

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics

www.SafeCosmetics.org



Steering Committee

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Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow

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Breast Cancer Fund

Commonweal

Dear Jay,

Environmental Working Group

Friends of The Earth

On behalf of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, I would like to express our thanks for meeting with us in August. We enjoyed talking with you and your colleagues in person, the meeting was a positive step forward and we look forward to continuing this important dialogue soon. I am writing to follow up on our conversations at this meeting and to share recent medical papers related to quaternium 15.

Massachusetts Clean Water Fund

We believe we share the same goals of ensuring that personal care products for children – and for all of us -- are as safe as they can possibly be. We hope to see Johnson & Johnson go beyond regulatory compliance and the policies of its competitors to improve the safety and sustainability of personal care products.

Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition

Women's Voices for the Earth

For the health of children, we believe it is imperative that Johnson & Johnson act fast to remove quaternium 15, formaldehyde, 1,4 dioxane and other chemicals of concern from children's body-care products. In the interest of transparency, we encourage you to make public such moves and any other related company safety policies and processes. We would also like to bring to your attention a recent journal article that raises fresh concerns about quaternium 15, the chemical preservative used in a wide range of baby products made by Johnson & Johnson.

Quaternium 15, found in Johnson's Baby Shampoo, "is the most sensitizing formaldehyde-releasing preservative and has been repeatedly shown to be a strong allergen that can cause contact dermatitis," states a peer-reviewed paper in the June 2009 *Journal of Dermatology Nurses' Association* (see attached article).ⁱ

"Quaternium 15 is present in an alarmingly high number of baby products, making exposure and sensitization at an early age increasingly common," states the paper. This is a concern because repeated exposures to sensitizing chemicals, especially in early life, can cause a person to develop allergic reactions over time.

According to the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep database,ⁱⁱ more than 600 cosmetic products contain quaternium 15, and many are baby products labeled "extra gentle" or "for extra sensitive skin." Johnson & Johnson and Cover Girl make the highest number of products in the database containing the chemical.

Johnson's baby products containing quaternium 15 include shampoo, baby wash and head-to-toe body wash – making it likely that children are being repeatedly exposed to sensitizing chemicals, at a time when they are most sensitive to the harmful effects of toxic exposures.

In addition to being a sensitizing chemical itself, quaternium 15 releases formaldehyde, a known allergen and potent sensitizer that has been shown to evoke positive patch test results for contact dermatitis at levels as low as 30 parts per millionⁱⁱⁱ – many times lower than the 200 ppm and above levels of formaldehyde found in two samples of Johnson's Baby Shampoo tested by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics in 2009.^{iv}

According to the North American Contact Dermatitis Group, quaternium 15 may be even more sensitizing than formaldehyde.^v

An estimated 72.9 million adults in US suffer from allergic contact dermatitis, and most are never properly diagnosed, according to a recent cover article in the July 2009 edition of the journal *Skin & Aging*.^{vi}

The article notes that patch-testing to identify allergens is underutilized, resulting in many misdiagnoses. The article's authors conclude that proper diagnosis and avoidance of sensitizing chemicals could help patients avoid a lifetime of contact dermatitis.

We bring these recent articles to your attention in hopes that they will inform Johnson & Johnson in its deliberations about reformulating children's products to remove quaternium 15 and other chemicals of concern. We look forward to our October meeting and we hope your company will soon be able to make public statements about your chemical safety processes and policies. I will be in touch soon with potential dates for this meeting and please let me know if you have any questions about these studies.

Best wishes,

Lisa

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ⁱ Moennich, J., Hanna, D., Jacob, S., et al. Formaldehyde Releasing Preservatives in Baby and Cosmetic Products: Health risks related to exposure during infancy. *Journal of Dermatology Nurses Association*; May June 2009

ⁱⁱ www.cosmeticdatabase.com, search for products containing quaternium 15 on August 10, 2009

ⁱⁱⁱ Jordon, W.P. Jr., Sherman, W.T., and King, S.E., Threshold Responses in Formaldehyde-Sensitive Subjects. *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, 1979 1(1), 44-48

^{iv} Sarantis H, et al. "No More Toxic Tub: Getting Contaminants Out of Children's Bath and Personal Care Products," March 2009, Breast Cancer Fund and Commonweal. www.SafeCosmetics.org/toxictub

^v Zug, K., et al. Contact Allergy in Children Referred for Patch Testing; North American Contact Dermatitis Group data 2001-2004; *Archives of Dermatology* Vol. 144 (No.10) October 2008

^{vi} Jacob, S., Breithaupt A., Environmental Exposures, A Pediatric Perspective on Allergic Contact Dermatitis; *Skin & Aging*, July 2009. <http://www.skinandaging.com/content/environmental-exposures—a-pediatric-perspective-on-allergic-contact-dermatitis>