



PFAS IN COSMETICS

PFAS in Top Makeup Brands

A recent study¹ found that toxic PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are broadly used in cosmetic products from popular brands in the US and Canada. Researchers found signs of PFAS in over half of 231 samples of products including lipstick, mascara, foundation, eyeliner, concealer, nail polish, lip balm and more. Waterproof mascara, foundation, and liquid lipstick were among the products that most frequently contained high levels of fluorine (an indicator for PFAS). Makeup brands were not disclosed in the study.

What is PFAS?

PFAS stands for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which are a class of compounds used in many consumer and other products for their water-resistant properties. These compounds do not break down naturally and have been referred to as “forever chemicals” due to their persistence in the environment and in the human body.



Why is PFAS a Concern?

Studies have shown links between PFAS and cancer, birth defects, liver disease, thyroid disease, and a range of other serious health problems. PFAS can enter the body through ingestion and can also be absorbed through the skin and tear ducts. For individuals who wear makeup daily, this can mean an accumulation of high levels of PFAS over time. PFAS is also rarely included on labels, making it impossible to determine which products contain these "forever chemicals".

Need for PFAS Regulation

Currently there is no regulation regarding the use or levels of PFAS in cosmetics. However, at the time of this study's release, a bipartisan bill was introduced in the Senate titled the "No PFAS in Cosmetics Act".² Authored by Maine Republican Susan Collins in the Senate and Michigan's Democratic congresswoman Debbie Dingell in the House, this bill would require the Food And Drug Administration to ban the addition of PFAS chemicals in cosmetic products within 270 days. As stated by Senator Collins, "Americans should be able to trust that the products they are applying to their hair or skin are safe".

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1. Heather D. Whitehead, Marta Venier, Yan Wu, Emi Eastman, Shannon Urbanik, Miriam L. Diamond, Anna Shalin, Heather Schwartz-Narbonne, Thomas A. Bruton, Arlene Blum, Zhanyun Wang, Megan Green, Meghanne Tighe, John T. Wilkinson, Sean McGuinness, and Graham F. Peaslee. Fluorinated compounds in North American cosmetics. *Environ. Sci. Technol. Lett.* 2021, 8, 7, 538–544 Publication Date: June 15, 2021
2. Senator Susan Collins. (2021, June 15). Retrieved from <https://www.collins.senate.gov/newsroom/collins-blumenthal-introduce-bill-ban-pfas-chemicals-cosmetics>