

FAQ “PARABENS IN COSMETICS”

WHAT FUNCTION DO PARABENS HAVE IN COSMETICS?

Parabens are a class of substances widely used as preservatives in cosmetics, foods, medicinal products and other household products. In cosmetics they are used to stop products from deteriorating by protecting products against contamination by microorganisms during storage and continued use by consumers. Preservatives are essential in safeguarding the quality and safety of many of our products.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO USE PRESERVATIVES IN COSMETICS?

Preservatives are ingredients designed to protect products, and so the consumer, against contamination by microorganisms during storage and continued use.

Some of these bacteria, yeasts or molds can cause illness and therewith harm the health of the consumer during the daily use of these products. The multiplying of the microorganisms may lead to product deterioration, which shows up in an objectionable odor, a discoloration or a change of texture. Moreover some microorganisms may build metabolic products, which may also be harmful to health.

A few types of cosmetic products don't need preservatives because of their composition (high alcohol content, extreme pH-values or low water content) or their kind of packaging (aerosol sprays, disposable products). The risk of contamination is very low in these products. But the majority of cosmetic products must be protected against contamination, as bacteria, yeasts and molds are always present in our environment, on our skin and in the air around us. These can get into products during normal use and especially in the warm and humid bathroom they will find good growth conditions. Contamination of products, especially those used around the eyes and on skin, can cause significant problems like infections or inflammations if the level of contamination is high. Preservatives can prevent these problems by stopping microorganisms from multiplying in the product.

On the market you can find some cosmetic products labelled with the claim “no preservatives added”. But this could be misleading for the consumer: Either the product doesn't contain preservatives because it is not necessary for this type of product (composition or type of packaging) and all other products of this type don't contain preservatives as well. Or the product contains multifunctional substances, which have also antimicrobial properties besides others (masking the inherent smell of the utilized raw materials etc.) These multifunctional substances may be for example essential oils, what is a controversial point because of the allergic potential of many essential oils. Parabens in contrast are quite skin-friendly. But if the main effect of these substances is not the antimicrobial one, this labelling is correct from the regulatory point of view.

ARE COSMETIC PRODUCTS WHICH CONTAIN PARABENS SAFE?

Yes! Scientific safety studies have demonstrated that parabens are safe both for human health and in the environment. None of the extensive research carried out on the parabens has indicated a potential risk of harm to human health and parabens remain amongst the safest of preservatives in today's cosmetic products.

Amway has always regarded the health and safety of our customers and the environment in which we live to be of paramount importance. We want to assure our sales force and their customers that every ingredient included in our products is carefully considered to assure that it meets our high standards of safety and effectiveness. All of the ingredients in all of our products are considered safe for the intended use by appropriate government agencies, independent scientific review and the best available resources that our scientists could consult. Our personal care and cosmetic products contain only those ingredients that are classified and labeled according to regulations in the country in which they are marketed.

All cosmetic products sold in the EU are regulated by European Cosmetics Regulation (No. 1223/2009). The primary purpose of this law is to protect human safety. The manufacturer, supplier or importer of the cosmetic product is responsible for ensuring it is safe and each cosmetic must be assessed for safety before it is made available to the public. Every one of our cosmetic product formulations has undergone a full safety assessment. Safety assessments may only be carried out by a qualified professional and

not only cover the finished product but all of the raw ingredients used in the manufacture of the products. This assessment looks at how and where the product will be used and by whom.

The family of parabens, which are found naturally in plants and animals as well as being man-made, are approved for use as preservatives in the European Cosmetics Regulation, and have been endorsed by the competent authorities of all member states. They are among the most widely used of the preservatives, having been in use for more than fifty years with an excellent safety record. Moreover parabens are thoroughly studied ingredients and EU authorities have led in the review of their safety. These ingredients continue to be recognized as valuable for preserving some cosmetic products from contamination. Amway has actively monitored the scientific review of these ingredients and anticipated the EU findings (assessment by the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety - SCCS) so that we met the guidelines as established, using authorized parabens only as necessary. Amway will continue to monitor scientific findings on parabens and will update our policy when appropriate.

WHAT IS THE ALLEGED CONCERN ABOUT PARABENS?

There have been many reports questioning the safety of parabens. They repeat a discredited theory concerning parabens, underarm cosmetics and links to breast cancer. There has been no causal link found between the use of parabens and breast cancer – a view shared by several cancer charities. Scientific safety studies have demonstrated that parabens are safe both for human health and in the environment. None of the extensive research carried out on the parabens has indicated a potential risk of harm to human health and parabens remain amongst the safest of preservatives in today's cosmetic products.

Furthermore the BUND (Friends of Earth Germany), a German NGO, introduced an app, called ToxFox, in July 2013, which shall identify alleged health-dubious ingredients in cosmetic products. But this app is not based on scientific studies or findings, but on an old European priority list of substances for further evaluation of their role in endocrine disruption. And this list also contains parabens. The description of this list clearly indicates that these substances should be further investigated in a single valuation for the classification as an endocrine disruptor. However only the presence of a potential hormonal-effective substance doesn't mean that the whole product is not safe. It is always a question of dose. Moreover this single valuation of parabens already happened. Parabens are thoroughly studied ingredients and within the legally fixed maximum concentrations non-hazardous to health. This is also proven by the European Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS).

- Special case for Germany -

WHAT ARE ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS?

Numerous body functions in humans and animals are controlled by messenger substances such as hormones. This system of hormones is perfectly balanced and, in conjunction with hormonopoietic glands, it makes up what is called the endocrine system.

The term 'endocrine disruptors' refers to substances that could have adverse health effects by disturbing the endocrine system once they would enter the body at an effective dose. Endocrine disruptors can occur naturally (phytohormones) or are being produced artificially (synthetic). Endocrine disruptors thus do not belong to a defined chemical category.

Certain ingredients used in cosmetics and personal care products have also been claimed to be 'endocrine disruptors' because they have the potential to mimic the hormone estrogen. The claims include some phthalates, UV filters, and parabens. It is important to stress that just because something has the potential to mimic a hormone does not mean it will disrupt the endocrine system. Many substances, including natural ones, may mimic hormones but very few, and these are mostly potent medicines, have ever been shown to cause disruption of the endocrine system.

In laboratory test systems, some hormone-like activity has been demonstrated for parabens, but this activity is thousands to millions of times weaker than the activity of natural hormones. Currently there is no evidence that at low levels endocrine mimics harm human health. Parabens are a well-investigated substance group and non-hazardous to human health within the applied concentrations. This is also proven by investigations of the SCCS of the EU (Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety).