

Hair-raising study finds hazardous chemicals in black beauty products

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New research has found that hair care products could be exposing black women to dozens of hormone-disrupting chemicals.

New research has found that black women could be exposed to dozens of hormone-disrupting chemicals through the use of certain hair products.

Carried out by scientists at Silent Spring Institute in the U.S., the study is the first to measure the concentrations of endocrine-disrupting chemicals - which interfere with the body's hormones - in a variety of hair products marketed at black women.

The team looked at 18 different hair products including hot oil treatments, anti-frizz hair polishes, leave-in conditioners, root stimulators, hair lotions and hair relaxers.

Beauty products can have seriously ugly side-effects

The products you put on your body need to be treated with caution

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The researchers tested each product for the presence and level of 66 endocrine disruptors that are associated with a variety of health problems including reproductive disorders, birth defects, asthma and cancer.

They found that the products contained a total of 45 endocrine disruptors, with each product containing anywhere between six and 30 of the chemicals tested for in the study.

All of the products contained fragrance chemicals and 78% contained parabens - preservatives commonly found in cosmetic products which have been shown to be endocrine-disruptors.

Nonylphenols and diethyl phthalate were also commonly found in root stimulators, hair lotions and hair relaxers, and cyclosiloxanes were found more frequently in anti-frizz products.

Eleven products also contained seven chemicals that were prohibited in the European Union (EU) or regulated under California's Proposition 65, and hair relaxers marketed at children contained the highest levels of five chemicals prohibited in the EU or regulated under Proposition 65.

40% of clippers at township barbers contaminated with blood: study

Researchers flag possible public health risk after hepatitis B virus found on township barber clippers

The team also found that 84% of chemicals detected were not listed on the product label, with co-author Robin Dodson explaining that, "unfortunately, companies aren't required to disclose everything that's in their products, so it's hard for consumers to make informed choices."

The researchers noted that the chemicals found in the study are also present in other personal care and beauty products. However, the levels found in the products for black women were generally higher, which the researchers say could potentially explain why black women have higher exposures to hazardous chemicals than other groups.

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"Chemicals in hair products, and beauty products in general, are mostly untested and largely unregulated," says lead author Jessica Helm. "This study is a first step toward uncovering what harmful substances are in products frequently used by black women, so we can better understand what's driving some of the health issues they're facing."

Helm is now advising consumers to reduce the number of products they use, look for products that say "paraben-free" or "fragrance-free" on the label, and choose products that are plant-based or made with organic ingredients.

The results can be found online in the journal [Environmental Research](#).

