

## Report stresses potential hazards in natural ingredients

23/01/2006 - **A new report is due to be published highlighting the potential safety issues relating to natural ingredients. The report adds to a growth in information stressing the potential toxic compounds that exist in this still relatively unregulated segment.**

Over the years criticism has been directed at the potential [hazards](#) associated with synthetic chemicals leading to a tightening of EU regulations aimed at ensuring maximum safety. However, what the report 'Making Sense of Chemical Stories' highlights is the fact that, although [naturals](#) are perceived to be safer, areas of concern remain.

The report is to be published by the charity Sense About Science and draws together leading names in chemical research, in an effort to throw further light on the types of toxic compounds that can and do exist in a number of leading natural [ingredients](#) used in cosmetic, cosmeutical, supplements and pharmaceutical products.

The news comes in the face of record growth in the market for organic-, botanical- and natural-based worldwide. In the course of 2005, one of the most noticeable trends has been the increase in the number of cosmetics ingredients that being labelled to stress natural ingredients, as part of the growing trend towards health and wellness-orientated products.

While the cosmetics and toiletries sectors is expected to grow by only around 1 percent a year through 2009, Euromonitor draws on figures from TNS Media Intelligence/CRM, which predicts that the annual growth rate for natural organic skin care, hair care and color cosmetics markets in the US to be around 9 percent between 2003 and 2008, increasing in value from \$3.9 billion to \$5.8 billion.

In the face of this mini-boom, the Sense About Science report findings point to a significant mismatch between consumers perception of synthetic ingredients and natural ingredient. The report states that, although consumers are increasingly opting for products on the basis that they have been formulated using chiefly natural ingredients, often they are unaware of a number of potential hazards such products may contain.

Furthermore, it challenges that perception man-made chemicals often contain potential hazards or toxins and that natural products are considerably safer is not always true.

Primarily the report rubbishes claims often made on personal care products that they are chemical-free. It says that such claims are 'nonsense', stating that all products contains chemicals to some degree or another, even if all the ingredients are natural.

As well as this the report also highlights how to evaluate



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chemical stories in products and the various ways in which ways to avoid the dangers associated with this phenomenon, as well as discussing cures.

As research chemist Derek Lohmann points out in the report, *"If someone offered you a cocktail of butanol, isoamyl alcohol, caffeine, geraniol, 3-galloyl epicatechin, and in organic salts, it sounds ghastly. Yet it is just a cup of tea."*

The charity is holding a briefing session on January 26 at the Royal Society of Chemistry in London, where a number of scientists that have worked in connection with the report will discuss the research and its conclusions.

The findings coincide with on-going research being carried out by the European organisation of cosmetic ingredients, industries and services, UNITIS, over the potential dangers surrounding botanical ingredients. Only last week the organisation published further findings that highlight 27 substances within the botanical framework considered to be hazardous.

Led by European experts, the study also includes information about possible precursors as well as substances that can be found in living plants only.

It relates to the 7th amendment of the European Directive on Carcinogenic, Mutagenic or toxic to Reproduction (CMR) substances. UNITIS says that because of this requirement all botanical ingredients used in cosmetic products have had to be tested for the presence of some 800 CMR substances.

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