

Research Assignment

Lipstick: Appealing Cosmetic or Hazardous Waste

By:

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Lipstick is one of those products that we all utilize but seldom give much thought to, other than selecting a complimentary color/shade, finding one that is 'smudge-proof' or has the ability to stay on, for hours at a time. Magazines and commercials will tout *those* attributes but will very seldom discuss the chemical 'recipes' that make up these lipsticks & glosses. Instead, they continually promote the benefits of these products (you'll look & feel better, be popular, etc) and expand their product lines to reach women and girls of all ages.

It's notable that women in the USA spend 426 billion dollars annually on beauty products. Accurate data specifically related to lipstick sales is said to average around 270 billion dollars annually. Historically speaking lipstick sales, until recently, had risen when the economy was in a downturn (The "Lipstick Index" was/is a popular theory that says that women purchase more lipstick during recessions in hopes of attracting men with money.)'

For a variety of reasons, including discrepancies in the reliability of the "Lipstick Index" during recent economic downturns, the industry has resorted to marketing a wider and more diverse line of lipsticks and glosses to women...*and girls*. So, what's the problem, you might ask?

The ingredients.

The University of California, Berkley tested 32 lipsticks and glosses used by young women in a California youth program and found 'concerning levels' of nine heavy metals in all of them. They concluded there was lead in 75% of lipsticks. In 2011, the FDA did look at 400 lip products to determine the threat and they determined the levels of lead were too low to be a threat because the daily exposure rates were lower than the government-recommended guidelines for lead consumption. *That's right, consumption.* What the report failed to note is that many lipstick and lip glosses do end up being ingested/consumed by nearly everyone who wears them. And then we re-apply and re-ingest and...the cycle continues. It's important to note that the FDA does limit lead in certain color additives but it doesn't set limits on lead in the final products.

In addition to heavy metals and lead, here are some 'hidden' ingredients that may be in your lipstick:

Methylparaben which is a preservative and used in many products in the US. The use of these chemicals is restricted in European Nations because they've been linked to cancer, and can disrupt the endocrine system. Cosmetics Database labels these chemicals as a 'high hazard'.

Propylparaben is also frequently used in cosmetics and can be irritating to skin & eyes. In addition, there is concern about cancer, other toxicity issues and again, there is the possibility of causing disruption to the endocrine system. This chemical is rated as a 'moderate hazard' by the Cosmetics Database.

Retinyl Palmitate is a synthetic form of vitamin A which is rated a 'moderate hazard' by the Cosmetics Database due to limited evidence that suggests exposure may be related to cancer and reproductive issues.

D&C Red 36 and **D&C Red 22 Aluminum Lake** are also raising concerns because some exposure to animals, during research suggests possible nervous system damage and other health concerns. Both are rated low and moderate hazards.

Tocopheryl Acetate is also referred to as vitamin E acetate and is used in a variety of beauty products and it may cause itching, hives, skin blistering and burning. This is rated as a moderate hazard.

These are just a few of the ingredients you can find in common lipsticks and lip glosses...but they are not the only ones. Is it any wonder that many women and girls suffer from a variety of symptoms including inflammation, redness, dryness, scaling, blistering and a change in skin & pigment color as a result of using lipsticks & glosses? Of course, long-term exposure to heavy metals can result in neurological issues, cancer, heart & vascular disease and so much more.

So, what is the remedy?

- Be AWARE of what's in the lipstick or gloss that you purchase. If you don't think you have time or you're just not interested in making your own natural lipstick, search for Lipsticks & Gloss that are at least lead-free. They are out there and while they may still contain other chemicals, they are a good start. Research, read and educate yourself, not just on lipsticks but on all beauty products as many of the constituents I noted above, are used in other popular beauty products as well.
- Consider purchasing or making your own natural gloss & lipstick with natural & chemical free products. For instance, you can combine 1tsp beeswax pastilles, 1 tsp Shea or Cocoa Butter and 1 tsp of Coconut oil for a natural gloss that will truly moisturize and protect. You could also add a variety of Essential Oils (ie 1 drop of Lavender) for added skin benefits and you could add Natural Red Food Coloring, Beet Root Powder or Cocoa Powder to add a touch of color.
- Be Accepting of the real YOU! We are all made to be uniquely beautiful! It's been said before but I'm going to say it again...***real beauty comes from the inside*** so it doesn't matter if our lips are glossy & the perfect shade of pink for 24 hours (without smudging or fading!)...it's what's inside that truly matters!

Huffingtonpost.com
Harpers Bazarre
dermnetnz.org
Good Housekeeping
FDA.gov

Note: Young Living now offers lipstick made with naturally derived ingredients, including moisturizing botanicals, this lipstick is not tested on animals, so you can feel good about what you are putting on your lips.