



## Host a Safe Cosmetics Party!

Hosting a safe cosmetics party is a great way to get involved in the growing movement to make consumer products safe. Most people don't know that the \$50 billion cosmetics industry is unregulated and that many cosmetics ingredients are linked to serious health problems. Your party is an opportunity to educate friends, offer tips for choosing safer personal care products, and make change by contacting companies and elected officials.

You can host a Safe Cosmetics party as a private event with your friends, or you can work with local community organizations, women's groups, parents' groups, book clubs, environmental groups, teen groups or faith groups to host the event together.

### **Suggested Party Plans**

Be creative with your party plans- these are some ideas to get your party planning wheels turning. On our Web site, look for cosmetics recipes (Get Involved > Get Crafty), and sample letters, talking points, poster art and more (Get Involved > Materials).

- Make non-toxic cosmetics together as a group, or make cosmetics ahead of time to give as presents in goody bags with copies of the recipes.
- Ask people to bring their cosmetics bags or favorite personal care products so you can check out the safety of the ingredients together in the Skin Deep database, [www.cosmeticdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com).
- Have a book club event focusing on Stacy Malkan's book, *Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry*. Remember to plan the party well in advance so guests can purchase and read the book. You can purchase the book through our Web site, [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org).
- Have a discussion about chemicals in cosmetics framed by larger topics. (See *suggestions at the end of this kit*)
- Write to cosmetics companies that have not signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics, and urge them to make this public commitment to safety.
- If your state has legislation pending that addresses toxic chemicals in consumer goods, write and/or call your representatives urging them to be proactive and protective of their constituents' health. E-mail [mia@safecosmetics.org](mailto:mia@safecosmetics.org) if you need more information about what's happening in your state.
- Work together on a letter to the editor or an opinion piece for your local paper. (See *"Writing a Letter to the Editor"*)
- Plan grassroots activities for the near future, such as visiting local retailers, cosmetics counters or elected officials, or tabling at a health fair. (See *"How to Table"*)
- Work on an art project! Using heavy-weight paper and beauty magazines, make collage postcards to send to cosmetics companies that have not signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics, or to your state representatives. Or, make educational posters to hang in community centers, high schools or health food stores. Spread the word!

### **Step 1: Pick a date**

If you want to have a larger party—say 15 or more people—or if you are going to host the party with a community group, begin planning one to two months in advance. If you want to have a smaller party, you may not need as much advance notice.

*Note: If you do not have access to health food stores or herb shops and want to make cosmetics for the party, allow plenty of time to order ingredients online and have them delivered. See the Get Involved section of [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org) for more info.*

### **Step 2: Pick a location**

A safe cosmetics party can be a simple gathering where you talk about the issue of toxins in personal care products. Or, it can be more hands-on: you can write letters, plan events or make your own cosmetics. The space you choose will need to accommodate your needs.

Some things to keep in mind when choosing a location:

- If you choose to make cosmetics you'll need an area that is large enough to accommodate your group and tolerate a spill or two, like your kitchen. Kitchens at local community centers or churches might be available to use as well.
- Internet access and a place to project images (if you can secure a projector) will ensure that everyone can partake in the Skin Deep research. Or, you can gather around one or two laptops to conduct your Skin Deep searches.
- Is the location accessible to everyone you're inviting? (Public transportation, parking spots, distance from home, wheelchair access, etc.)

### **Step 3: Invite people**

Once you know the time and place, send your guests an invitation about three weeks in advance (more notice for book club parties). You can make or buy invitations and mail them to people, post a flyer if you want to make it open to the public, set up a private or public Evite <http://www.evite.com/>. or send an e-mail.

### **Step 4: Learn more about the issue**

You don't need to be an expert on all the ingredients in cosmetics (there are 10,500 unique ingredients in cosmetics!). However, it is always helpful to do a little research ahead of time so you can answer commonly asked questions and provide your crew with resources they can refer to after the party.

The best place to get started is on the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics Web site ([www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org)). There you can find:

- **Campaign materials:** For a basic Campaign for Safe Cosmetics overview of cosmetics safety issues, as well as other useful documents, like Frequently Asked Questions, go to Get Involved > Materials.
- **Recent news about safe cosmetics:** For links to articles published about cosmetic safety and the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, see our Campaign Newsroom.
- **Companies that have signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics:** The campaign asks cosmetics manufacturers to sign the Compact for Safe Cosmetics, a meaningful pledge to end the use of ingredients linked to health concerns. Navigate to the Companies

section to learn more about the Compact and which companies have signed on. Skin Deep also notes in its product reports if a company has signed the Compact.

- **Talking points:** In Get Involved > Materials you'll find a Talking Points document that can help you articulate some of the key problems and solutions that the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics works toward.
- **Skin Deep:** If you have Internet access, we highly recommend you spend time using the Skin Deep database, an inventory of 25,000 personal care products and ingredients. In addition to allowing consumers to search for the safety score of a personal care product or ingredient, the database contains a scientific bibliography, fact sheets (What Not to Buy, [www.cosmeticdatabase.com/special/](http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com/special/), is especially useful) and a Frequently Asked Questions page. You can access Skin Deep at [www.cosmeticdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com).
- **Campaign for Safe Cosmetics petition to Congress:** Please have your guests sign our petition to Congress, asking the FDA be empowered to regulate the cosmetics industry. Signed sheets can be mailed to the address at the bottom of the form.

You can also contact Mia on the East Coast, ([mia@safecosmetics.org](mailto:mia@safecosmetics.org)) or Genevieve on the West Coast ([genevieve@breastcancerfund.org](mailto:genevieve@breastcancerfund.org)), for copies of the Campaign's Unmasked brochure. Small quantities are free for activists. (Please give us two weeks to get the brochures to you. Thanks!)

#### **Step 5: Choose your recipes and activities**

See the Get Involved > Get Crafty on [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org) for sample recipes and feel free to search the Internet or local health food stores for more ideas.

We recommend trying the more in-depth recipes ahead of time to make sure you are comfortable presenting them to your guests. Also note that if you melt substances like beeswax, the dish or pan you use may be difficult to restore to food-cooking condition.

If you're going to write to elected officials or company CEOs, find their contact information ahead of time; it may be difficult to find do. If you need help, e-mail [mia@safecosmetics.org](mailto:mia@safecosmetics.org).

#### **Step 6: Buy your party supplies**

If you are going to make cosmetics, it is best to get all your supplies plenty ahead of time. Don't forget the containers to put the homemade cosmetics in (like little pots or tubes), and small funnels for pouring cosmetics into containers. From an environmental health perspective, glass is always preferable to plastic, but it can sometimes be difficult to find the proper glass containers.

Determine other supply needs (paper, magazines, pens, clipboards, etc).

#### **Step 7: Send your group a reminder**

Give your group a phone or e-mail reminder three or four days before your party date. Having a head count will also help you ensure that you are fully stocked for the party.

#### **Step 8: Just before the party, prepare the site**

- If you have access to a projector and the Internet you can project Skin Deep onto a wall or a white sheet. Or, you can set up one or two Internet stations so guests can inventory products at the computer together.
- You can decorate your space with Campaign for Safe Cosmetics ads (printable from our Web site, under Get Involved > Materials) or copies of articles about the Campaign (Newsroom).

### **Step 9: Have a party!**

In addition to having a blast and educating one another, we hope that a few folks at your party will want to become more involved with the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics moving forward.

Gauge the level of interest and the availability of your participants. Should you have a follow-up meeting to make plans moving forward?

Let people know how they can get involved in the campaign. Some examples include:

- Sign up for Campaign for Safe Cosmetics Action Alerts on our Web site. We send e-news on cosmetics safety once or twice a month, and we never share e-mail addresses.
- Participate in grassroots activities happening nearby – or make one happen yourself! This might include a visit to the cosmetics counters at your local department store to talk with salespeople, a meeting with a beauty or department store manager, meetings with legislators, speaking at a community health fair or high school health class, etc.
- Write a letter to key decision-makers (in fact, people can do this at your party) and request a meeting with them.
- Contact the companies that have not signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics, urging them to make safer products and sign the compact. If they don't respond, keep writing!
- Bring Unmasked brochures to the gym, the nail salon, parent groups, etc.
- Host their own house party to spread the word to a larger group.

### **Step 10: Follow up**

After the party is over...

- Send thank-you notes to your guests.
- If you take pictures, we would love to see them. Please e-mail them to [mia@safecosmetics.org](mailto:mia@safecosmetics.org), or mail them to address below.
- Let us know how it went!

### **Sample Invitation**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Did you know that cosmetics products we use daily, like shampoo, make-up and even baby lotion, contain ingredients with known links to serious health concerns such as cancer and birth defects? And did you also know that it is perfectly legal for companies to do this in the United States?

Please join me for a safe cosmetics house party! We will learn about the ingredients in the products we use regularly, how to make safer purchases, how to make our own healthy cosmetics and what we can do to bring this issue to the general public and to our elected officials.

All you need to bring is a couple of the personal care products you use most often (or a list of them) and an interest in learning more. I hope you can make it!

Where:

When:

What:

Please RSVP to:

### **Sample Supply List**

- All materials for making cosmetics (including funnels for pouring newly made cosmetics, containers for the products, printed recipes...)
- Campaign fact sheets, Unmasked brochures
- CSC Ads (from Web site)
- Icebreaker
- Goody bags
- Snacks
- Drinks
- Pens and paper, art supplies if needed
- Cleaning supplies

### **Sample Discussion Questions**

- What is our society's image of beauty? How has this changed over time, and what changes do you think we'll see in the future?
- The personal care product industry is unregulated—no government agency makes sure that these products are safe for humans, animals or the environment. Why do you think this is, and what are the implications?
- While we are living longer in this country, the number of people with health problems like cancer, obesity, attention deficit disorder and reproductive problems is growing. Many

scientists and advocates have linked chemicals to this increase. How does this make you feel, and what do you think we need to do to change this unhealthy trend?

**Sample Thank-you Letter**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for attending my Safe Cosmetics house party! It was a great time.

Please continue to spread the word about the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. If you haven't already, please visit the Web site ([www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org)) and sign up to receive action alerts, news and updates on campaign activities.

Feel free to contact me for ideas on how to get involved in the campaign, and thanks again for helping make the party a great success.

Sincerely,

## **Useful Links and Contact Information**

### **Online resources from the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics:**

<http://safecosmetics.org/action/index.cfm>

### **Signers of the Compact for Safe Cosmetics:**

<http://safecosmetics.org/companies/signers.cfm>

### **The Skin Deep database:**

<http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com>

### **Organizations that endorse the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics:**

[http://safecosmetics.org/about/compact\\_supporters.cfm](http://safecosmetics.org/about/compact_supporters.cfm)

### **Copy of EU ban on dangerous substances in cosmetics:**

<http://www.safecosmetics.org/docUploads/OJ%20implementation%20CMR%20ban%202004%5F93%20EN%2Epdf>

### **“Not Too Pretty” report on phthalates in cosmetics:**

<http://www.safecosmetics.org/docUploads/NotTooPretty%5Fr51%2Epdf>

### **A quick breakdown of cosmetic-related laws:**

[http://safecosmetics.org/your\\_health/index.cfm](http://safecosmetics.org/your_health/index.cfm)

**Please contact Mia Davis, the national grassroots coordinator for the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, with any questions.**

**617.338.8131x201**

**[mia@safecosmetics.org](mailto:mia@safecosmetics.org)**

**Have a great time!**