

Why Handmade Soap?



This e-book tells exactly what ingredients are in major name brand soaps and why you should be wary when it comes to the health and safety of your family when using them.

Why Handcrafted Soap?

There is a large amount of information about the advantages of homemade soap over the commonly available commercial products. Articles available on the internet will sing the praises of homemade soap at great length. Briefly, these advantages are:

1. Homemade soap retains all of the glycerin which is produced as a byproduct of the soap making process. Glycerin is widely used in the cosmetics industry and is frequently removed by the large manufacturers of commercial soap for sale to that industry. Glycerin is a natural moisturizing agent and accounts for many of the benefits of handmade soap.
2. Most of the homemade (or handcrafted) soap makers use natural vegetable oils in their recipes. These oils are more expensive than those used by the large commercial manufacturers; but, the resulting soap is superior in texture, moisturizing properties and cleaning ability.
3. Chemicals, detergents, degreasers and the like are absent from homemade soaps. While these compounds will clean your skin, they also remove the natural oils and dry the skin.

The first and foremost advantage of natural handmade soap is "First, do no harm." Handmade, natural soap has no harmful or potentially harmful chemicals. To illustrate some of the advantages of handcrafted soap over mass produced commercial soaps, two products will be used: 'Irish Spring' and 'Lever 2000'. As mass marketed, commercial soaps go, these popular soaps aren't bad. There are certainly worse on the market. On the back of the soap package, the ingredients are listed, in order, by the quantity of that ingredient in the product, with the largest quantity listed first.

For 'Irish Spring' these are: "Ingredients: Soap (sodium tallowate, sodium concoate, and/or sodium palm kernelate types), water, stearic acid (skin conditioner), coconut and/or palm kernel acid, glycerin (skin conditioner), fragrance, sodium chloride, titanium dioxide, pentasodium pentetate, BHT, D&C green No.8, FD&C Green No.3."

For 'Lever 2000 Pure Rain' these are: "Ingredients: Sodium tallowate, sodium cocoyl isethionate, sodium cocoate, water, sodium isethionate, stearic acid, coconut fatty acid, fragrance, titanium dioxide, sodium chloride, disodium phosphate, tetrasodium EDTA, trisodium etidronate, BHT, FD&C blue no.1, D&C red no.33."

Notice that sodium tallowate is listed first in both of these soaps. This soap compound is the natural result of combining sodium hydroxide (lye) with beef tallow. Tallow has been used in

soap making for about 5,000 years. Also, tallow is considered by some to clog pores, cause blackheads, and increase eczema for those individuals with sensitive skin. The attractiveness of tallow for mass producing soap is that it processes quickly, produces a hard bar of soap, and is cheap and plentiful. Pioneers on the American frontier had few, or no, alternatives to the use of animal fats for making soap. Today, there are many vegetable oils which are better alternatives.

Sodium cocoate is listed both sets of ingredients for our example commercial soaps. Sodium cocoate is the result of combining coconut oil with sodium hydroxide (lye). Nothing controversial here. Coconut oil is a main ingredient in many quality soaps. (I said these two commercial soaps weren't bad!) Sodium palm Kernalate is listed next for 'Irish Spring'. This soap compound results from the combination of palm Kernel oil with sodium hydroxide (lye). Beginning to see a pattern here? **"No Lye, No Soap."** This is just as true for the manufacturers as it is for the homemade soap makers. Anyway, back to sodium palm Kernalate. This is an excellent soap compound—white in color, very hard, and excellent lather. Stearic Acid is listed in both sets of ingredients. Stearic acid is a saturated fatty acid usually derived from tallow or lard and sometimes palm oil. The use of stearic acid can contribute to a harder, more long-lasting bar of soap. Titanium dioxide is a neutral, very white powder used in combination with other colorants. It is not considered to be harmful.

And now for the bad boys... If Lever and Colgate-Palmolive had stopped with the ingredients listed above their soap would have been merely cheap; and, for the most part questionable only for their use of tallow. But read on...

Pentasodium pentetate- An inorganic salt used as a water softener, emulsifier and dispersing ingredient in cosmetic cleansing creams, lotions and soaps. Can be an eye irritant.

Tetrasodium EDTA- Synthetic preservative- can be irritating to the eyes/mucous membranes.

Sodium cocoyl isethionate- synthetic detergent. Technically, an anionic surfactant, meaning it reduces surface tension, making water 'wetter'.

Sodium isethionate- synthetic detergent. Technically, a moisture absorber, surfactant and anti-static agent.

Trisodium etidronate- A preservative. Possible irritant.

BHT- (butylhydroxytolunene) Synthetic antioxidant to keep oils in formula from going rancid. When ingested, implicated in tumor formation and liver enlargement in rodent tests. Sometimes used as a food preservative.

Disodium phosphate- Buffering agent, used to adjust pH.

And the search for a good, petroleum/chemical free commercial soap continues...

Lets check out three more products... the products selected are: 'Ivory', 'Dove-sensitive skin, hypo allergenic, fragrance free' and 'Dial anti bacterial'. These mass marketed, commercial soaps have long lists of ingredients so the first step is to get these tedious listings out of the way. On the back of the soap package, the ingredients are listed in order by the quantity of that ingredient in the product, with the largest quantity listed first. The back of the soap package for 'Ivory' does not show the ingredients. The Food and Drug Administration does not appear to require a listing of ingredients if the product is only soap and not a "cosmetic." Where they draw the distinction is a subject of some debate; but, for those who are interested in researching this subject further go to the Food and Drug Administration's website.

For 'Ivory' (which has the shortest list) these are: Sodium tallowate, sodium cocoate or sodium palm Kernelate, water, sodium chloride, sodium silicate, magnesium sulfate, and fragrance. (This information is from the Material Safety Data Sheet prepared by the Proctor & Gamble Company.) Sodium tallowate, sodium cocoate, and sodium palm Kernelate are all natural soap compounds produced from tallow, coconut oil, and palm Kernel oil, respectively. Magnesium sulfate is also known as Epsom salts and sodium chloride you may recognize as common table salt. Sodium silicate is also known as soluble glass or sodium silicate glass. While the amount in Ivory soap is probably too small to be of concern, **sodium silicate is harmful if ingested and in its pure form can cause burns through skin or eye contact.** Of all the mass produced commercial soaps that this writer has examined, Ivory is closest to an all natural soap with a minimum of additional chemicals. Of more importance to the consumer could be what *isn't* in Ivory soap. **Notice that glycerin is missing from the list of ingredients??** This cheapens the soap and removes one of the natural moisturizers for the skin.

For 'Dove- sensitive skin' the ingredients are: sodium cocoyl isethionate, stearic acid, coconut acid, sodium tallowate, sodium isethionate, sodium stearate, cocamidoprpyl betaine, sodium cocoate, or sodium palm Kernelate, sodium chloride, sweet almond oil, rosewood oil, cedar wood oil, rose oil, tetrasodium EDTA, trisodium etidronate, titanium dioxide.

The artificial ingredients of concern for 'Dove-sensitive skin' are: sodium cocoyl isethionate, sodium isethionate, tetrasodium EDTA, and trisodium etidronate. Additional information about these and other common ingredients is shown in the Ingredients Listing section.

For 'Dial anti bacterial' the ingredients are: Active ingredient: triclocarban. Other ingredients: soap (sodium tallowate, sodium cocoate or palm Kernelate, sodium palmate types), water, PEG-6 methyl ether, palm acid or tallow acid, fragrance, glycerin, sorbitol, sodium chloride,

pentasodium pentetate, tetrasodium etidronate, BHT, FD&C yellow #5, D&C yellow #6, FD&C Red #4.

Of greatest concern are: Triclocarban, pentasodium pentetate, tetrasodium etidronate, and BHT. The Food and Drug Administration does not separately examine colors. They are generally synthetic and periodically one or more of them become banned as a carcinogen. Hopefully, for the consumers, these particular ones are safe.

Ingredients Listing

BHT- (butylhydroxytoluene) Synthetic antioxidant to keep oils in formula from going rancid. When ingested, implicated in tumor formation and liver enlargement in rodent tests. Sometimes used as a food preservative.

Cocamidopropyl betaine- (cocamidopropyl hydroxysultaine). This one sounds awful, but probably isn't. It is manufactured from coconut oil and no hazard or toxicity warning could be found. It is included in this ingredients listing only because the name would seem to suggest that it is a very un-natural and possibly harmful compound (which it does not appear to be.)

Disodium phosphate- Buffering agent, used to adjust pH.

PEG-6 methyl ether- A synthetic polymer made from oxirane (ethylene oxide.) Usually used as a solvent.

Pentasodium pentetate- An inorganic salt used as a water softener, emulsifier and dispersing ingredient in cosmetic cleansing creams, lotions, and soaps. Can be an eye irritant.

Sodium cocoyl isethionate- synthetic detergent. Technically, an anionic surfactant, meaning it reduces surface tension, making water 'wetter'.

Sodium isethionate- synthetic detergent. Technically, a moisture absorber, surfactant and anti-static agent.

Sorbitol- This one also sounds awful, but probably isn't. It is manufactured from corn oil and no hazard or toxicity warnings could be found. It is included in this ingredients listing only because the name would seem to suggest that it is a very un-natural, and possibly harmful compound (which it does not appear to be.)

Stearic Acid is listed in both sets of ingredients. Stearic acid is a saturated fatty acid usually derived from tallow or lard and sometimes palm oil. The use of stearic acid can contribute to a harder, more long-lasting bar of soap.

Tetrasodium EDTA- Synthetic preservative- can be irritating to the eyes/mucous membranes.

Titanium dioxide is a neutral, very white powder used in combination with other colorants. It is not considered to be harmful.

Triclocarban- This is a common anti-bacterial agent. More commonly used is Triclosan. No specific hazards could be found though there is some controversy about anti-bacterials in general, specifically triclosan.

Trisodium etidronate- A preservative. Possible irritant.

As you can see, mass marketed soap contains all kinds of chemicals and preservatives that can potentially harm your skin. Also, they take out the best ingredient (glycerin) that keeps your skin moist and does not dry out your skins natural oils. All of the above reasons are why when people try handmade soap they never go back to their store bought soaps again.

If you would like to try a free sample of Handmade Soap, please visit:

<http://www.schellessoapshack.com/products/Free-Soap-Sample.html>

