



EWG Analyzed Over One Thousand Personal Care Products Used by African-Americans

PRODUCTS OF INTEREST, TESTING

By LANA BECKETT, January 13, 2017

Environmental Working Group (EWG) reported that they had analyzed the ingredients in **1,177 beauty and personal care products marketed to Black women¹⁾**, and found that one in 12 was ranked highly hazardous on the scoring system of **EWG's Skin Deep® Cosmetics Database²⁾**. Skin Deep compares product ingredients to more than 60 toxicity and regulatory databases and scientific studies, and rates the products from 1 (lowest hazard) to 10 (highest hazard).

Black people make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population, but by one estimate, African-Americans' spending accounts for as much as 22 percent of the \$42 billion-a-year personal care products market, suggesting that they buy and use more of such products – including those with potentially harmful ingredients – than Americans as a whole.

The analysis also found:

- Fewer than one-fourth of the products marketed to Black women scored low in potentially hazardous ingredients, compared to about 40 percent of the items in Skin Deep® marketed to the general public. The percentage of products scored as "high hazard" was about the same for both market segments, but the disparity in products scored as "low hazard" suggests that there may be a narrower range of choices for safer-scoring products specifically marketed to Black women.
- Potential hazards linked to product ingredients include cancer, hormone disruption, developmental and reproductive damage, allergies and other adverse health effects.
- The worst-scoring products marketed to Black women were hair relaxers, and hair colors and bleaching products. Each of these categories had an average product score indicating high potential hazard.

- In the categories of hair relaxers, hair colors and bleaching products, lipsticks, and concealers, foundations and sun-protective makeup, none of the products analyzed were scored as "low hazard."

Resources for this article

1. 1,177 beauty and personal care products marketed to Black women

http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/search.php?black_women=products

2. EWG's Skin Deep® Cosmetics Database

<http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>