Pretty Poison

It’s time to face the ugly truth: Your cosmetics may be killing you.

September 3, 2010 By Margaret Rode

Lead in lipstick, mercury in mascara, who-knows-what in our latest must-have beautifier. Toxins come camouflaged in a variety of ways and cosmetics are no exception, says consumer advocate Stacy Malkan, author of *Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry*.

It’s a dirty little secret that the Food and Drug Administration neither pre-approves nor tests cosmetics. That’s left entirely to the companies themselves, meaning potential dangers can go unstudied.

So it’s up to you to get educated. Avoid the worst offenders, such as hair dyes and relaxers, nail polish removers and acrylics (the chemicals in their composition have been linked to cancer and reproductive complications). And opt for cosmetics that aren’t made using nanotechnologies.

Early studies show that some of these microscopic nanoparticles may be toxic. And because they can penetrate human cells unusually quickly and deeply, scientists are also concerned that nanoparticles might wreak havoc on the body.

Most important for your health, Malkan recommends keeping it simple: “Choose products with fewer ingredients and use few products overall.”

For more, visit cosmeticdatabase.com, which ranks more than 25,000 of the most toxic products. Remember: Your health is also a thing of beauty.

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