



The facts about...

News

The Commission's Scientific Committee gives Parabens a Positive Opinion

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The parabens, a family of preservatives, have been the subject of much mis-information and scare stories.

The safety of all cosmetic products and their ingredients is governed by strict European laws. As well as this, cosmetic ingredients and their safety are kept under constant review by the European Commission and EU member states, assisted by the Commission's independent scientific expert committee (the Scientific Committee for Consumer Safety, SCCS).

The SCCS has been reviewing all the available information and data on the parabens, and has recently issued a draft opinion, open for public comment.

In this draft opinion, the SCCS looks specifically at two parabens - propyl and butyl parabens. The opinion states that these two parabens are safe for use in cosmetic products and proposes limiting their levels.

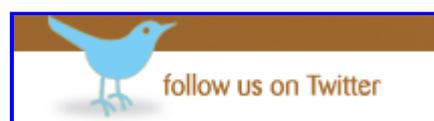
The opinion also re-iterates a previous SCCS opinion confirming the safety of two other parabens, methyl and ethyl parabens.

These opinions are based upon an objective assessment of all of the available scientific data by an independent, expert, scientific committee that advises the European Commission.

The opinion does also state that SCCS found insufficient data to set a safe limit for some other parabens (isopropyl, isobutyl, phenyl, benzyl and pentyl parabens) but additional data were not generated in their support.

The cosmetics industry has consumer safety as its number one priority and this industry is pleased to see independent scientific endorsement of its belief in the safety of parabens after years of misinformed speculation and unfounded prejudice against these safe, effective and important preservatives which play a vital role in protecting consumer health.

We have heard reports that Denmark has decided to takes steps to prohibit propyl and butyl parabens from children's products. We are disappointed by this action, which is not supported by the draft opinion of the SCCS and pre-empts the European legal process that will incorporate the new safe levels for all cosmetics, including those for children, into the cosmetic legislation. We hope that the EU Commission defends its committee's position and challenges this unnecessary action by Denmark and also asks Denmark to provide evidence to defend its actions.



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The Cosmetic, Toiletry and Perfumery Association (CTPA) is the voice of the cosmetic, toiletry and perfumery industry in the UK. Our members vary from small and medium-sized companies to large multi-nationals and include manufacturers, raw material suppliers and service providers.

Our primary goal is to promote good working practice to ensure that consumers are provided with the very best products. To this end, we co-ordinate the industry's viewpoint on key issues such as science, innovation and safety and maintain an open dialogue with government, both at UK and European level, as well as with international regulatory authorities and key opinion formers.

CTPA recognises that the consumer has a right to understand the processes that industry and the regulatory bodies go through to ensure the safety and efficacy of cosmetic and toiletry products. Over the years we have steadily increased our focus on providing the public with direct access to the industry's perspective and progress on safety, science and innovation.

In April 2008 we launched our consumer information website, www.thefactsabout.co.uk, which provides scientific facts about common ingredients used in cosmetics and the industry's perspective on common safety questions as well as information on how products are regulated to ensure safety and efficacy.

Further information on the work of the CTPA is available from our main website www.ctpa.org.uk which also houses the full set of legislation under 'Cosmetic regulations'.

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