



# Cosmetics

## Helping you to make safe choices

**New Zealand's Environmental Protection Authority sets rules that mean you can be confident that the cosmetics and toiletries you buy will not harm you**

### Setting the standard

You may not think so, but some cosmetics can contain ingredients that are classed as hazardous.

In New Zealand, cosmetics (*see page 2 for a general list*) that contain hazardous substances are regulated under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms legislation. Manufacturers and importers have a responsibility to ensure the products they sell in New Zealand meet the standards that have been set.

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) manages these standards, which are there to help protect you from potentially harmful ingredients and ensure that you can trust the products you buy to be safe to use.

#### **But my products only have natural ingredients...**

It's important to note that even natural, plant based or organic cosmetics can have hazardous properties.



### Safety of cosmetics

The cosmetic standard has an overall requirement that cosmetic products do not cause harm. Most cosmetic products made by reputable brands and sold by reputable suppliers comply with the rules. These products will have been tested for safety in other countries.

However, it's possible that not all cosmetics that you find on sale in New Zealand stores will comply.



## What's covered and what's not

The rules relating to the safety of cosmetics cover any product or preparation to be used:

- on the outside of the body
- on the teeth or in the mouth
- to clean, perfume, change the appearance of, protect, keep in good condition or correct body odours.

This includes soap, shampoo, toothpaste, shaving products, deodorant and other toiletries, perfume, hair colouring products, insect repellents, sunscreens and self-tanning products, as well as make-up. They also include children's 'toy' cosmetics and face paint.

## Read the label

The most important rules that manufacturers and importers must follow relate to restrictions on certain ingredients, and labelling and packaging requirements.

Where appropriate, labels should provide clear information against allowing the product to get into your eyes, or mouth, and advice about checking the product on a small area of your skin first in case of allergic reaction.

## Labels

Labels must be in English and:

- be durable and easy to read
- state the product name
- list the hazards and information about safe use (for example, *Flammable, use in a well-ventilated area*)
- list all of the ingredients in the cosmetic product from highest concentration to lowest
- provide enough information so the New Zealand supplier or manufacturer can be contacted
- provide a batch code
- provide disposal recommendations
- identify any nanomaterials in the product by using the word 'nano' in brackets after the ingredient (see page 3 for more information on this).

Sometimes, if the label of a product is very small this information may be provided on a separate notice at the point of sale.

## Packaging

Cosmetics must also be suitably packaged so that the container does not:

- leak when it's filled and closed
- leak when some of the contents have been used and the container is reclosed
- react with the contents of the package so that the container is weakened.

## How New Zealand rules compare internationally

The rules for cosmetics and toiletries are not the same worldwide. Our rules came into force in 2006 and are based on the European Union (EU) regulations for cosmetics products.

Many cosmetics are international brands and already comply with equivalent EU and United States labelling or other requirements.

We review and update the rules for cosmetics regularly to reflect changes made to the EU regulations and to take into account other issues raised by interested parties in New Zealand.

Proposed changes are consulted on, and submissions form an important part of the decision-making process. Changes are usually introduced gradually to give importers and manufacturers time to make sure their products comply with the new rules.

### Nanomaterials in cosmetics

Nanomaterials are very tiny particles. They can occur naturally or be deliberately engineered and are increasingly used in healthcare, electronics and cosmetics. Nanomaterials are an emerging technology and scientists are developing their understanding of the effects such small materials have on health and the environment.

Manufacturers or suppliers must also let the EPA know if nanomaterials (with some exceptions) are being used in their cosmetics.

### Key points

- Buy cosmetics from retailers that you know and trust.
- If you are in any doubt about the safety of a product – don't buy or use it.
- If the label isn't in English, doesn't list the ingredients, batch code and NZ importer and manufacturer contact details, the product isn't compliant with the rules
- Read the label and follow the instructions for example, some cosmetics shouldn't be used around the eyes.
- Store cosmetics out of reach of small children. Even if the product says it's non-toxic and natural it could be dangerous if it were swallowed.
- If you have an allergic or other reaction to a cosmetic product, stop using it immediately. If the reaction is severe, get medical advice from a doctor or call Healthline on 0800 611 116.



## Further information

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