

Video- Narration Script:

## **What's in Your Medicine Cabinet? How To Be A Smarter Shopper When Buying Personal Care Products.**

Narrator: What's in your medicine cabinet? How to be a smarter shopper when buying personal care products.

We all use a variety of personal care products like toothpaste, deodorant, shampoos and soaps every day. In fact, the average woman uses 12 personal care products in a typical day; the average man uses 6. But do we know what's in them? Most people don't think that products they buy at the store could be a source of chemical exposure.

However, there is little regulation of these products. This means that of the thousands of chemical ingredients in personal care products, most have not been tested for safety. Of the chemicals that have been tested, some are a health concern. For example, concerns have been raised about triclosan, an antibacterial in soaps and toothpaste, parabens and formaldehyde, which are preservatives in cosmetics and lotions, and phthalates- plasticizers used in shampoos, deodorants, perfumes, lotions and fragrances.

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Chemicals in consumer products can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals, may be endocrine disruptive, and some may even cause cancer. Now that doesn't mean that you will necessarily get cancer or that your hormones will stop working if you use consumer products, but what it does mean is that we want to cut down on the amount of exposures to these chemicals, especially in products that you wear on your skin for long periods of time, and that you have intimate contact all day. It is these kinds of products that produce the greatest exposure and potential for health risks. And in terms of different life stages, it is often pregnancy and early childhood that will lead to the greatest exposures and risk.

Narrator: What can you do to reduce your exposure to harmful chemicals in your personal care products?

- Read the label to look for the active ingredient listed and any precautions to take such as, "use only in ventilated areas." However, there are not many labeling requirements. You may have to go to the manufacturer's website for more ingredient information.
- Avoid aerosol spray cans, as the spray causes greater amounts of chemical to be inhaled. Instead look for pump sprays or products that can be applied by hand.
- Use as little product as possible

Are there safer products to use? Yes. Find products that do the job without unnecessary chemicals or health risks.

- For example, antibacterials are not needed in most cases.

- Select toothpaste, soap and deodorant without triclosan.
- Choose unscented products or products that have natural essential oils.
- Look for products that are paraben-free and phthalate-free.
- Choose products with plant-based ingredients.

Some manufacturers have started to voluntarily remove some of these chemicals of concern.

Be a smart shopper. Be informed, choose wisely, buy safer products.

More Information about personal care products and other consumer products can be found at [www.ct.gov/dph/consumerproducts](http://www.ct.gov/dph/consumerproducts) or call 860-509-7740.

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