

## Ew! Look What's in Toothpaste

You brush your teeth and use mouthwash to take care of your oral health, right? After all, healthy teeth and gums are important. But Prevention magazine reports there is a chemical found in many toothpastes, as well as mouthwash, deodorant, body wash, antibacterial hand soaps and even makeup, that poses a serious danger not only to your personal health, but also to the health of our planet. And that chemical is triclosan.

Triclosan is a germ-killing chemical found in many personal hygiene products that Canada has been deemed toxic to the environment, especially aquatic life. But Prevention magazine reports that a growing body of scientific research shows that triclosan also can alter how the human thyroid functions, increase resistance to antibiotics and make allergies more severe.

**Here's the kicker:** We don't even need the germ-killing benefits of triclosan. It's long been proven that regular hand soap and water work just as well as antibacterial soaps at cleaning our bodies.

While the Canadian government is working to curtail the use of triclosan throughout the country, the United States isn't doing the same. The Food and Drug Administration has admitted there are "valid concerns" about the adverse health effects of triclosan, but it still allows it to be used in many personal care products.

**What can you do to limit your exposure to triclosan? Prevention advises the following:**

- Read the labels of your favorite products. If the label contains triclosan, you might want to switch to a different brand.
- Be wary of liquid soaps, since most contain triclosan. Switch to a bar soap that does not contain the chemical.
- Choose organic personal care products instead, all of which are free of this chemical.
- If a product advertises itself as "**germ-killing**" or "**antibacterial**," read the label very carefully before using it. The chances are very good that it contains triclosan.
- While many solid bar soaps are triclosan-free, some do contain the chemical, so read labels.

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