

DR.OZ
THE GOOD LIFE

JUNE 2017

NATURAL

by KRISTA BENNETT DEMAIO
photographed by JEFFREY WESTBROOK



THE PROMISE OF
CHEMICAL-FREE BEAUTY
PRODUCTS IS APPEALING,
BUT THERE'S A LOT OF
HYPE OUT THERE. GET THE
REAL DEAL, AND REAL
RESULTS, WITH OUR
KNOW-IT-ALL GUIDE.

WONDERS

To find a “natural” moisturizer or shampoo, you used to seek out health food stores or a patchouli-scented soap shop in the nearest tourist town. Now these products are suddenly *everywhere*—and we’re scooping them up by the shopping-cart-ful. In fact, natural cosmetics are even outselling traditional beauty products in high-end department stores, and this \$10 billion industry is expected to hit \$15.98 billion by 2020. So you’re probably wondering, as you scan the label of some plant-based cleanser beckoning from the drugstore aisle, *Are these products a better, safer option?*

First, know this: There’s still a ton of confusion about what *natural* even means. According to the FDA, there’s no regulatory definition for the term: “Each brand defines it according to

its own philosophy,” says cosmetic chemist Ni’Kita Wilson. For some companies, *natural* indicates that every single ingredient comes from nature. For others, products that are mostly plant-based with minimal chemicals qualify. But without a set standard, anyone can slap the word on a label even if the product has nothing more than a few botanical extracts adrift in an otherwise traditional formula—a marketing practice known as greenwashing.

How do you know if going natural is a smart choice, and not a waste of money? We tapped top industry experts, in-the-know dermatologists, and product formulators to answer all your questions, and tell you when going green is worth your green.

OUR NATURAL SELECTIONS



PURE FRAGRANCE
Lurk RSW 005 Eau de Toilette (\$225, lurkmade.com)

CHEM-FREE DEODORANT
Schmidt's Naturals Coconut Pineapple Sensitive Skin Deodorant Stick (\$11, schmidtsnaturals.com)

ORGANIC STYLER
Dr. Bronner's Lavender Coconut Organic Hair Crème (\$8, drbronner.com)

FRUIT-DYE LIPSTICK 100%
Pure Cocoa Butter Semi-Matte Lipstick (\$29 each, 100percentpure.com)

OIL-BASED SKIN HEALER
Carol's Daughter Body Jelly (\$12, carolsdaughter.com)

Give it to me straight: Is “natural” safer?

Sorry—there’s no simple answer to this question. If you want to reduce the number of chemicals you come into contact with daily, adopting a more natural beauty routine is one way to go. We do know that some man-made ingredients can seep beyond the skin’s surface: In one recent study, subjects who switched to cosmetics that didn’t contain chemicals like parabens,

phthalates, and the sun-screen filter oxybenzone had significantly lower levels of these chemicals in their urine after only three days. That said, it’s entirely possible that we simply pee out most of these ingredients anyway, and no human studies have ever definitively linked any of them to cancer or other health concerns.

For that reason, many women just aren’t all that concerned about chemicals in their beauty products. But if going natural makes sense

to you, look for lotions and potions made with fewer synthetic (translation: man-made) ingredients—a good place to start is with retailers that have pledged to sell these types of products. (For a list of trusted online and brick-and-mortar shops, see “Shop Greener,” page 71.) Also, many brands eliminate the guesswork by calling out what’s *not* in their products right on the label. (The ingredients in the picks on these pages were independently verified

by a third-party cosmetic chemist as “all natural” or “mostly natural.”) And you don’t have to overhaul your entire routine: Focus on products that linger on your skin, such as moisturizers, recommends [Ava Shamban, M.D.](#), an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine in Los Angeles.

Just keep in mind that natural doesn’t always mean gentler (hello—poison ivy is found in nature), and

MORE NATURALS

SILKY HYDRATOR
Tata Harper
Repairative
Moisturizer (\$105,
Sephora)



SHINE ENHANCER
Lark Hair Potion
(\$28, larkskinco.com)



MINERAL COLOR
RMS Beauty
Lip2Cheek (\$36 each,
rmsbeauty.com)



**HAIR
REFRESHER**
One Love Organics
Healthy Locks Dry
Shampoo Powder
(\$29, onelove
organics.com)

**PLANT-BASED
TEXTURE HELP**
Kinky-Curly Curling
Custard Gel (\$17,
kinky-curly.com)



commonly used plant ingredients like citrus oils and fruit acids can definitely trigger stinging and redness in someone with very sensitive skin, Shamban adds. Likewise, natural makeup formulated with certain minerals and oils can still make you break out.

Will I get the same results?

There are plenty of natural moisturizers, soaps, and makeup that will get their assigned jobs done, but if you're looking for potent anti-aging benefits, traditional tried-and-true skin-

care ingredients are your best bet. While some of the most effective research-backed anti-agers—like retinol (a vitamin A derivative), vitamin C, niacinamide (a B vitamin), and glycolic acid (from sugarcane)—*can* be derived naturally, they're usually not. For one thing, the natural versions can easily break down in the bottle or when they're exposed to air or sunlight. That's why even so-called natural products often use synthetic versions. Also, it's not always cost-effective or realistic to use the natural form of certain ingredients. "To get a clinically significant

amount of, say, the antioxidant resveratrol, you'd need about 100 bottles of wine or a ridiculous amount of grapes," Shamban says. "It's just easier to make it in a lab." And none of the chemical versions of these ingredients are linked to any health concerns.

Wondering how you can fight wrinkles and still be as natural as possible? Look for the studied anti-agers in an otherwise natural formula. "We have retinoids, AHAs, lactic acid, plant stem cells; we just don't use potentially irritating base materials," says Barbara Close, founder and CEO of Naturopathica,

a skin-care line inspired by holistic medicine. You can also seek out plant-based ingredients with actual research behind them, such as rose hip oil, coconut oil, and green tea, and plant actives like bakuchiol. True, they're not quite as effective, but many work similarly to much-studied retinol, slightly smoothing wrinkles without irritation.

How do I know that what I'm buying is really natural?

Here's the thing: It's tough to find products that are truly *all-natural*, so don't

SHOP GREENER

Stores and websites with their own promised standards help you lean toward natural without obsessive label-reading.

Whole Foods Market

This food store has a list of around 75 ingredients it won't allow on shelves. Artificial dyes and anything the company feels could cause health or skin issues are forbidden. All ingredients under its "premium-body-care standard" have been evaluated for safety, environmental impact, and efficacy.

Target

The big-box retailer has vowed label transparency—which means that by 2020, all beauty, baby-care, personal-care, and household cleaning products must disclose

every ingredient in their products and formulate them without phthalates, parabens, formaldehyde, or any ingredient that releases formaldehyde.

Credo

An online retailer with stand-alone stores in New York and Los Angeles, Credo sells beauty products that don't contain animal by-products or a laundry list of more than two dozen ingredients that the company believes can be harmful.

Integrity Botanicals

The beauty products sold on this site are all free of ingredients it considers controversial.

Beautycounter

While this direct-sales beauty company doesn't position itself as a natural brand, it won't formulate its skin, makeup, and body products with the more than 1,500 ingredients it has deemed worrisome.

CVS

The retailer recently announced that it will remove harsh chemicals (parabens, phthalates, formaldehyde) from its CVS Health, Beauty 360, Essence of Beauty, and Blade product lines—nearly 600 products. The store already had a lengthy list of ingredients it won't use in its store-brand baby, beauty, and personal-care products.



PLANT-BASED PRETTY



SOOTHING TONER
Jane Iredale BeautyPrep Face Toner (\$33, janeiredale.com)

BOTANICAL ANTI-AGER
Acure Seriously Glowing Facial Serum (\$20, acureorganics.com)

ALL-NATURAL BALM
John Masters Organics Lip Calm Vanilla (\$6, johnmasters.com)

GENTLE SCRUB
S.W. Basics Cream Scrub (\$17, swbasics.com)

MOISTURIZING SOAP
Kiss My Face Pure Olive Oil Bar Soap (\$4, amazon.com)

ESSENTIAL OIL CLEANSER
Laurel Whole Plant Organics Clarity Oil Cleanser (\$48, laurelskin.com)

RICH HAIR MASK
Shea Terra Organics Mongongo & Banana Deep Conditioning + Pre-Shampoo Hair Food Masque (\$18, sheaterraorganics.com)

believe it just because the package says so. (Remember, there are no labeling standards.) "A 100% natural product would have to be made with ingredients that are unprocessed, or very minimally processed," says Jody Vilecco, global quality standards coordinator at Whole Foods Market. That's a tall order, which is why many ingredients that start out natural are ultimately tweaked in a lab. Take coconut-derived cleansers like coco glucoside or coco betaine, for example. Fatty acids are extracted from the coconut and then combined with a lab-made cleanser. "Yes, this new ingredient is naturally derived, but it's still

a little misleading," Vilecco says. Plus, you may not even want a product to be 100% natural. In many cases, lab additions make products more pleasant to use—they smell nicer and feel less greasy on your skin—and chemical preservatives prevent bacteria from growing in your face cream and potentially causing skin infections.

To get the best of the natural options, make sure there are plant-based components listed within the first five ingredients. That means there's a greater percentage of them in the formula. If a botanical is found toward the end of the list, it's a red flag that there's

only an insignificant bit in the product, says cosmetic chemist Perry Romanowski.

Our experts also recommend looking for a seal from an outside certifying agency. (See "Seal the Deal," opposite, for a breakdown of the most common ones.) "If you see one of these symbols on a product, it means its ingredients—and how they are sourced—have been reviewed by a third party and held to some kind of standard," says Fred Khoury, a cosmetic chemist who has years of experience formulating natural products. You also want to read the label carefully. Close suggests looking for products with labels that use the INCI

(International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients) as a guide. When you see "INCI" in parentheses somewhere near the ingredients list, it means the brand ensures that everything inside adheres to an internationally recognized list and prohibits the use of proprietary names, which may make ingredients hard to identify. Will you be able to decipher all the ingredients used and assess whether or not they're truly natural? Probably not, but you'll at least know that the brand is committed to transparency—a good indication that there's not something in there that you don't want to be in there. Now, happy shopping, nature lovers!