
Environmental Justice

Session 3: Beauty Justice



Journaling Exercise

- What do you think about, when you think about beauty?
- What do you think about, when you think about personal care for your physical body and mind?
- It is a relatively new term, but what comes to mind when you hear the phrase *Beauty Justice*?
- Have you ever felt any social pressure (from friends, family, media, etc.) when it comes to personal appearance and/or beauty standards and norms? Has that ever influenced your decision making?

INTRODUCTION TO TOXIC PRODUCTS: THE STORY OF COSMETICS

<https://youtu.be/pfq000AF1i8>

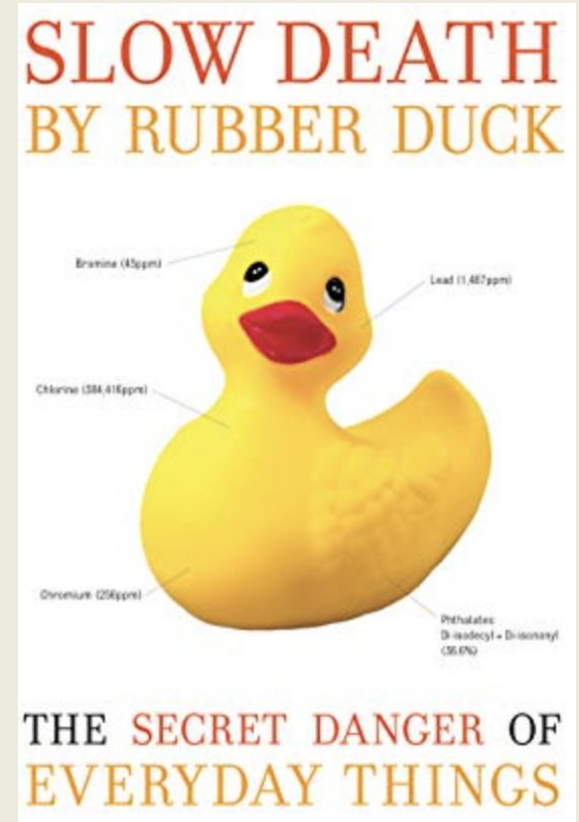
The video:

- 1) What surprised you from the video?
- 2) What do you think are some solutions to this problem?
- 3) What most interests you?

COMMON PRODUCT EXPOSURES

Cosmetics &
personal care
products

Children's toys
Household
products

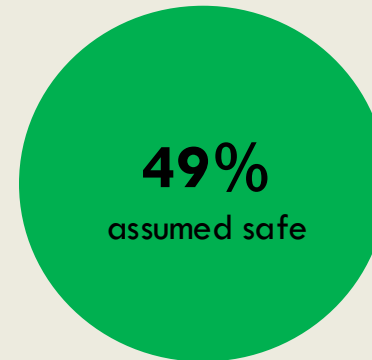


Toxic chemicals are found in products thought to be innocuous. This is one of the major difficulties with communicating the risk of these products.

People Want Product Safety

A 2022 survey of n = 1,200 registered U.S. voters including Democrats, Republicans and Independents conducted by Lake Research Partners found:

- 49% of respondents thought that chemicals in food and consumer products have been tested for safety (but this is not the case)
- There was broad agreement that the government require products to be proven safe before they are put on the market. More than 90% of people support the requirement that products be proven safe, and 2/3 strongly agree with this requirement



Beauty Justice



Beauty Justice

According to the National Beauty Justice coalition, which is co-lead by WE ACT for Environmental Justice and California Black Health Network, **Beauty Justice is:**

- The right for all people to live in a society free of toxic chemical exposure from cosmetics and beauty products.
- The right for people of color to live in societies free of racialized beauty norms, and to be intentionally and actively protected against health disparities due to toxic beauty products.



Beauty Justice

The Problem. Toxic chemicals in beauty products marketed to people of color are harming our communities in two ways:

Toxic chemicals cause physical harm to our health

Racialized marketing of products causes social, psychological, and societal harm

The Solutions. Solutions to this problem fall into two categories, top-down and bottom-up solutions. Both types are necessary because top-down regulation alone is insufficient to solve the problem

Top-down solutions target legislation, regulation, sales, and availability of these products

Bottom-up solutions target the demand for the products, through social movements, public discussion, and education

WHAT IS THE ISSUE

- 1) We are **exposed to harmful chemicals** in everyday products
- 2) Harmful chemicals are not always listed on labels, and labels are hard to read
- 3) We need more **government oversight** of chemicals in cosmetics
- 4) Some of the most harmful chemicals are found in **products marketed to women of color**

RACISM IN THE BEAUTY INDUSTRY



- Cosmetics marketed to people of color have some of the most notoriously toxic ingredients
- Chemical hair straighteners and skin lighteners also reinforce racism, colonialism, colorism white supremacy
- Skin lighteners often contain **mercury** to block melanin production in the skin
- Hair straighteners often contain **formaldehyde** or formaldehyde-releasers



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NEWS RELEASES

Monday, October 17, 2022

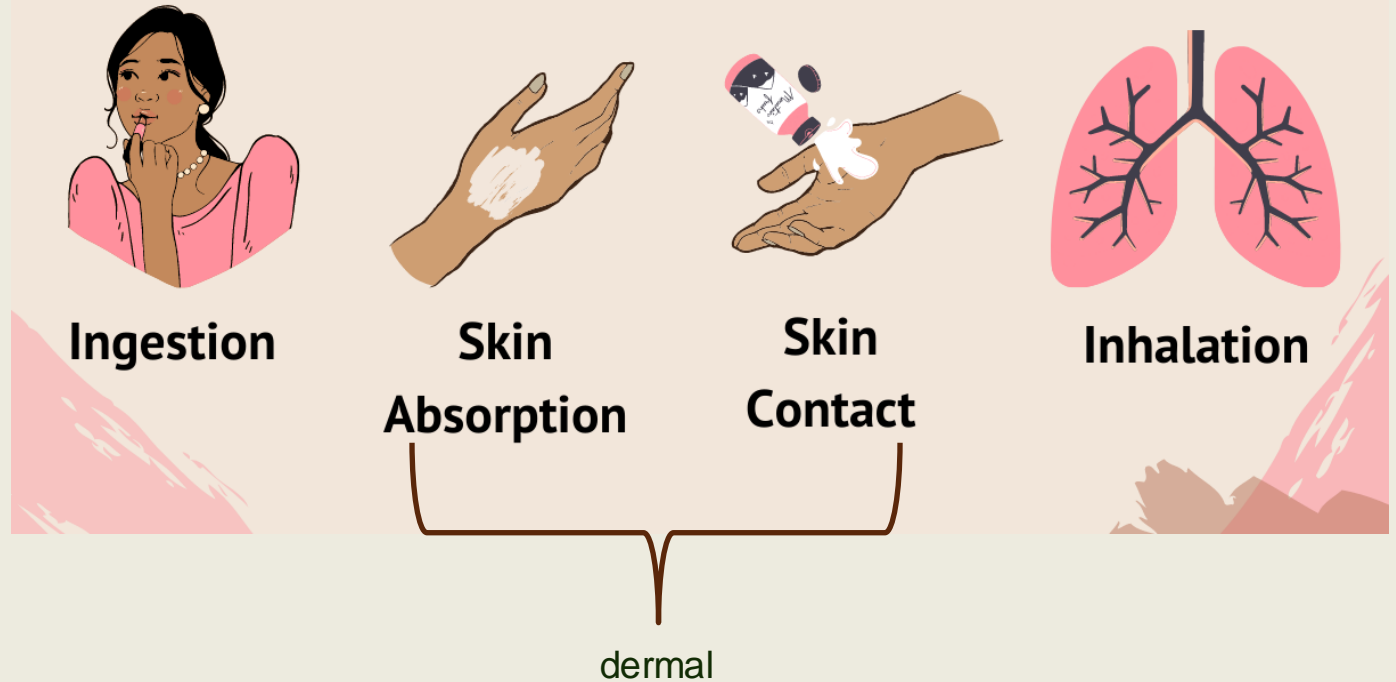
Hair straightening chemicals associated with higher uterine cancer risk

NIH study finds Black women may be more affected due to higher use.

ROUTES OF EXPOSURE

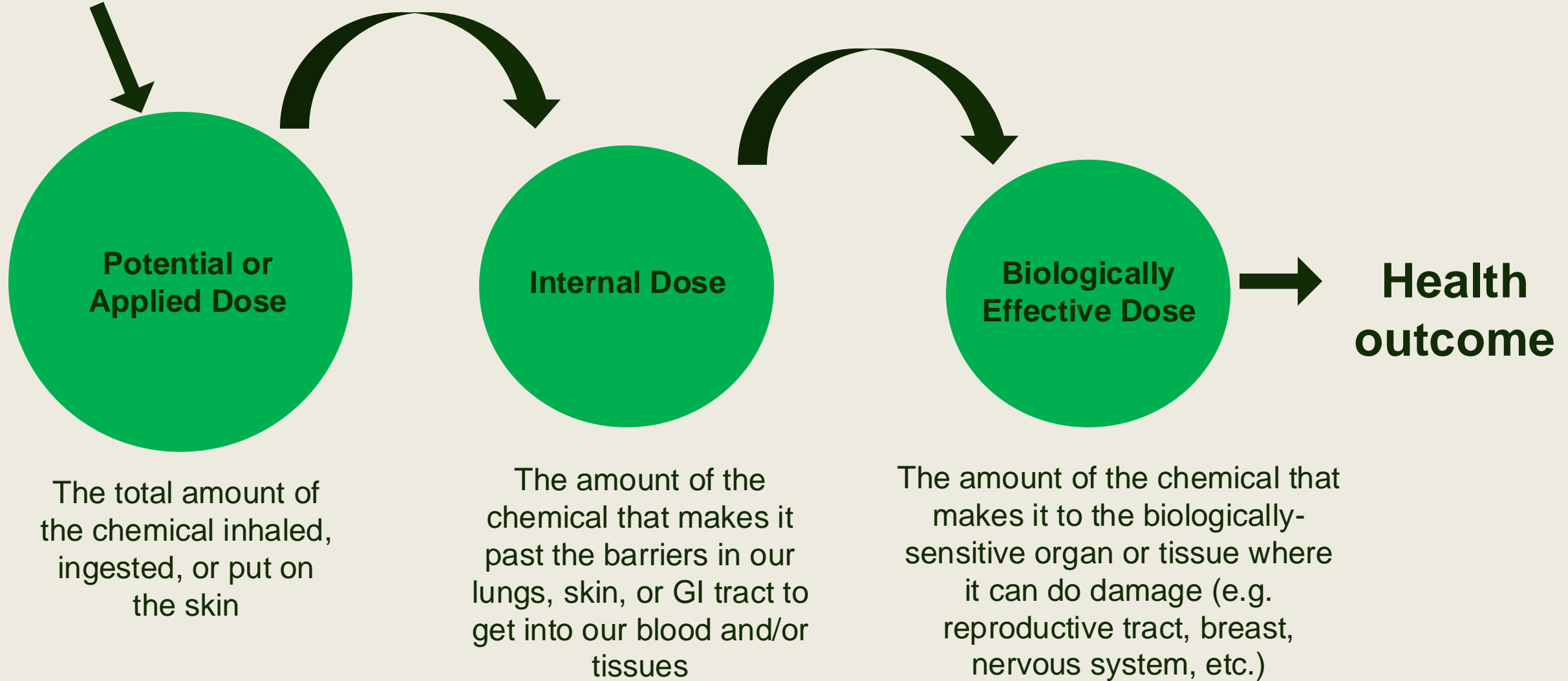
There are 3 primary routes of exposure to toxic substances: inhalation, ingestion, and dermal (i.e. skin) exposure

HOW AM I EXPOSED TO TOXIC CHEMICALS IN COSMETICS?



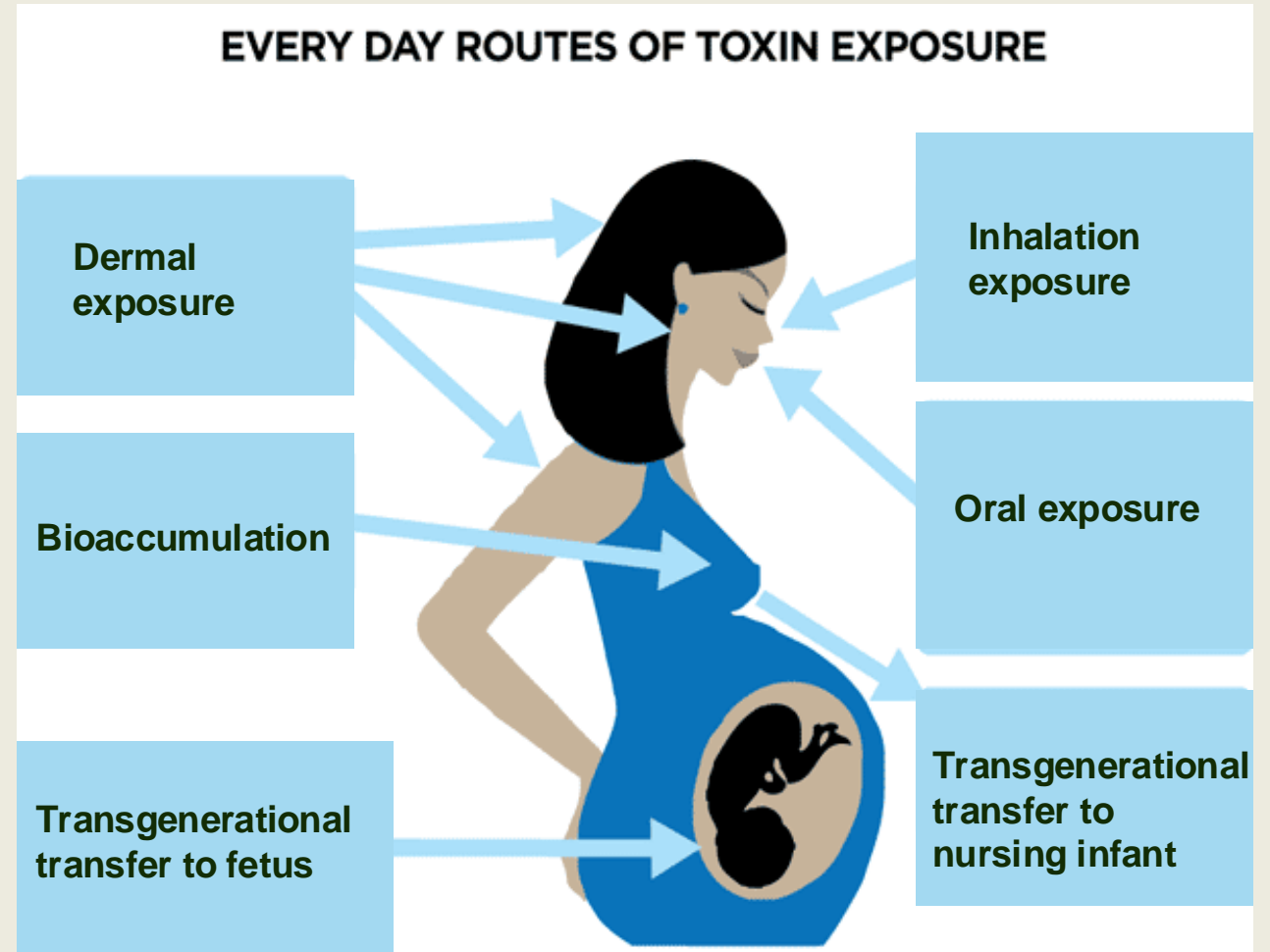
DOSE OF EXPOSURE

Chemical in our
environment or
products



ROUTES OF EXPOSURE

- Some chemicals can accumulate in the body, while other metabolize quickly
- Some chemicals are able to be passed from mother to fetus through the placenta, such as lead and mercury
- Some chemicals are able to be passed from mother to via breastfeeding



BIOACCUMULATION

If the rate of the chemical into the body is faster than the rate out, then it will start to accumulate in a process known as bioaccumulation



Bioaccumulation = the gradual accumulation of a chemical in an organism when the organism absorbs the chemical faster than it can be lost or eliminated by catabolism (i.e., breaking down the chemical) and excretion.

Bioaccumulation makes it very important to know how long a chemical will last in the body and how often we are exposed.

Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals

- The EPA estimates that the US population is **exposed to approximately 87,000 endocrine disrupting chemicals** potentially causing an increased risk of various pathologies including cancers (Eve et al.).
- According to the Endocrine Society, **Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs)**:
 - Block connections between hormones, including reproductive hormones such as estrogen and testosterone, and their receptors
 - They can mimic hormonal activity, thereby tricking a hormone receptor into action.
 - EDCs interfere with the normal function of hormonal systems.



International Journal of
Molecular Sciences



Review

Exposure to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals and Risk of Breast Cancer

Louisane Eve ^{1,2,3,4}, Béatrice Fervers ^{5,6}, Muriel Le Romancer ^{2,3,4,*} and Nelly Etienne-Selloum ^{1,7,8,*}

Let's pack our toiletries bag for a trip!

(What products do you use on a regular basis?)

Personal care product examples:


- Soap
- Shampoo
- Tampons

Beauty/Cosmetic product examples:

- Nail polish
- Blush
- Mascara


EXPLORE CHEMICALS IN OUR PRODUCTS

clearya.com





KEEP TOXIC
CHEMICALS OUT
OF YOUR HOME






Shop online as usual.
We'll alert you to toxic ingredients,
and help you find safe products.

 Add Clearya to Chrome

Or get the app





Use when shopping online at:



English ▾


☆ 🔍 ☰







Alerts Ingredients Discover


Banned or toxic

Methyl Methacrylate 

Potentially toxic


CI 73360 


Bis-PEG-12 Dimethicone Beeswax 

Sodium Laureth-12 Sulfate 

Potential allergens

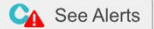
The following ingredients may or may not cause an allergic reaction, depending on your individual sensitivity.


Alpha-Isomethyl Ionone 

Linalool 

Gucci
Velvet Matte Lipstick

★★★★☆ 284 | Ask a question | ❤️ 94.9K





\$45.00 get it for **\$42.75 (5% Off)** with Auto-Replenish or 4 payments of \$11.25 with **Klarna**, or **afterpay** 

Color: 25* Goldie Red - the gucci red matte


Size 0.12 oz/ 3.5 g

Matte finish - Standard size






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for Standard Shipping

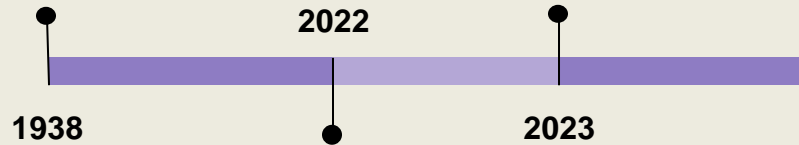


Regulation of the Beauty Industry



Cosmetics Laws in the US

Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDCA)



Modernization of Cosmetics Regulation Act (MOCRA)

Made necessary changes to the FDCA, which was enacted over 80 years ago.

Safer Beauty Bills Package

This package will implement additional necessary changes to MOCRA.



CURRENT FEDERAL REGULATION

MOCRA – *Modernization of Cosmetics Regulation Act of 2022*, was the first major reform in 80 years

The Good

- Serious adverse events (e.g., death, hospitalization, birth defects) now have to be reported to FDA
- Fragrance and flavor ingredients now reported to FDA

The Bad

- There are critical gaps in cosmetics safety regulation
- Adverse events not reported to the public
- According to the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, the new safety standard is weaker than the previous law
- Safety is based on toxicology and acute effects and not chronic disease
- Preempts states from enacting higher safety standards & adverse event reporting

WE ACT's Advocacy Efforts

International. Supported 2023 Amendment to the Minamata Convention on Mercury to ban advertising, display, sale, and offering of sales of mercury-added cosmetics, including skin lightening products. Will reintroduce in 2025.

Federal. Safer Beauty Bills Package

4 bills to address gaps in cosmetic safety, including:

- 1) Banning 11 of the most toxic chemicals
- 2) Fragrance ingredients disclosure
- 3) More supply chain transparency
- 4) Increase resources for research on exposure in communities of color and salon workers

NY State.

Passed: New law banning sale & offering for sale cosmetics and personal care products containing mercury.

2024 bills: Proposed ban on some of the most toxic chemicals from personal care products and menstrual products. (Will be reintroduced 2025)



SAFER BEAUTY BILLS PACKAGE



Toxic-Free Beauty Act



Cosmetic Fragrance and Flavor
Ingredient Right to Know Act



Cosmetic Safety for Communities of
Color and Professional Salon Workers
Act



Cosmetic Supply Chain Transparency
Act

- Four bills were introduced in Congress in 2021-2022 to make beauty and personal care products safer
- The bills were revised and reintroduced to congress May 2023
- The bills will likely be reintroduced in 2025

<https://www.bcpp.org/resource/safer-beauty-bill-package/>



The 11 Hazardous Chemicals in the Safer Beauty Bills Package Ban List

M-Phenylenediamine & O-Phenylenediamine

- Eye irritation, cancer, skin sensitization
- *Hair dyes, hair products*

Formaldehyde, Paraformaldehyde & Methylene Glycol

- Cancer, skin irritation, respiratory harm
- *Hair straightening products*

Quaternium-15

- Cancer, skin irritation, respiratory harm
- *Body wash, baby shampoo, hair products, makeup*

Isobutylparaben & Isopropylparaben

- Endocrine disruption, breast cancer, reproductive harm
- *Sunscreen, lotion, blush, hair products, eye liner*

Dibutyl Phthalate (DBP) & Diethylhexyl Phthalate (DEHP)

- Birth defects, breast cancer, endocrine disruption
- *Nail polish, fragrance*

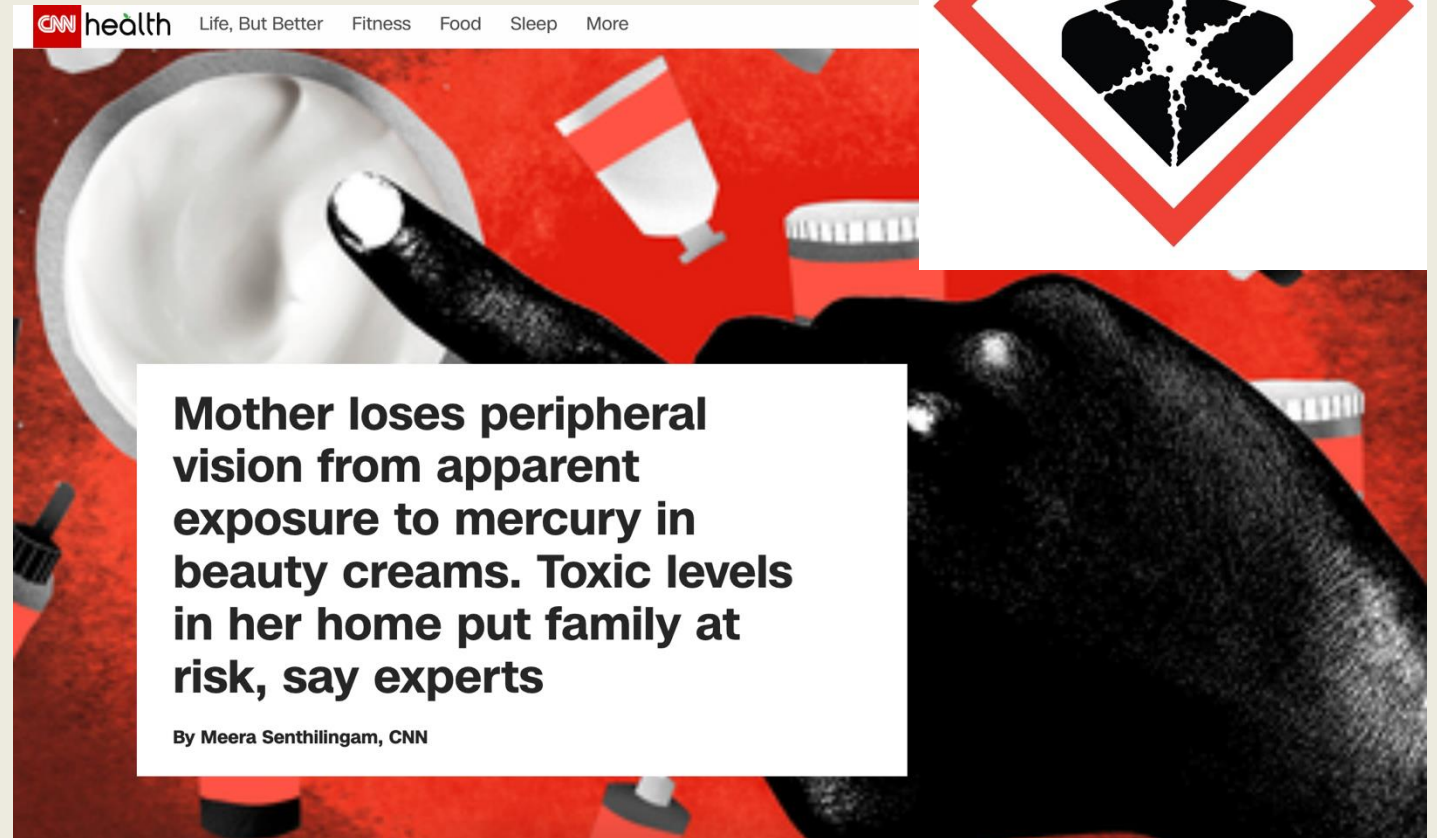
Mercury

- Neurotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, kidney damage, mercury poisoning
- *Skin lightening creams, germicidal soaps, lotions*

Sources: BCPP, CSC, NYC Dept of Health

DANGEROUS CHEMICALS TO BE BANNED

- **Mercury** is neurotoxin, meaning it is poisonous to the nervous system & this can manifest through various symptoms
- **Formaldehyde** is classified as a known human carcinogen



HAIR STRAIGHTENERS & CANCER



- n = 33,947 study participants with mean 10.9 yr. follow up
- 378 uterine cancer cases identified
- Using hair straighteners 4+ times a year at baseline was associated 2.55x higher risk of uterine cancer
- Previous studies have found that exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals from hair products can impact hormone sensitive cancers, including breast & ovarian cancer



JNCI J Natl Cancer Inst (2022) 114(12): djac165

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djac165>
First published online October 17, 2022
Article

Use of Straighteners and Other Hair Products and Incident Uterine Cancer

Che-Jung Chang, PhD ¹, Katie M. O'Brien, PhD,¹ Alexander P. Keil, PhD,² Symielle A. Gaston, PhD,¹ Chandra L. Jackson, PhD,^{1,3} Dale P. Sandler, PhD,¹ Alexandra J. White, PhD, MSPH ^{1,*}

Formaldehyde State Regulations

Minnesota	Banned formaldehyde-releasing chemicals from children's body products in 2013.
California, Maryland, & Washington	Banned formaldehyde releasing chemicals & other hazardous chemicals in cosmetics (effective Jan 1, 2025)
Oregon	Banned formaldehyde releasing chemicals & other hazardous chemicals from cosmetics in 2023.
Maine	Banned formaldehyde releasing chemicals & other hazardous chemicals in cosmetics (Jan 1, 2027)
New York (Bill A.6969/S.4265)	Did not pass. Would have banned the sale of personal care products that contain intentionally added formaldehyde & other hazardous chemicals.

Sources: California Legislative Information, Colorado General Assembly, Maine Legislature, Maryland.gov, Minnesota Legislature, NY State Senate, Washington Legislature

TOXIC PRODUCTS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Toxic products are widely available in storefronts and via online retailers with **harmful targeted marketing**

1-48 of over 2,000 results for "**hair relaxer**"

★★★★★ & Up
★★★★☆ & Up
★★★☆☆ & Up
★★☆☆☆ & Up

Brands

- ☐ Soft-Sheen Carson
- ☐ Hawaiian Silky
- ☐ Tcb
- ☐ Avlon
- ☐ Dr. Miracle's
- ☐ Luster's
- ☐ African Pride
- [See more](#)

Price

Results

Amazon's Choice



Amazon's Choice



Chiki Halka Hair Relaxer Cream for Girls

\$20⁰⁰ (\$20.00/Count) Was: \$25.00

FREE delivery May 22 - Jun 13

Only 7 left in stock - order soon.



African Pride Dream Kids Olive Miracle Relaxer Regular - Contains Olive Oil, Helps...

1 Count (Pack of 1)

★★★★★ ~ 1,061

100+ viewed in past week



ORS Ors Olive Oil Girls Soft Curls No-lye Creme Texture Softening System Kit, 1 Ea, 1count

1 Count (Pack of 1)

★★★★☆ ~ 520

100+ viewed in past week

Targeted marketing includes young girls



Social Aspects of Beauty Justice



TOXIC BEAUTY PRODUCTS IN NORTHERN MANHATTAN



25% of all survey respondents reported using **skin lighteners** in their lifetimes; among Asian respondents, use was higher at **57%**.



44% of respondents reported using **chemical straighteners** in their lifetimes; among Non-Hispanic Black respondents, use was higher at **60%**.

297

Femme-identifying individuals and women were surveyed in nine NYC neighborhoods:

Edwards et al. (2023)
Environmental Justice

Respondents' perceptions that others believe straight hair or lighter skin confer benefits such as beauty, professionalism, or youth were associated with greater use of chemical straighteners and skin lighteners.



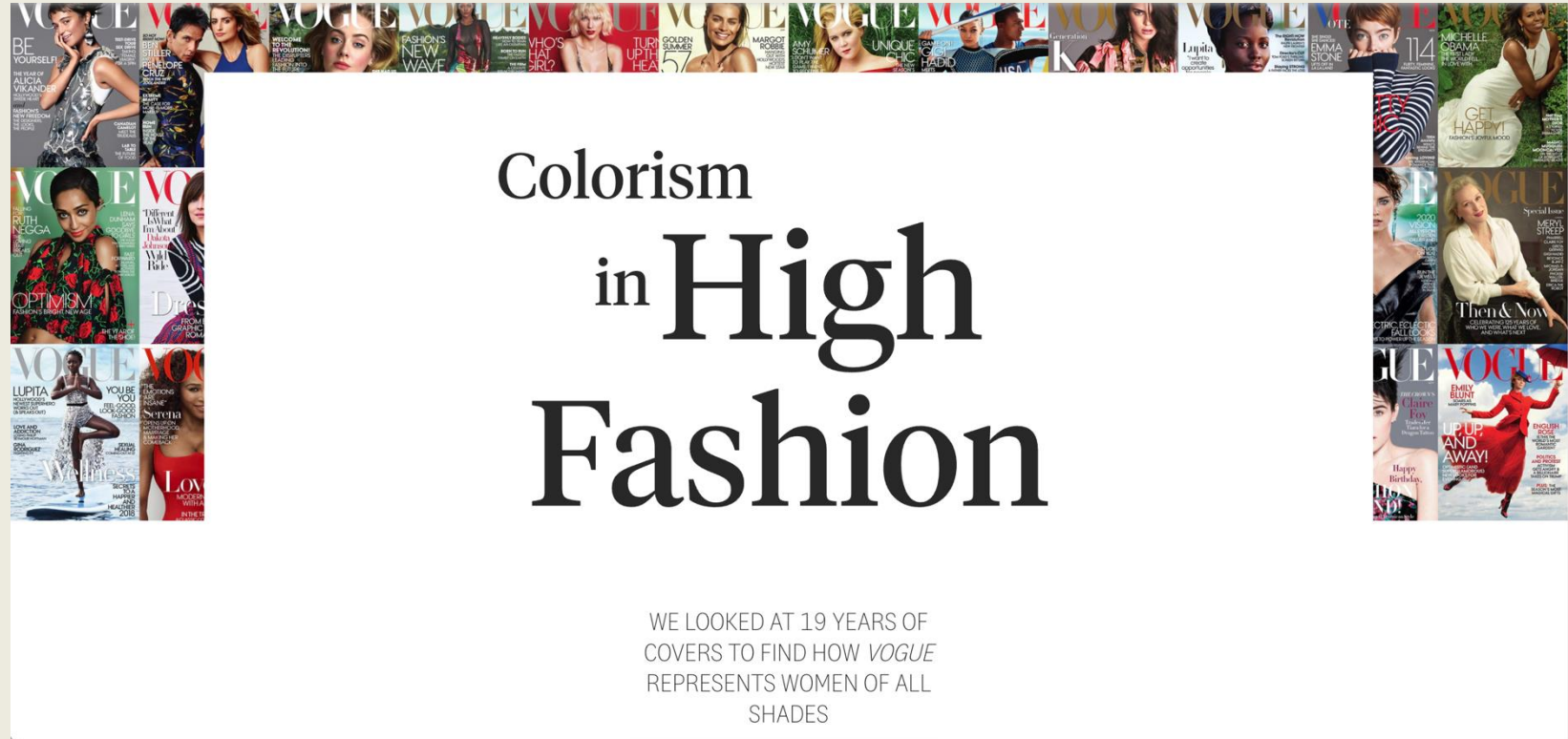
Our results show that racialized beauty norms can impact personal decisions to use skin lighteners and chemical hair straighteners

Colorism

- Colorism is discrimination based on skin color, which may happen within a racial or ethnic group
- Colorism is typically when individuals with darker skin are treated poorly relative to others with lighter skin, who experience more privilege due to lighter skin
- Colorism is also referred to as shadeism

Let's explore how this plays out in the media:

<https://pudding.cool/2019/04/vogue/>



TALK TO FRIENDS ABOUT TOXIC BEAUTY

Do you think it would be easy or difficult to discuss toxic products and racism in the beauty industry with friends?

Let's talk toxic chemicals & racism in the beauty industry...



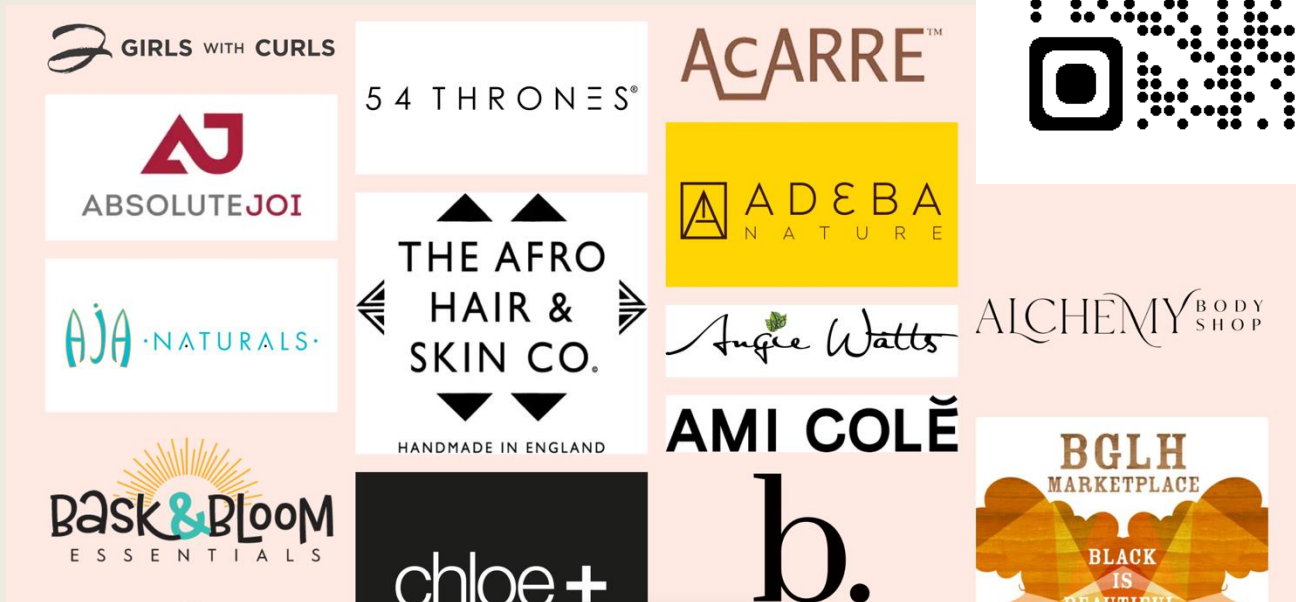
Need for A Diverse Lens & Intersectionality for Beauty Justice

Need to better understand and represent:

- Cultural complexity, both domestically and internationally, in Beauty Justice
- Generational differences and trans-generational impacts both in terms of impacts and social pressures
- The intersection of Beauty Justice, gender, and reproductive health impacts (especially for endocrine disrupting chemicals) and also needs to be inclusive for both femme- and masc-identifying individuals

Non-Toxic Black Beauty Project

“Black-owned beauty brands’ product ingredients are free of toxic chemicals, verified by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics”



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Group Assignment

Find three examples of Beauty Injustice from around the world and create a slide deck of 4-6 slides long summarizing the issue for a general audience