed in New Jersey against manufacturers of children's bath and personal-care products because defendants manufactured, distributed, marketed, or sold products containing formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane.*

The Organic Consumers Organization released a fact sheet on 1,4-dioxane, which reports that the levels of 1,4-dioxane found in many personal care products are 1,000 times higher than those found to cause cancer in animal studies. According to the FDA, "Skin absorption studies demonstrated that dioxane readily penetrates animal and human skin from various types of vehicles." *This can be especially concerning when using products containing dioxane if you're taking a hot bath (or using a facial care product), as your pores open up, which means your skin could be absorbing even more of the 1,4-dioxane contained in the product.* If you were exposed to this ingredient only once in a while, you may have little reason to be concerned. But most of us use 10 or more body or facial products a day -- several times a day -- and if even a couple of those have polysorbate-20, the exposure could be adding up, especially if it's penetrating the skin.

[Source: <https://www.annmariegianni.com/ingredient-watch-list-polysorbate-20-it-may-be-contaminated-with-carcinogenic-14-dioxane/>]

One more to review: **Phenoxyethanol**. According to the website, *Truth in Aging*, Phenoxyethanol is increasingly turning up in cosmetics as a preservative used as an alternative to parabens. This only recently came to public attention in the US when the FDA issued a warning about its use in a cream, called *Mommy Bliss*, for nursing mothers. The FDA warned that phenoxyethanol can cause shut down of the central nervous system, vomiting and contact dermatitis. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) data sheets show chromosomal changes and genetic mutation effects in testing as well as testicular atrophy and interference with reproductivity in mice. Phenoxyethanol breaks down to phenol and acetaldehyde, and acetaldehyde converts to acetate. Phenol can disable the immune system's primary response mechanism. Acetaldehyde occurs during the breakdown of ethanol, (alcohol and 2-phenoxyETHANOL), and it is a suspected carcinogen. Inhalation studies have shown irritation of the eyes, skin, and respiratory tract.

[Source: <https://www.truthinaging.com/review/is-phenoxyethanol-safe>]

Creekside Friends, this is just ONE of the products that I researched in order to illustrate the importance of reading labels (of course, all labels are not created with honesty) and getting your skin care products from a company you know and trust!

For the complete information on my research on these product ingredients too often used in our cosmetic and body products and inappropriately called *All Natural*, please download the document:

[Dangerous Ingredients Sold as All Natural](#)

In addition, you can find more information on another popular internet anti-aging facial care products on the web:

[Organic Skincare Magazine – Cindy Crawford](#)

[Toxic Ingredients in Anti-Aging Cream, Meaningful Beauty Fountain of Youth](#)

As always, In the Spirit of Health and Nature,

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