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HAIR OILS SAFETY FOR DRY AND CURLY HAIR TYPES

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There are many women and men who have very curly and dry hair types, which may require the use of additional moisture. The hair moisturizers which many people chose generally contain chemicals, which may be harmful to the skin and body.

I will provide information regarding the ingredients and chemicals, which may be found in popular hair care moisturizers, made for dry/curly hair types. In addition; I will discuss the side effects and some possible short and long-term consequences of utilizing some of the harmful chemicals, which are found in these products. The products have been evaluated by a consumer protection agency called the Environmental Working Group (EWG).

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a Washington, DC based consumer group, which reviews consumer products and foods for safety. EWG evaluates each product based on its' known effects and hazards on human's organs, reproductive organs, allergy/immune response, and environmental impact. The group also offers products, which are considered safe for use and ingestion. They rate products on a scale of 1-10, with 1 doing the least harm or being least hazardous and 10 doing the most harm or being the most hazardous. They utilize data from the USA, Canada and Europe's governmental safety groups.

Alternative and more natural hair moisturizing products /ingredients will be identified for use in the curly/dry hair types. These more natural products offer increased consumer safety as well as provide a low carbon footprint.

A very typical, common and popular hair moisturizer/cream, contains the following ingredients and chemicals with possible side effects and environmental concerns, as noted by the EWG:

- Petrolatum: A mix of hydrocarbons obtained from petroleum in a partially solid form. Used in hair and other moisturizing products. Organ system toxicity (non reproductive), contamination concerns (4)
- Mineral Oil: Hydrocarbons from petroleum in a liquid form. Used as a softening and moisturizing agent in lotions, hair oils and skin conditioners. Organ system toxicity (non reproductive). (1)

- **Fragrance:** Multiple chemicals used in perfumes and other products. Represented by an unspecified amount of different smells and scents, which generally contains diethyl phthalate, a chemical known to cause irritation to skin and the respiratory system. Allergies/immunotoxicity, (immune system) organ system toxicity, ecotoxicity (environment), irritation of skin, eyes and/or lungs. (8)
- **Lanolin:** A substance secreted in the skin of sheep and is repurposed for use as a conditioner in hair and skin care products. Allergies and immunotoxicity (1)
- **Lauric Acid:** A naturally occurring fatty acid found in coconut oil. None noted (0)
- **Ceresin:** A mixture of hydrocarbons in form of a waxy substance, which comes from a natural wax. Binds ingredients together by increasing thickness. Low hazard. (1)
- **Aluminum Stearate:** An aluminum salt used to stop products from caking up. Also used to thicken ingredients in products. Low hazard. (1)
- **D&C Green:** A chemically formed pigment, which may be made from natural and synthetic sources. Used to color cosmetics. Approved for limited in certain products. (3)

There are safe alternative/natural hair moisturizers/crèmes, which can be used instead of crèmes, laden with chemicals, which are harmful to the human body as well as to the environment. Some examples of natural hair crèmes/moisturizers are:

Raw, unrefined Shea Butter: Shea butter is extracted from the nuts of the Shea tree (*Butyrospermum parkii*), which grows in the savannah of Western Africa. Used to moisturize skin, hair, baby care, healing and food. No known hazards.

Recipe: use a nut size of Shea butter and apply evenly on your hair. Wrap your hair in a warm towel and leave on for 20-30 min.

Extra Virgin Coconut oil: Coconut oil comes from the coconut meat of a coconut. Use coconut oil as a DIY hair mask to soften your hair and add moisture. Hazards are minimal and the only known side effect is irritation/local allergic reaction if allergy to coconut.

Recipe: Rub a dime-sized amount of coconut oil on to dry ends to hydrate and tame frizzy flyaways

Extra Virgin Olive Oil: Olive oil is made from olives. Olive oil is a rich emollient that conditions the hair and makes it easy to comb. It also adds shine and prevents breakage. No known side effects or hazards.

Recipe: Use your fingertips to massage olive oil into your scalp so that your entire scalp is covered and then use a comb dipped in the olive oil to coat the rest of your hair.

Liquid Lecithin: Lecithin is a fat that is essential in the cells of the body and it can be found in many foods, including soybeans and egg yolks. It is used to add moisture and to bind and mix with other products. No known side effects. Generally known as safe.

Recipe: Add 1-2 tablespoons of liquid lecithin to shea butter and/or coconut butter recipe for a smooth hair moisturizer.

Essential oils can be added to all oils and or hair butters. Essential oils such as rosemary, peppermint oil, lavender and/or eucalyptus oil may be utilized, and each oil should be evaluated to make sure that there are mixed well in an oil base. Each oil should be used with caution to make sure that there is no allergy or condition which is contraindicated to the use of one of the listed oils, although they are all generally known as safe if mixed in the proper base and not left on bare skin for a long time.

Chemicals in synthetically prepared hair conditioners/moisturizers may be dangerous and may lead to side effects in humans, may cause allergies and/or may cause harm to the environment. There are many natural alternatives, which can be utilized, and are easily available and accessible.

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