

Healthy Homecoming **House Party Kit:**

Coming Home to
Healthy Body Care
Products





Thank You for Hosting a Healthy Homecoming Party!

Products and materials we use every day are made with toxic chemicals. This can harm our health and the environment. Hosting a *Healthy Homecoming Party* is a great way to learn and share information about how to choose safer alternatives to toxic chemicals and reduce pollution. The information in this party kit will help your family and friends learn how look for safer products, and avoid products which may cause harm. They will see that relying on toxic chemicals is not only dangerous, but also unnecessary.

Each kit focuses on a different aspect of coming home to healthy products, but all contain the same underlying message: we can get toxic chemicals out of our lives by making different personal choices, calling on product manufacturers to choose safer materials and supporting stronger government oversight of chemicals. By hosting this event, you are helping to build a community of people who want to create positive change. It is a great opportunity to spread the word and actively work to replace unnecessary toxic chemicals with safer alternatives.

You can host a Healthy Homecoming Party as a small private event with your friends or a larger event in collaboration with local community organizations, daycare centers, small businesses, student groups, or faith-based groups.

No matter how you choose to throw the party, this kit will guide you through the steps and provide materials to get you started. Please read this entire kit and contact us if you have any questions.

Thank you for supporting a healthy environment.

Now let's have some fun!

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Steps to Hosting a Healthy Homecoming Party



Pick a topic

This kit addresses body care products, but we recommend you choose a specific topic that you and your friends want to know more about – this will help to keep the party focused and ensure you have time to take action. Read the Background and Talking Points thoroughly to prepare yourself for being a resource to your guests.



Pick a date

Get started early to increase your chances of having good attendance. Two to four weeks are enough to plan a smaller event. If you want to have a larger party – 15 or more people – or if you are going to host the party with a community group, you'll be more successful if you begin planning one to two months in advance.

Be sure to keep in mind any possible conflicts with holidays or school schedules. It is a good idea to check with a few guests to confirm they are available before finalizing the date. A save-the-date e-mail or phone call can also be useful. You do not need to have all the details finalized to start sending out basic invitations.



Pick a location

Most parties are held at home – either yours or a friend's. You need an area that is large enough for the group you are inviting, and space to spread out and make or demonstrate any products. Churches, community centers, or campus rooms are great options as well. Depending on the activities you choose for your party, you may prefer a place with a sink or internet access.



Invite people!

After choosing the time and place, send out invitations, preferably two to three weeks in advance. You can make or buy invitations and mail them to people, post a flyer if you want to make it open to the public, send an e-mail, or use an online service like Evite (www.evite.com). These free online services save paper, allow you to design colorful invitations, and track RSVPs.



Optional: Notify local media of the event

If you would like your greater community to hear about the event, or if it is open to the public, you can contact your local newspaper, radio, or TV station to let them know about it. This is a great way to spread the word! A sample media advisory is included in this kit, and feel free to contact Clean and Healthy New York for help.



Buy your party supplies

Check the Supplies Checklist to determine what kind of materials you will need. Consider having food or drink to share and get people talking. You can also ask guests to bring some supplies (containers, baking soda, etc) or a snack to share.



Send out a reminder

Send a phone or e-mail reminder two to three days in advance to remind your invitees of the event (phone calls are most effective). Having a reliable head count will also help you ensure that you have plenty of supplies. This is a good time to review the talking points and check the website for any current events.



Have a party!

Below is a sample agenda for a Healthy Homecoming Party. Reviewing the rest of the materials in this kit will help you decide exactly how you would like the event to flow. You may want to ask someone to take pictures to help document the fun.

- Mix and mingle with snacks, ask new guests sign in and make a name tag
- Welcome guests, everyone introduces themselves
- Presentation: Use the Talking Points to talk about this issue. (page 8)
- Questions, answers, and discussion: It's OK to say you don't know the answer, and to use Clean and Healthy New York staff as a resource to get back to your guests with the information they want.
- Group Activity: There are several options in each kit. Choose the one that you like best! (page 10)
- Take Action: Let guests know about any current news or updates on relevant opportunities to act (check the Clean and Healthy New York website) as you make a difference with one of these activities, like making a phone call or writing a letter. (page 11)
- Thank you and wrap up: Please ask guests to fill out the Guest Survey so we can continue to improve these materials. Don't forget to collect the surveys and send them to Clean and Healthy New York!



Follow up

Within a week, thank the guests for attending. Feel free to encourage guests to hold their own party, maybe focusing on a different topic! If there were unanswered questions from guests, please send them to us. Also, please send us the details about your event, how it went, recommendations for improvement, and of course, pictures!



Frequently Asked Questions

How much does it cost to host a Healthy Homecoming Party?

You can throw a Healthy Homecoming Party (HH Party) for very little cost. Most hosts make about 20 copies of assorted materials and arrange for light refreshments.

How long should a HH Party last?

HH Parties commonly last between 1 and 2 hours, but this is very flexible.

How many people usually attend a HH Party?

It's up to you! Generally, between 5 and 15 people, but this is also flexible. Even two people talking about the issues and getting involved can help make a difference.

Do I have to get permission to throw a HH Party?

No, but Clean and Healthy New York likes to stay informed about who is using these materials and keep records for our supporters. We would like to know when you held your party, your topic, and the number of guests.

What do I do if a guest asks a question that I cannot answer?

It is very common for guests and hosts to have questions that the scientists have yet to answer. We encourage using the enclosed fact sheets and resource websites during a party to answer any questions that may arise. If you can't find an answer, please email us at info@cleanhealthyny.org!

Can I charge admission to a HH Party?

No, but if you'd like to collect donations for Clean and Healthy New York at your party, please see the Healthy Homecoming Fundraising Tips on the Healthy Homecoming website.

Do I need to send anything to CHNY after the Party?

We would love to get feedback and pictures from your party! We would appreciate any means you choose of sending them our way. We would also like to keep in touch with folks who want to know more or get more involved, so please send along any contact information you collect. For example, the guest surveys, contact information, and photos can be mailed to 62 Grand St, Albany, NY 12207 or emailed to info@cleanhealthyny.org.



Background Information

As consumers, many of us use soap, lotion, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, shaving cream, and other body care products on a daily basis. This collective daily exposure to multiple products, many of which contain one or more potentially harmful ingredients, is cause for concern. However, the booming cosmetics industry can use most chemicals as ingredients without testing for health problems, or monitoring for effects, using insufficient labeling.

The Food and Drug Administration does not approve or review products prior to their use by consumers. Instead, cosmetics companies are a self-regulating industry.

The FDA has banned or restricted the use of only 11 ingredients in personal care products sold in the United States.

By contrast, the European Union's Cosmetics Directive (76/768/EEC) bans more than 1,300 ingredients for use in body care products. Using the precautionary approach, the European Union outlaws chemicals linked to cancer and other human health problems. Product manufacturers have responded by removing dangerous chemicals from their European lines, but not necessarily those sold in the US.

In the US, in the absence of strong FDA regulation, the non-profit Campaign for Safe

Cosmetics has helped drive safer products in some parts of the personal care market. Over 100 health and environmental organizations have worked together since the Campaign's formation in 2002 to work for "government regulation over the cosmetics industry and safer personal care products for people and the planet."



The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics' "Compact for Safe Cosmetics" asks companies to pledge to meet or exceed the standards outlined in the EU Cosmetics Directive and provide more information to consumers about their products. To date, more than 1,300 companies have signed

the Compact.

Shopping the body care aisle can be a confusing task amidst all of the claims of "natural," "green," "healthy," "hypoallergenic," "gentle," and other advertisements. None of these words carries a guarantee of a safer product! You can cut through the confusion and learn about companies, chemicals, or products by choosing products from the Skin Deep online cosmetics database (www.cosmeticsdatabase.com). There are now over 50,000 products rated and 8,000 chemicals listed, with details about potential concerns, to help guide consumer choices.

You can find more information on chemicals to watch out for on the Skin Deep Database:

<http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/site/about.php>



Chemicals of Concern in Cosmetics

Parabens

Parabens are a group of chemicals used as a preservative in water-based body care products. In essence, they help our products stay fresher longer, allowing us to buy gigantic bottles of lotion and conditioner without worry of it spoiling before we use it up. Numerous recent scientific studies show that parabens can interfere with normal hormone function, mimic estrogen in the body and hurt our ability to have children. Parabens are sometimes found on ingredient lists, so you can avoid them by looking for “methylparaben,” “ethylparaben,” “propylparaben” or “butylparaben.” (Some products are labeled “paraben-free,” too!)

1,4 Dioxane & Formaldehyde

You won't find either of these on the label, since they are unintended byproducts. According to the EPA, both of these chemicals probably cause cancer in people, and they readily pass through the skin.

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission reports the presence of 1, 4 dioxane, even in trace amounts, as cause for concern. 1, 4-dioxane can be removed before the product is available to consumers, but despite its restriction in personal care products in the European Union and Canada, many manufacturers fail to take this step.

Formaldehyde is used to make preservatives, which can then break down over time, releasing the formaldehyde into products. Formaldehyde can also cause rashes, chemical sensitivity and other reactions. In the U.S. there is no limit on formaldehyde levels in body care products, no product testing requirements, and no obligation to list it on the label as a contaminant.

Without more protective policies, including better labeling requirements, we don't know for sure if these chemicals are in our products.

Formaldehyde may be in products containing quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin, imidazolidinyl urea and diazolidinyl urea. 1,4-dioxane may be in products containing PEG-100 stearate, sodium laureth sulfate, polyethylene and cetareth-20, or other ingredients with the suffix “-eth.”

Triclosan

This chemical is used to slow bacterial growth and is found in a wide range of antibacterial soaps, hand sanitizers, and other body care products. According to the EPA, triclosan is likely to cause cancer in people. Antibacterial soaps are in widespread use, but according to the Mayo Clinic, washing your hands with these agents is no more effective in killing germs than regular soaps. According to the Center for Disease Control, overuse of these chemicals can lead to antibacterial resistance, or ‘superbugs.’ Several studies show that triclosan is also toxic in the environment, particularly to aquatic life.

Phthalates

Phthalates are an oily chemical used to carry fragrances. Shampoos, lotions, and nail polishes are just a few of the personal care products that can contain phthalates. One phthalate used in personal care products, dibutyl phthalate, was found in all 289 people tested by researchers at the Center for Disease Control. When phthalates get into our bodies, they can trigger asthma attacks and act like hormones, leading to a variety of reproductive problems. According to the Center for Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction, phthalates are linked to testicular atrophy, reduced sperm count, and defects in the structure of the penis. The US and European Union restricted the use of six phthalates in children's products. However, phthalates can still be found in fragrant body care products. Chemical fragrance formulas are tightly guarded, so phthalates need not be listed on labels.



References and Resources

About Regulation:

- Learn about FDA authority over cosmetics: <http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm074162.htm>
- Ingredients prohibited and restricted by FDA regulations are bithionol, chlorofluorocarbon propellants, chloroform, halogenated salicylanilides, methylene chloride, vinyl chloride, zirconium-containing complexes, and some cattle materials. Learn more here: <http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductandIngredientSafety/SelectedCosmeticIngredients/ucm127406.htm>
- EU Cosmetics Directive: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1976L0768:20080424:en:PDF>
- GovTrack.us. H.R. 4040: Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008. <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-4040>

About the Chemicals and Products:

- Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Cosmetic Safety Database:
 - Triclosan: <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/ingredient/706623/TRICLOSAN/>
 - Parabens: <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/ingredient.php?ingred06=704450>
 - http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=parabens+endocrine&as_sdt=2000000000&as_ylo=2008&as_vis=0
 - Formaldehyde: <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/ingredient/702500/FORMALDEHYDE/#>
 - 1,4-Dioxane: <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/ingredient.php?ingred06=726331#>
- Washing your hands with soap and water is preferable to using a triclosan-based product. EWG summarizes American Medical Association, FDA and other leading experts' statements on the issue: <http://www.ewg.org/node/26859>
- Environmental Health News on triclosan's build-up in dolphins. The story also quotes EPA's review of triclosan. <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/triclosan-and-dolphins>
- ATSDR Public Health Statement for 1,4-Dioxane: <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/phs187.html>
- ATSDR ToxFAQs for Formaldehyde: <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts111.html>
- Scientific Committee on Cosmetic Products and Non-Food Products: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/sccp/documents/out188_en.pdf
- Environmental Health News summarizes research about phthalates and other chemicals: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/bad-mix-exposures-safe-only-one-chemical-at-a-time/>
- A good overview of the problems of toxic chemicals in body care products: Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry, by Stacey Malkan, New Society Publishers.



Talking Points

The story:

- Cosmetics and body care products are not federally regulated before being sold.
- Industry regulates these products through their own standards.
- The European Union protects people with a Cosmetics Directive, which has banned more than 1,300 ingredients for use in body care products; only 11 are banned or restricted in the US.
- As a result, some companies offer safer products in the EU and continue to sell toxic products to Americans and the rest of the world.
- Body care products commonly contain chemicals that disrupt natural hormones and can result in reproductive problems.
- In an effort to solve the problem, work by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics has resulted in more than 1,300 companies signing the Compact for Safe Cosmetics.
- Improvements in manufacturer and government policy can reduce the use of toxic ingredients in body care products.

What to watch out for:

Parabens

- Used as a preservative in water-based body care.
- Known to mimic estrogen. Linked to hormone disruption and reproductive problems.
- Sometimes found on ingredient list, so they can be avoided. Look for them listed as “methylparaben,” “ethylparaben,” “propylparaben,” or “butylparaben.”

Triclosan

- Slows the growth of bacteria.
- Studies show it is no more effective in killing germs than washing with regular soap and water, and can lead to antibacterial resistance.
- Triclosan is toxic to fish and other animals that live in water.
- Found mainly in products such as soaps, toothpaste, shaving creams, and deodorants.



1,4 –Dioxane & Formaldehyde

- You won't find these on the label; they are byproducts of manufacturing and storage.
- 1, 4-dioxane can be removed at the end of manufacture, but rarely is.
- Formaldehyde is used to make certain preservatives, which can change over time, releasing formaldehyde into our products.
- Both of these chemicals probably cause cancer and readily pass through the skin.
- They may be in products containing quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin, imidazolidinyl urea and diazolidinyl urea (may have formaldehyde) PEG-100 stearate, sodium laureth sulfate, polyethylene and cetareth-20, or other ingredients with the suffix “-eth” (may have 1,4 dioxane).

Phthalates

- Some regulation in children's products, but still used in many body care products.
- Used to carry fragrances.
- Linked to disrupting hormone systems and reproductive problems.
- Since fragrance information is proprietary and protected from disclosure under trade secrets, phthalates are rarely listed on the label.

What you can do:

To protect yourself and your family:

- Choose products with full ingredient disclosure when possible.
- Avoid products with “fragrance,” since this one word can represent hundreds of chemicals, including phthalates.
- If you find a chemical of concern in the ingredients, call the company and ask them to use safer alternatives. Look for toll-free numbers on the label.
- Patronize companies that have signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics (<http://www.safecosmetics.org/downloads/Compact-Signers-Oct08.pdf>)
- Use the SkinDeep database to check your products: www.cosmeticsdatabase.org
- Make your own cosmetics (see the Informational Handout).

To help change the marketplace:

- When you call product makers, ask them if they sell products in Europe. If they do, ask them to sell matching products in the US. If they use toxic ingredients, ask them when they will be removing these from their products.
- Encourage companies (and local retailers) to sign the Compact for Safe Cosmetics.
- Contact Clean and Healthy New York for other ways to get involved.



Group Activities

As your guests arrive, start by talking about the basics of the issue using your background knowledge and the talking points. Then, these group activities are a great way of encouraging your guests to get involved and understand how their actions can make a difference. Choose one or more:

- Do a purse check: guess who has the most/fewest personal care products in their purse, and then look some up on the safe cosmetics database to identify those that are particularly dangerous and those that are safer (www.cosmeticsdatabase.com).
- Guess the number of body care products you use on a daily basis (don't forget to include make-up, things in the shower, lotions, deodorants, tooth care, etc). Talk about places you have taken action to reduce the toxins in your life.
- Ask guests to bring a body care product, check for ingredients of concern at www.cosmeticsdatabase.com, and discuss safer alternatives.
- Watch *Contaminated Without Consent* to learn about the importance of these issues (<http://www.contaminatedwithoutconsent.org/>).
- Are there stores in your community that sell natural or alternative products? If so, have everyone brainstorm a list. Be sure to thank the stores next time you shop. Would these stores appreciate hearing about your Home Safe Home Party, hosting future parties, or be a good source of information about available alternatives?
- Make your own products! Choose one of the recipes below or find another on the internet (but be sure to test it before the party):

Herbal Spa Wrap

- 1 cup corn oil
- 1/2 cup grapefruit juice
- 1 tsp. dried thyme

Preparation: Combine ingredients and massage into skin, wrap arm with towel to lock in body heat. Lay a heating pad over areas for five minutes at a time. Rinse.

Rosemary Salt Bath

- 1/4 cup fresh rosemary
- Cheesecloth
- String
- 1 cup Epsom salts

Preparation: Put rosemary in a square of cheesecloth and tie it with a length of string. Add Epsom salts and rosemary pouch to warm bath, climb in, and soak. Rinse.

Maple Sugar Body Polish

- 1 1/2 cups raw or brown sugar
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/3 cup olive oil

Preparation: In a container with lid, mix ingredients well. Apply to wet skin in a circular scrub motion. Rinse.



Taking Action

An important part of any educational party is that your guests stay involved and share their new knowledge. Here are some ways your guests can take action to further spread the word and make a difference.

- Write a letter to the editor voicing your concerns about this topic. We have included an outline and an example letter. Be sure to tell your personal story in your letters.
- Write or call the manufacturer of a body care product. Ask them not to include toxic chemicals in any body care products they make. Look for a mailing address or an 800 number on the product or packaging.

Letter to the Editor

1. Look for details on how to submit your letter in the opinions section of your paper.
2. Keep your letter to 250 words or less.
3. Never be rude or inappropriate (not that you would be!)
4. Always include your name, address, and phone or e-mail for verification.

Outline:

- If possible, start your letter by mentioning a related health or environmental issue recently covered in the paper.
- Mention the issue you are concerned about.
- State what you are asking for (ex: manufacturers to make safer products, etc).
- Tell why this issue matters to you.
- Close your letter with a point you would like readers to remember.

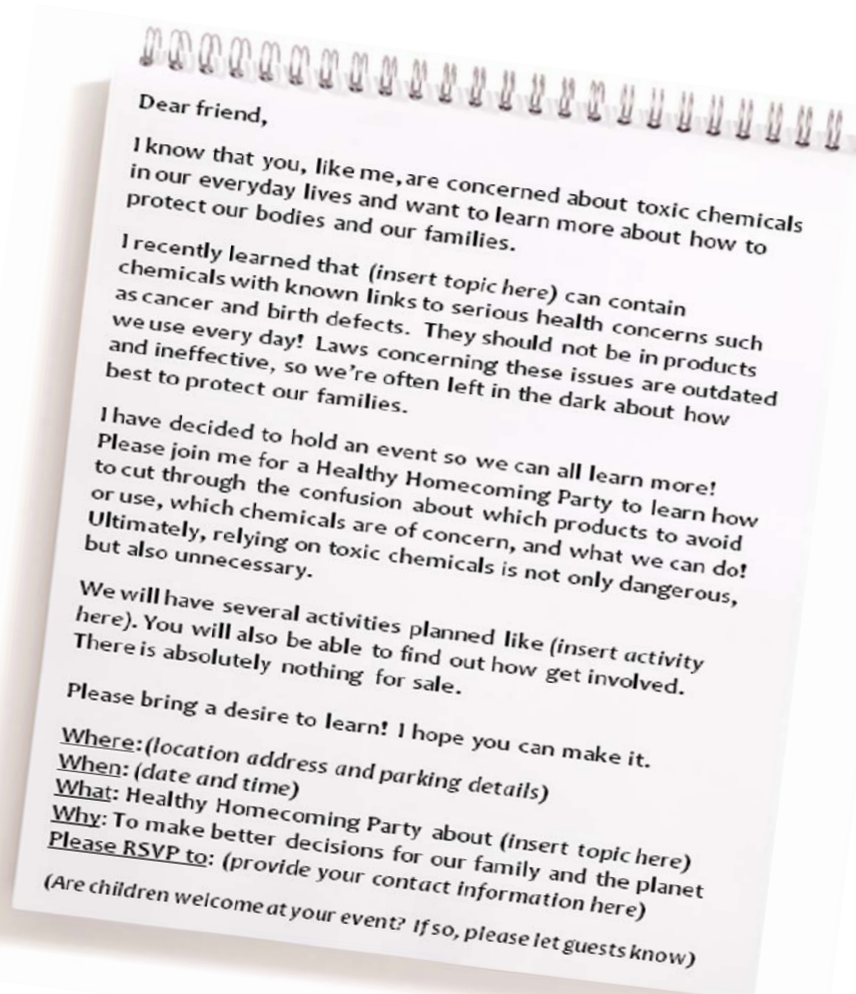




Preparation Materials

Sample Invite

To invite your friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors to your Healthy Homecoming Party, you may want to try several different approaches, such as e-mail, paper-mail, a telephone call, or a chance encounter in the grocery store. If you are searching for the text of a written invitation, here is an example.



Sample Party Flyer

Hanging flyers on bulletin boards can be an effective way to advertise and connect with neighbors. Here is an example flyer. A digital, editable version of this flyer is available on the Healthy Homecoming Party website.



Sample Media Advisory

Local news sources often like to report on how their readers are working towards making a stronger community. Stories that feature Healthy Homecoming Parties greatly enhance the effect of the event. Feel free to distribute a media advisory to your local newspaper, television station, or radio station to increase the reach of your efforts. Here is the basic format for a media advisory to get you started.

MEDIA ADVISORY

Title (Ex: Join Us to Learn about Chemicals in Products)

Date of event

WHAT: A brief description of the event (topic covered, purpose, etc)

WHEN: Day of week, full date, time of day

WHERE: Name of building (street address, room number)

CONTACT: Local: List name, phone number, and e-mail address (if appropriate). State-level: Clean & Healthy NY, www.cleanhealthyny.org

DETAILS: (OPTIONAL) Can include information about: who the event is targeted toward, the event goal, parking information, or anything else that the audience needs to know.





Party Materials

As you prepare for your party, we have provided you with a checklist of things to gather, print, or set up to ensure your party runs smoothly. Be sure to print enough copies of the items in *italics* before your party begins.

Supplies Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Guest sign in sheet</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Paper and pencils for guests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Fact sheets for guests</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and/or drink |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Guest Surveys</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera to take pictures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name tags | <input type="checkbox"/> Video player, if using |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sample product display tables | <input type="checkbox"/> Addresses or phone numbers to write or call |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer with internet, if using | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ingredients for recipes, if using (including containers) | |

Planning notes:



Healthy Homecoming Sign In Sheet

Clean and Healthy New York works to advance broad policy and market changes to protect people and communities from toxic chemicals. *Your support will help us:*

- Advance policy and market campaigns that remove dangerous, unnecessary chemicals from commerce.
- Promote healthy products, economic approaches, and solutions.
- Educate and empower individuals to engage in campaigns for environmental health and justice.

Please add your voice to the call for environmental health by checking the box below. We will update you via email. Clean and Healthy New York does not share lists.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Street Address, City, State, Zip Code</i>	<i>Phone Number (with area code)</i>	<i>E-mail Address</i>	<i>Contact me</i>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>



Healthy Homecoming Guest Survey

Name (if willing): _____

Presenter: _____ Host (if different): _____

Date: _____ Location: _____

First, please give us some quick feedback on the presentation.

<i>I learned</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> some	<input type="checkbox"/> not much	<i>from this presentation</i>
<i>I had</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot of	<input type="checkbox"/> some	<input type="checkbox"/> not much	<i>fun today</i>
<i>The presentation gave</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> too much	<input type="checkbox"/> just right	<input type="checkbox"/> not enough	<i>information</i>
<i>The handout had</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> too much	<input type="checkbox"/> just right	<input type="checkbox"/> not enough	<i>information</i>
<i>Based on what I learned today, I plan to make</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot of	<input type="checkbox"/> some	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<i>different purchasing decisions</i>

Please list three changes you plan to make in your personal purchasing decisions:

Please suggest two ways we could improve the presentation:

Based on the presentation and activities, I would (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Host a similar event	<input type="checkbox"/> Organize in-district meeting with officials
<input type="checkbox"/> Join an e-mail list for more information	<input type="checkbox"/> Collect postcards
<input type="checkbox"/> Join an action alert list	<input type="checkbox"/> Work on local issues
<input type="checkbox"/> Call my elected officials	<input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter to the editor
<input type="checkbox"/> Come to Albany to meet with policymakers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Other thoughts?



Coming Home to Healthy Body Care Products

The Problem

The booming cosmetics industry can use most chemicals with no safety testing, no monitoring of effects, and insufficient labeling. The Food and Drug Administration does not approve or review products prior to their use by consumers. Instead, producers regulate their own products.

Out of concern for the environment and safety, the FDA has banned or restricted the use of 11 ingredients. In contrast, the European Union protects citizens with a Cosmetics Directive, which bans more than 1,300 ingredients for use in body care products. Using the precautionary approach, chemicals linked to cancer and other human health problems are prohibited. In the US, without strong FDA regulation, the non-profit Campaign for Safe Cosmetics has helped drive safer products in some parts of the personal care market.



What to Watch Out for:

Parabens: Used as a preservative in water-based personal care products to slow growth of bacteria. Known to mimic estrogen; linked to hormone disruption and reproductive problems.

Look for them in: most kinds of personal care products (including shampoo, conditioner and lotion), sometimes with a prefix like “methyl-“ or “butyl-“

Triclosan: Used to slow bacterial growth. Studies show it is no more effective in keeping germs from spreading than ordinary soaps, and can lead to resistant bacteria. Triclosan can harm fish and other animals that live in lakes, streams, and oceans.

Look for it in: hand soap, dish detergent, hand sanitizer, and other antibacterial products.

1,4 –Dioxane & Formaldehyde: You won't find these on the label, since they are byproducts of manufacturing. According to the EPA, these chemicals probably cause cancer. They readily penetrate the skin.

Look for them in: Products containing quaternium-15, DMDM hydantoin, imidazolidinyl urea and diazolidinyl urea (may have formaldehyde) PEG-100 stearate, sodium laureth sulfate, polyethylene and cetareth-20 (may have 1,4-dioxane).

Phthalates: Partially regulated in children's products, but still unregulated in personal care products. Used to bind fragrances or colorings. Since fragrance information is proprietary and protected from disclosure under trade secrets, phthalates are rarely listed on the label. Linked to disruption of hormonal systems and reproductive dysfunction.

Look for them in: products with fragrance on the label; phthalates won't appear as an ingredient.

What Can I Do?

- Choose products with full ingredient disclosure.
- Avoid products with artificial fragrances, which may contain phthalates.
- If you find a chemical of concern in the ingredients, call and ask them to use safer alternatives. Look for toll-free numbers on the label.
- Buy from companies that have signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics (<http://www.safecosmetics.org/downloads/Compact-Signers-Oct08.pdf>)
- Use the SkinDeep database to see how your products rank: www.cosmeticsdatabase.com
- Make your own cosmetics! You can find many more recipes on the sites listed below.
 - Add milk, baking powder, or Epsom salts to your bath to soothe skin. Add fresh herbs for scent.
 - Use naturally abrasive products like salt, sugar, or ground oatmeal for face or body scrubs. Mix with oil, maple syrup, or honey for application.
 - Moisturize and condition hair with mayonnaise or yogurt. Apply, cover in plastic, and rinse after 15 minutes.
- Host your own Healthy Homecoming party! Find out how at www.cleanhealthyny.org/hhparty.html

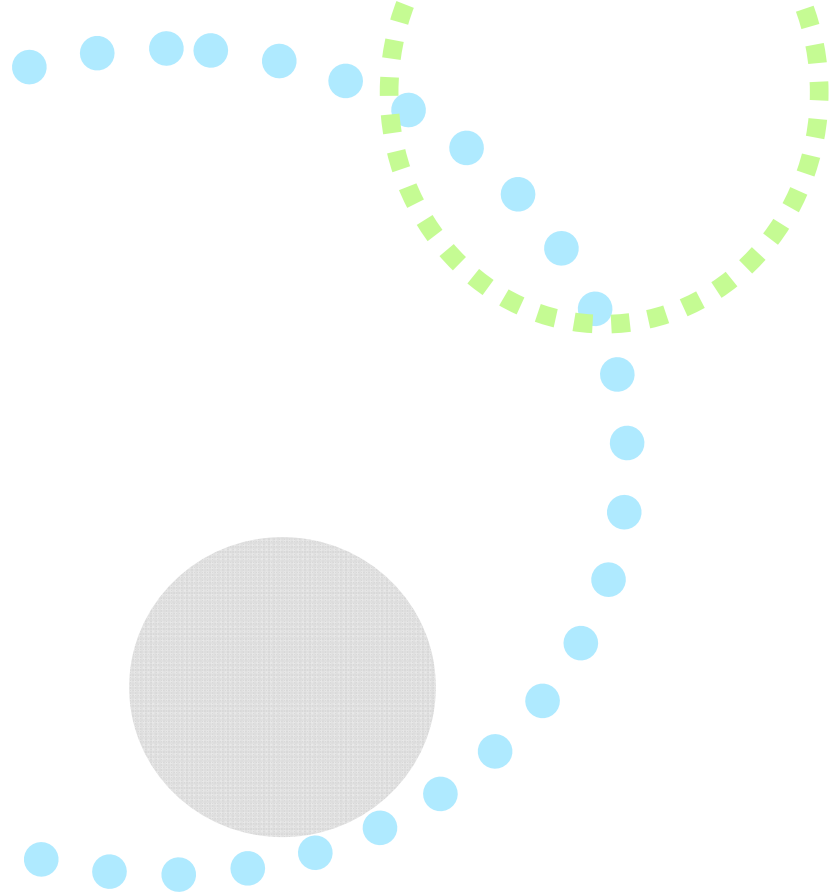


For More Information:

- Campaign for Safe Cosmetics: www.safecosmetics.org
- FDA Cosmetics Page (including info on FDA authority and restricted ingredients): <http://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/>
- European Union Cosmetics Directive: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1976L0768:20080424:en:PDF>
- Guide to Less Toxic Products (includes recipes): <http://www.lesstoxicguide.ca/>
- Skin Deep Database: <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/> (search for specific chemicals).
 - Safer Shopping Tips: <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/tips.php>
- *Not Just a Pretty Face: the Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry* by Stacy Malkan

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