



Recent Lawsuit Highlights Dangers of Toxins in Hair Care Products

Imagine an advertising campaign that goes something like this: “Buy our hair care products and although your scalp will itch for a time, soon you won’t have to worry about that - because you’ll be bald!”

As sales pitches go, that message would be wildly counterproductive. But as Larissa Whipple discovered, it is an accurate description of some consumers’ experiences. The Illinois woman is suing OGX and its parent company Johnson & Johnson over claims that they misled and deceived the public about a harmful substance in some of their products and thereby placed customers in harm’s way for the sake of increased profits. She alleges that using the products as instructed on their label caused baldness and scalp damage.

The suit centers around one particular ingredient, DMDM hydantoin, which was used as a preservative in all OGX products. Johnson & Johnson claims on its website to have removed the chemical, a form of the carcinogen formaldehyde, from all its products by 2015. However, when it acquired Vogue International and its line of OGX products, the company failed to update its ingredient profile even though some of the OGX products were not held to the same standards for consumer safety, according to Whipple. “Since 2016, Johnson & Johnson has continued to market, sell and profit off of the products that contain ingredients known could harm consumers,” the suit alleges.

DMDM hydantoin works as a preservative by slowly releasing formaldehyde and making the environment less favorable to microorganisms. For any consumers who are allergic to formaldehyde, prolonged use of products containing DMDM hydantoin inevitably increases the risk of cosmetic-induced dermatitis, an itchy, blistering skin rash.

Studies have also discovered that long-term exposure to formaldehyde can cause irritation of the eyes and mucous membranes, headaches, shortness of breath and aggravation of asthma symptoms. It is classified as a ‘known human carcinogen’ in the U.S. while in the EU, any product that exceeds concentrations of 0.05% must include a warning label.



The lawsuit highlights an ongoing problem in the hair care industry: toxic chemicals that negatively impact health in both the short term and over time. Hazards range from the chemical burns, scalp lesions and hair loss induced by chemical ‘relaxers’ used to straighten natural hair (a topic comedian Chris Rock memorably explored in his 2009 documentary *Good Hair*) to the insidious effects of toxic substances embedded in many shampoos and conditioners.

Take, for example, **sulfates**. On the one hand, sulfates are a key ingredient in many shampoos that strips away oil and dirt from hair. On the downside, they can remove too much moisture, leading to dry and unhealthy hair and making the scalp itchy, dry and easily irritated. More importantly, they may include hormone-disrupting agents and carcinogens like dioxane, which disrupts kidney function.

Then there are **parabens**, another preservative often found in hair products. Parabens effectively prevent the growth of harmful bacteria and mold, but in some cases, they may mimic or partially mimic naturally occurring hormones within the human body, thereby overstimulating hormones like estrogen, androgen and thyroid hormones. They can also block the naturally produced hormone from binding to its receptor site by binding itself instead, thus making it impossible for the hormone to send the appropriate signals to the body. [Paraben-free shampoos and conditioners](#)

PEG may seem like an innocuous name for a girl or woman but in the hair care industry, it stands for Polyethylene Glycol, which may be contaminated with ethylene oxide and 1,4-dioxane, which are classified as a known human carcinogen and a possible human carcinogen, respectively. [Hair products that include PEG](#).

And let’s not forget **benzene**, considered by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) as one of the most toxic ingredients in the market. Often found in hair dyes, benzene is one of the 20 most common chemicals in the United States, even though it is known to cause cancers, including leukemia, according to the American Cancer Society.

This is just a partial list; other substances found in hair care products include **phthalates**, **Cocamidopropyl betaine**, **Diethanolamine**, **Triclosan**, **Dimethicone** and **Phenoxyethanol**, each of which poses its own risk.



Wading through the ingredients list of every beauty product can be a confusing chore. The best way to minimize the danger of potential toxins in hair care products is to look for sites like [The Good Trade](#) and [The Good Face Project](#) that list environmentally friendly, non-toxic alternatives to mainstream shampoos and conditioners.

If you are concerned about how harmful ingredients in everyday products may already be affecting you, learn how Vitality Detox Drops can safely and gradually eliminate toxins that have built up over time here: [Why the Structure of Soluble Zeolite is so Effective at Removing Toxins](#) or contact Vitality Detox Drops at info@vitalitydetoxdrops.com or (860) 60 DETOX / (860) 603-3869 to find out more.