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Carcinogenic 1,4-Dioxane Found in Leading "Organic" Brand Personal Care Products

USDA CERTIFIED PRODUCTS TEST DIOXANE-FREE

ANAHEIM, CA - A newly released study commissioned by the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), a watchdog group with over 500,000 members, and overseen by environmental health consumer advocate David Steinman (author of *The Safe Shopper's Bible*), analyzes leading "natural" and "organic" brand shampoos, body washes, lotions and other personal care products for the presence of the undisclosed carcinogenic contaminant 1,4-Dioxane. A reputable third-party laboratory known for rigorous testing and chain-of-custody protocols, performed all testing.

Ethoxylation, a cheap short-cut companies use to provide mildness to harsh ingredients, requires the use of the cancer-causing petrochemical Ethylene Oxide, which generates 1,4-Dioxane as a by-product. 1,4-Dioxane is considered a chemical "known to the State of California to cause cancer" under proposition 65, and has no place in "natural" or "organic" branded personal care products. 1,4-dioxane is also suspected as a kidney toxicant, neurotoxicant and respiratory toxicant, among others, according to the California EPA, and is a leading groundwater contaminant. Although previous studies have revealed 1,4-Dioxane is often present in conventional personal care products, this new study indicates the toxin is also present in leading "natural" and "organic" branded products, none of which are certified under the USDA National Organic Program. The products/brands tested are listed on the attached page with the level of 1,4-Dioxane detected, if any, along with ethoxylated ingredients listed on the label.

Some of the Leading Brands Found to Contain 1,4-Dioxane: JASON Pure Natural & Organic; Giovanni Organic Cosmetics; Kiss My Face; Nature's Gate Organics. Please see attached sheet for full listing.

Both the OCA and Steinman are calling for misleadingly labeled "Organic(s)" brands which include ethoxylate ingredients or otherwise utilize petrochemicals in their ingredients, to drop all organic claims from their branding and labeling. "The practice of ethoxylating ingredients or using other petroleum compounds must end for natural personal care, and is that much more outrageous in so-called 'organics' brand products," says Ronnie Cummins, Executive Director of the OCA. *(over)*

"At a time when our nation is dangerously dependent on foreign oil and attempting to wean itself off unnecessary dependence on petroleum-based ingredients in major consumer products for national security reasons, it is self-defeating that we are literally bathing ourselves and our children in toxic petroleum compounds," says Steinman. "But consumers should also take heart in the emergence of a growing number of companies who've received the message and who are seeking to completely avoid petrochemicals in their cosmetic and personal care products. Your best bet is to purchase products whose ingredients you can pronounce or better yet are certified under the USDA National Organic Program."

Brands Found not to Contain 1,4-Dioxane: All USDA Certified brands tested in this study were 1,4-Dioxane-free, including: Dr. Bronner's, Sensibility Soaps (Nourish), Terressentials. All German Natural "BDIH" Certified brands tested were found to be 1,4-Dioxane-free: Aubrey Organics, Dr. Hauschka. See attached sheet for full listing.

A visit to any health food store unfortunately reveals the majority of products in the personal care section with "organic" brand claims are not USDA certified, and contain only cheap water extracts of organic herbs and maybe a few other token organic ingredients for organic veneer. The core of such products are composed of conventional synthetic cleansers and conditioning ingredients usually made in part with petrochemicals. According to market statistics, consumers are willing to pay significantly more for products branded "natural" or "organic" which they believe do not contain petrochemical-modified ingredients or toxic contaminants like 1,4-Dioxane.

To avoid 1,4-Dioxane, the OCA urges consumers to search ingredient lists for indications of ethoxylation including: "myreth," "oleth," "laureth," "cetareth," any other "eth," "PEG," "polyethylene," "polyethylene glycol," "polyoxyethylene," or "oxynol," in ingredient names. In general, the OCA urges consumers to avoid products with unpronounceable ingredients. "When it comes to misbranding organic personal care products in the US, it's almost complete anarchy and buyer beware unless the product is certified under the USDA National Organic Program," says Cummins.

The study builds on the extensive survey conducted by Steinman for his book *Safe Trip to Eden* (Perseus Books 2007), in association with the **Campaign for Safe Cosmetics**, the **Breast Cancer Fund** and the **Environmental Working Group**, which found that many mainstream children's bubble bath and shampoo products contain dangerous amounts of this undisclosed carcinogen.

Further Resources:

OCA's "Coming Clean" Campaign: www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/

Campaign for Safe Cosmetics: www.safecosmetics.org/newsroom/press.cfm?pressReleaseID=21

FDA: www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/cos-hdb3.html