

Are you ready for safer beauty?

This ebook covers all of the following:

- 7 of the most commonly used toxic ingredients
- Safer sun care products
- How to make a plan to switch to safer products
- How I create my everyday look
- How to switch to safer deodorant
- Safer hair care products
- Safer swaps for the family
- What to splurge on

Are you ready to get some safer beauty education so you are equipped to make *better choices*?

It's really important to know what the **7 of the most commonly used toxic ingredients** are, why you should avoid them, and what great safer beauty swaps are available to help get your body and hormones back in balance!

Please read it over so you can truly understand the importance of safer beauty. And do me a favor and share this with your loved ones!

Safer beauty is a gift that we can share with all the people we care about!



7 Toxic Skincare Ingredients to Avoid & Why

1) PARABENS

Parabens are very common and found in many beauty and skincare products because they increase shelf life. Aside from their antibacterial properties, they act as preservatives which allow products to last much longer.

This is a plus for beauty companies, but definitely a negative for our bodies. It is important to avoid parabens because of their damaging effects on the endocrine system. Parabens mimic estrogen in the body. In other words, our bodies recognize parabens the same way they recognize estrogen — so in essence as a “fake estrogen”. An excess of parabens can result in high estrogen levels in the body which have been linked to breast cancer, skin cancer, decreased sperm count, as well as hormonal imbalances and reproductive issues.

Parabens are found in most makeup, foundation, face washes, face moisturizers, and lotions.

REPLACE WITH THESE SAFE SOLUTIONS: [Tint Skin Foundation](#), [Touchup Concealer Pen](#), [Nourishing Cream Cleanser](#), [Countermatch Adaptive Moisture Lotion](#), [Brightening + Vitamin C Face Oil](#).

2) PHTHALATES

When you see the word phthalates, think plastic. Phthalates are plasticizing chemicals which help lubricate other substances, help lotions and makeup penetrate and soften the skin, and help fragrances last longer. It's quite obvious why companies would want to use these little chemical plasticizers, but rather alarming to think of these substances in our bloodstreams. In recent years, phthalates have been linked to an array of troubling issues to include asthma, ADHD, breast cancer, obesity, type II diabetes, neurodevelopmental issues, behavioral issues, autism spectrum disorders, endocrine disruption, impaired reproductive development, and male fertility issues.

Phthalates are often found in items which contain fragrances and in deodorants, lotions, and hair sprays.

REPLACE WITH THESE SAFE SOLUTIONS: [Primally Pure Deodorant](#), [Nourishing Hand Cream](#), [Rejuvenating Day Cream](#), [Rejuvenating Night Cream](#), [Sea Salt Styling Spray](#), [Citrus Mimosa Body Butter](#).

3) FRAGRANCE

This one is rather misleading as a fragrance is a fairly pleasant sounding thing. I mean, I like things that smell good! However, companies are able to disguise an alarming amount of chemicals by listing this single ingredient.

Unfortunately, these cryptic “fragrances” which are found in many creams and hair products are largely linked to allergies (both food and environmental), skin issues, respiratory problems, hormone disruption, and reproductive issues.

Fragrances are mostly found in creams, moisturizers, and hair products.

REPLACE WITH THESE SAFE SOLUTIONS: [Beautycounter’s Daily Shampoo & Conditioner](#), [Countermatch Adaptive Moisture Lotion](#), [Citrus Mimosa Body Lotion](#), [Primally Pure Dry Shampoo](#), [Rejuvenating Eye Cream](#).

4) SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE (SLS) AND/OR SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE (SLES)

Sodium lauryl sulfate is a synthetic soap which creates a foamy lather as it cleans, and it is present in most body washes, soaps, shampoos, toothpaste, and laundry detergent. Since people have grown accustomed to its presence, many feel as if products MUST have significant lather or they do not work. That is not the case.

SLS/SLES has been known to be an irritant to the skin and eyes and helps other chemicals get into the body because of its identification as a penetration enhancer. It has also been linked to allergies, which have become so common and prevalent these days.

SLS and/or SLES are found in most body washes, soaps, shampoos, toothpaste, and laundry detergent.

REPLACE WITH THESE SAFE SOLUTIONS: [Citrus Mimosa Hand Wash](#), [Citrus Mimosa Body Wash](#), [Kids Body Collection](#), [Beautycounter’s new Hair Care line](#), [BioKleen Laundry Liquid](#).

5) BHA AND BHT

BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole) and BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene) are synthetic antioxidants which are used as preservatives in lipsticks and moisturizers, among other cosmetics. You can also find these widely used as food preservatives. It is obviously cost effective for companies to use ingredients which make their products last longer, but it is disturbing when it is at the cost of our health. BHA and BHT are linked to skin irritation, hormone disruption, liver damage, and they also have been identified as carcinogens.

BHA and BHT are found in most lipsticks and glosses, moisturizers, diaper creams, and other cosmetics.

REPLACE WITH THESE SAFE SOLUTIONS: [Lip Sheer](#), [Lip Gloss](#), [Lip Conditioner](#), [Color Sweep Blush](#), [Primally Pure Body Butter](#), [Baby Oil](#), [Baby Balm](#), [Diaper Cream](#)

6) LEAD

It is common knowledge that lead is very harmful, though most associate it only with paint. Yet more than 60% of all lipsticks and lip glosses contain this neurotoxin, in addition to other makeup items.

Neurotoxins are toxins that are poisonous or destructive to nerve tissue. Applying lipstick multiple times a day leads to significant exposure over time. Lead exposure is extremely dangerous as it has been linked to many negative issues which are becoming more and more common, such as learning disabilities, behavior issues, menstrual irregularities, and infertility. *Lead is found in most lipstick and lip glosses, lip products, and other makeup items.*

REPLACE WITH THESE SAFE SOLUTIONS: [Lip Sheer](#), [Lip Gloss](#), [Color Pinch Cream Blusher](#), [Outline Eye Pencil](#), [Define Brow Pencil](#), [Matte Bronzer](#)

7) TRICLOSAN

Though this one is not found as much in makeup or traditional skin care, it is in a few products which most people use every day. Triclosan is a widely used antimicrobial chemical and a known endocrine disruptor (especially harmful to thyroid and reproductive hormones) as well as a skin irritant. *Triclosan is found in toothpaste, antibacterial soaps, and deodorants.*

REPLACE WITH THESE SAFE SOLUTIONS: [Primally Pure Deodorant](#), [Citrus Mimosa Hand Wash](#), [Apagard Toothpaste](#).

I know -- it's a lot of information. But just start making one swap at a time and before you know it, you will have lightened your toxic load significantly.

I promise it's totally worth it!

Making A Plan to Switch to Safer Beauty Products

Okay, you guys. Let's face it — switching all of your products to safer choices at once is *overwhelming and ridiculously expensive*. **So let's make a plan.**

How to Prioritize Your Safer Beauty Swaps

- Simply start using up your old items and slowly start to replace, one by one or two by two ... whatever works for your budget!
- In terms of priority, first swap out the items you use most often and stay on your face the longest — because these are the things that absorb into your skin for the most hours of the day. Think moisturizers, face oil, foundation, body lotion, and deodorant.
- Stick with the basics that you actually need, love and use every day. When you think about it, you really don't NEED all the things. Buy the staples first, then add the other things along the way.

So today I'm going to share with you how to start making a plan to switch to safer beauty — with my go-to minimalistic daily look and a few things to add on when I need a little more polished or fancy look. I'll also let you in on my morning and evening skincare regimens, just in case you're looking for some ideas.

Please keep in mind that I live in Alaska, so fashion and beauty are not super high on the list of priorities around here. *Staying warm takes precedence over pretty much everything else!*

That being said, I do like to look nice and manage to put some makeup on most days. Of course, that probably has more to do with being in my forties than anything else ... I am definitely at an age when makeup makes me look younger and decent. However, now I know so much more about the need for safer products than when I didn't need as much help ... and I can guarantee that making the switch to safer beauty items will do wonders for your hormones and endocrine system overall.

My Everyday Look

- I don't wash my face in the mornings unless I'm showering (I have really dry skin and Alaska weather does not help!), so I first put on this [Brightening + Vitamin C Mist](#) to moisten my skin and prepare it for the next step (moisturizers and face oils absorb better into damp skin). Then I put on my [Brightening Face Oil](#) and [Rejuvenating Serum](#) and allow it to sit on my skin for at least 15 minutes before I apply any makeup. This is usually when my sacred coffee drinking ritual takes place.
- Before I apply any makeup, I have started using the [Countermatch Adaptive Moisture Lotion](#) as somewhat of a primer. Just one pump is enough for my entire face and really keeps my skin hydrated throughout the day! Then I reach for my [Flawless in Five](#) — these are 6 bundled products that give you that nice and natural look. It includes [Tint Skin Foundation](#), [Touchup Concealer Pen](#), [Powder Blush Duo](#), [Color Define Brow Pencil](#), [Volumizing](#) or [Lengthening Mascara](#), and [Lip Gloss](#). All the colors are customizable, and honestly — you really don't need more than these 6 products for the average day. The Touchup Concealer Pen (AKA the tired mom's best friend) is my favorite — it works its magic on dark circles and blemishes. On days when I will be out in the sun more, I also add the [Dew Skin](#) which contains SPF 20.

***Check out these before and after pics of the 5-Minute Face. I literally snapped them in my kitchen (because it has the best light), and I'm wearing sweats. I just wanted you guys to see it in real life — not in a beautiful setting with filters and gorgeous natural light. **#keepinitreal**



When I Need a Little Extra:

Sometimes I just need MORE, you know? So these are the extras I add:

- [Currant Lip Sheer](#) adds a deeper color to my lips without looking like too much! And then I add a bit of the [Dahlia Lip Gloss](#) on top and voila!! *Fancy!*
- If I wear eye shadow during the day, I just use the [Color Shade Eye Duo](#) Shell & Malt. We currently have the [Winter Jewels palette](#) as part of our holiday collection and it's the perfect addition to the Flawless in Five. (*FYI — If Beautycounter releases one of their limited edition palettes, GRAB IT. The most recent one was Ocean Pacific, and it is truly the most beautiful makeup I've ever owned!*)
- Nothing adds more sparkle to my face than eyeliner. On regular days I use [Beautycounter's Color Outline Eye Pencil](#) in brown, but for events, I prefer a liquid eyeliner. I'm currently using the [Nude Eye Trio](#) for a subtle look and the [Smoky Eye Trio](#) for a dramatic, smoky eye. I'm no

makeup expert, but these sets are so easy to use. These are limited edition holiday sets so grab them before they're gone!

- And I add a bit more [Color Contour Matte Bronzer](#) because *HELLO, Alaska*. Ain't nothin' but pasty white skin up here! And extra coats of mascara to really give my lashes some more oomph :)

My Nightly Routine:

I am a stickler about washing my face EVERY NIGHT. I don't care how late it is, how tired I am, or whatever excuse I can use — I drag myself to the bathroom and wash my face. End of discussion.

If I need to remove my eye makeup, I use the [Instant Eye Makeup Remover](#). I've never been a fan of makeup removers, but this one has changed my mind. It's made without mineral oils or silicones and does not make your face feel greasy or your eyes get all cloudy.

Then I wash my face with the [Nourishing Cream Cleanser](#). Then a little [Rejuvenating Eye Cream](#) followed by my favorite mix —the [Cleansing Balm](#) with a few drops of face oil. I heat it all up in my hands until it turns into this buttery goodness, then massage it onto my face, neck, and hands. It's the ultimate overnight hydrating mask!

There you go, beautiful friends. A safer beauty plan — just switch out one or two things at a time, and before you know it you will have lightened your toxic load significantly! And be the proud owner of gorgeous products that actually work.

Make the switch to safer deodorant



You know what's funny? Switching to safer deodorant was the very first safer product swap I ever made. I think I read something about the dangers of antiperspirants and aluminum, so I started using a natural deodorant. Now did it do the job? *Not really*. But I kinda gave up on finding a natural deodorant that worked AND kept me from smelling like a goat.

But, I found one. And I also figured out a few other things that contribute to smelling nice and clean despite the sweating that occurs during exercise and living in hot climates.

Before I get to my product recommendations, let's take a second to chat about the *importance of switching to safer deodorant*.

Let's think about WHERE we put that deodorant — right on the thin skin of our underarms near all of those important lymph nodes. As I've said before, our skin is our largest organ and absorbs everything we put on it ... eventually making its way into our bloodstreams. And deodorant is one of those items that pretty much ALL of us wear daily, maybe with multiple applications throughout the day. And because the armpit area contains so many lymph nodes, these chemicals can enter the lymphatic system as well. Our lymph has the important job of removing waste from our bodies (I recommend rebounding for the most effective form of lymphatic cleansing!), so let's choose deodorants that aren't full of toxins which require our lymphatic systems to work even harder.

Two things:

1 - Conventional deodorants are full of nasty chemicals which can cause hormonal imbalances and disruption, including parabens, phthalates, fragrance, and triclosan. In addition, most antiperspirants contain aluminum, which is linked to breast cancer and Alzheimer's.

2. We are supposed to sweat! Suppressing the act of perspiration can really interfere with the body's ability to detox properly. Our bodies were designed with the amazing ability to sweat in order to cool the body off and detox from toxins. So stick with deodorant, not antiperspirant.

Okay, let's get to the good stuff!

— My deodorant of choice is [Primally Pure's Sensitive Deodorant](#). I prefer the sensitive version because it contains less baking soda which can be a bit irritating and drying to my skin. My favorite scent is lemongrass!

— I don't shower every day (it's actually better for your skin if you don't! But when I do, I use [Beautycounter's charcoal bar](#) on my pits. Make sure to lather up for a solid 30 seconds to get the detox properties working well!

— I literally drink Liquid Chlorophyll all day long, and I have for years. If you're not familiar with chlorophyll, it is what gives plants their gorgeous green color! So it is found in lots of leafy green vegetables. As for health benefits, it helps support the body's daily detoxification process, supports digestion and elimination, and works as a natural deodorizer. I use this one from [Nature's Sunshine](#) — make sure to pick the Extra Strength version because the ingredients are of a higher quality. It has a spearmint flavor, which I actually love! And take it easy at first — because it can very likely turn the contents of your toilet bowl super GREEN.

And just a heads up -- when you switch to safer deodorant, there is an adjustment period. Be prepared for changes such as different smells and possibly excess sweating. I know that doesn't sound awesome, but it doesn't last long and it's just your body's way of detoxing from the previous formulations that may have contained toxic ingredients. Stick with it!

You guys, this is an important one. I know it may seem like **ONE MORE THING** to do, but the toxins in all these personal care products add up and affect us over time. It may take years for hormone imbalances and other struggles to make themselves known, but what we do now impacts our futures — and our families as well.

So just make the switch to safer deodorant. It's worth it.

My Favorite Safer Hair Products



Let's be real. **Good hair days are literally everything.** *Am I right?*

Unfortunately, they can be hard to come by for a lot of reasons. When I was a kid, I had crazy long hair that was thick and shiny. But then I spent a good decade of my life avoiding fat like the plague, and it changed dramatically. Add in two full-term pregnancies and seven miscarriages, and my hair took a huge hit from all the hormonal imbalances and postpartum readjustments.

Thin, dull, lifeless, brittle, and coming out in clumps. ***Raise your hand if you've ever wondered how you still have hair on your head with all the hair you clean up in your bathroom???***

Hormonal health, stress, adrenal fatigue, excess hormones in our animal protein products, and even toxins in our hair and beauty products can contribute to estrogen dominance — and this can result in hair loss, change

in hair texture, dullness, dry or oily hair, and even hormonal acne. (*The big cystic acne that feels like painful lumps and lasts forever ... the worst!*)

All that to say, you can be using the best and most expensive hair care products on the market — but if you do not get to the root of the problem, the health of your hair will never truly improve.

When it comes to hair health, it's a lot like skin health. We need to address diet, stress, and hormone balance first. Let's focus on nourishing our bodies, allowing optimal function and balance. Then make sure to use safer products which are free from toxic chemicals that contribute to both hormone balance and poor hair health.

Nourish Your Hair From the Inside Out!

Vital Proteins Collagen Peptides

Collagen is one of the few supplements I recommend to all of my clients. This amino acid does lots of wonderful things in the body, but it is a must have for healthy hair, skin, and joints! In fact, stronger nails and hair growth are the first benefits I see when I am consistently taking collagen peptides. I mix a scoop into my morning coffee, as it can be mixed into hot or cold beverages with no taste or change in consistency. I promise! To read more about the benefits of collagen peptides and how to incorporate them into your daily diet, [please click here](#). If you want to skip straight to the collagen peptides I use and recommend, [click here](#).

Eat adequate amounts of high-quality fats

Essential fatty acids (EFAs) are necessary for the maintenance of normal hair growth, so that is why my years of living the fat-free life wreaked havoc on my hair. Proper nutrition is imperative for healthy hair — when we do not get adequate nutrients, the hairs we lose regularly on a daily basis are not replaced easily. We need EFAs to promote hair growth and contribute to that shiny luster we all want. Omega 3 fatty acids specifically have anti-inflammatory properties, which can help to open the hair follicles, promoting healthy hair growth. Proper amounts of Omega 3's also prevent dry and itchy scalps.

Zinc

Zinc is a trace mineral essential for many processes in the body, but it plays a really important role in hair health. Zinc helps build healthy cells, balance hormones, and absorb nutrients in the body — but a common sign of zinc deficiency is hair loss. Boo! Since zinc is not easily absorbable, [I recommend this one](#).

My Favorite Safer Hair Care Products!

Beautycounter's Volume & Shape Line

Kinda like deodorant, I had given up on finding truly safe hair care products. But then [Beautycounter introduced their salon quality products](#) and I realized *I was wrong!* I have a lot of hair but it's very fine and crazy susceptible to frizz — and this set of shampoo, conditioner, and volume spray really does the trick. Shiny hair with lots of volume, *how exciting!* BC also offers Repair & Nourish, Smooth & Control, and the Everyday Shampoo & Conditioner. My husband uses the Everyday line and my boys use the Kids Collection. My only [recommendation](#) is to use LESS than you are used to using with conventional shampoos and conditioners — a little goes a long way!

Primally Pure Texturizing Dry Shampoo

This stuff is a total game changer for me! I used to really dislike dry shampoo, mostly because I knew a lot of them were filled with a bunch of junk (like butane gas, ugh). And the natural ones I tried just looked like I poured baby powder on my very brown hair. Enter [Primally Pure's Dry Shampoo](#) with an option for darker locks — it has cocoa powder in it! I feel like that alone makes me happy. Seriously, though, this stuff works. I sprinkle it on my scalp, make sure to rub it in, then flip my head over and blast the roots with my hair dryer. Voila! Instantly refreshed hair that will give me at least one more day without washing. And, it's safer.

Let's do this, you guys! Good hair days await!

My Favorite SAFE sunscreens.



Ohhhhh, sunscreen. Doesn't it seem as if all the information we get about sun safety is conflicting? Don't go in the sun, it's dangerous! Go in the sun, you need to make Vitamin D! Too much sun causes skin cancer! Not getting enough sun contributes to so many illnesses! *Geez. It's enough to drive a person crazy.*

Long gone are the days when we used to slather ourselves in baby oil and squeeze lemon juice in our hair, thank goodness. *How did we ever think that was a good thing???* But unfortunately, there is still a challenge in understanding how to practice safe sun exposure. Sometimes I feel as if this whole "sun is bad" thing is a lot like the "fat is bad" epidemic.

Let's be clear — exposure to the sun is healthy and has many wonderful benefits! *We just need be smart about our exposure.*

Vitamin D deficiency is a huge epidemic in this country and linked to a whole lot of issues and illnesses. We need Vitamin D for hormone balance and healthy immune systems! **Our best and most bio-available source of Vitamin D is the sunlight** — so why would we do everything we can to avoid it by being covered up in sunscreen all the time?

I know we have been warned repeatedly about the dangers of sun exposure in regards to skin cancer, but the sun is not really the problem. The problem

is when we have unbalanced exposure to the sun. And while this can totally be linked to TOO MUCH sun, it is more often linked to prolonged exposure to the WRONG RAYS. We very often end up using sunscreens that block the rays we actually need while allowing exposure to the harmful rays. *Isn't that crazy? Why would those sunscreens even exist???*

I know this all sounds really doomsday-ish, but I promise it's not. It all comes down to healthy amounts of sun exposure and knowing which sunscreens are doing the safest job of protecting us from the harmful rays.

So let's get to it.

There are two major types of sunscreens: PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL. Physical sunscreens contain ZINC OXIDE which acts as a physical barrier to prevent ALL of the sun's rays from getting to us. Zinc oxide does not penetrate the skin, nor does it convert to anything harmful once it comes in contact with the sun's rays. On the other hand, chemical sunscreens (which are typically the major brands we are all familiar with) use chemicals to block some of the sun's rays but not all of them.

These chemical sunscreens also contain many ingredients which are not only endocrine disruptors and known toxins but can be converted to more dangerous substances once they come in contact with the sun. A very common ingredient in chemical sunscreens that you probably have heard of is OXYBENZONE. Oxybenzone is a very dangerous and toxic ingredient found in most conventional sunscreens and is easily absorbed into the skin — and it's linked to hormone imbalances, testosterone disruption, allergies, endometriosis, and cancer. *Not awesome.*

So the moral of the story is, **use PHYSICAL sunscreen when you are in the sun for prolonged periods of time.** And allow yourself a little healthy sun exposure daily if you can. *(And that, my friends, is why most of Alaska vacations in Hawaii in the winter!)*

So what are my favorite SAFE sunscreens?

[Beautycounter Sun Sticks](#) and [Beautycounter Protect All Over](#) sunscreen.

Both of these have SPF 30 and truly do not leave a white mess everywhere. Keep in mind that when it comes to zinc oxide, you may have better and safer luck with the sun sticks as opposed to the lotion — this is because the ingredients in the lotions can separate and mean less consistent protection. You don't have to worry about separation with the sun sticks. Beautycounter offers a smaller face stick and a larger body stick, which are both super easy to keep in your purse, diaper bag, or beach bag. And Beautycounter eliminates 1500 possibly harmful ingredients even though America only bans 30, so we can trust its safety!

[Primal Life Organics SUN-UP™](#) Before Sun Protector ULTRA STICK.

This sunscreen combines zinc oxide with red raspberry seed oil, which has a natural sun protection. According to the PLO website, "Red raspberry seed oil has a natural SPF of 28-50 AND, because it is loaded with antioxidants, vitamins, and essential fatty acids, it not only protects your skin from harmful rays, but it actually nourishes, fights aging and heals the skin." Plus, Red raspberry seed oil not only offers protection from the sun, but any free radicals that invade your body can be neutralized by the high antioxidant levels of the ingredients found in Sun-Up™" *Yeah, that sounds kinda fabulous in my opinion!*

HERE'S THE TAKEAWAY, YOU GUYS. Don't let any sunscreen on the shelf at your local drug store give you a false sense of security. Do your homework, buy a safer physical sunscreen, and get out there for some time in the sun!

And please please please remember to reapply — one application when you first step out in the sun is not going to cut it. And I don't know about you, if I'm anywhere near a pool or beach I'm staying out there ALL DAY LONG!

My Skin Care Splurges



I think I really and truly started taking care of my skin when I was in my late twenties. My best friend took me to a Houston day spa and booked a facial with a Romanian woman named Elena. **And my world of skincare changed FOREVER.**

This woman, you guys. I can't even begin to tell you how beautiful and amazing she is, and that's just her spirit. When she walks in the room to begin your facial experience, she does reflexology on your feet — and then proceeds to tell you everything going on in your body from the lack of fiber in your diet to the sinus congestion in your left ear. *WHAT???* By the time she examines your face, Elena then lists all the foods you ate (of course mostly bad stuff).

"I see you ate some flour tortillas?" And I never know whether to be freaked out or just totally amazed. I even forced my husband to go last year, and his response after was, *"Ok. I totally get it now. That was unbelievable. She is amazing — she's a total voodoo witch, but completely amazing."* Ha!

Without question, Elena is the reason I take such good care of my skin AND started paying attention to the products that I use. My safer skincare regimen started with her about 12 years ago, and my knowledge has continued to grow. So anytime I schedule a trip to Houston, the first thing I do is text Elena and beg for a facial appointment. Because SERIOUSLY, this

woman is booked out about 3 months in advance. And bless that woman, she always fits me in! Then I know two things will happen — I will drop some serious cash (*don't even care because it's worth it*) and I will learn even more about safer skincare.

Because of all those learning experiences, I'm more than willing to splurge on a few products. I am a total sucker for facial serums, and these two have really been a fabulous addition to my skincare regimen over the past few months. Both are from [Primal Life Organics](#), a truly wonderful safer skincare company that I recommend often.

[Coffee Bean Face Serum](#)

From the PLO website: "Made with Arabica coffee seed oil, collagen protein and argan oil, this amazing serum will help to improve elasticity, encourage regeneration of skin cells, and improve tone, turning back the clock on your skin and making your friends ask about what you've been doing to get such great skin. It's simply the perfect blend of anti-aging squalene, vitamins and essential fatty acids (EFAs) to help restore skin's own elasticity and tone, give your skin its strength and durability and the smooth, plump appearance of young, healthy skin."

Y'all, this smells like a bag of freshly roasted coffee beans. I put it on first thing in the morning (just one or two pumps is more than enough), then take a few seconds to massage it into your skin. I always make it a point to place my hands over my face and take three deep breaths of this amazing goodness, and it's a great way to start the day. Then I head downstairs to put some coffee in my body.

[C-ex Vitamin C Serum](#)

From the website: "This incredibly rich, highly concentrated, nutrient-filled serum combines the most potent oils and vitamin C rich superfoods on the planet to nourish, renew, and revive the skin. With our all-natural, concentrated serum, you'll only be getting the most natural (and most potent) of Vitamin C's anti-oxidant power. And that's why C-ex™--because it's a NATURAL vitamin C serum, utilizing the world's most vitamin C rich oils and superfood extracts to bring your skin back to life by "X-ing" out damage and deterioration!"

This serum has been a total game changer for my skin. I put it on right after washing my face in the evenings: 5 drops total. One for the forehead, one for each cheek, one for the nose and chin, and one on my neck. Massage it into your skin and let it do its magic. I promise you will be surprised at how much work it does when you look in the mirror the following morning. Vitamin C is a powerhouse for the skin — it renews, repairs, and brightens while you sleep! [Shop here!](#)

I know this stuff isn't cheap, you guys. Just keep in mind that when it comes to serums, a little goes a long way. And I would rather spend money on skincare than shoes, so I feel like it all balances out. Kinda. Sorta. Or at least that's what I tell myself ...

Safer product swaps for the family



So, I'm a crazy person about ALL the products we use. My family is totally used to my crazy, but I know it takes some people by surprise. But I could write a book about all the product swaps we have made over the years! Maybe I will one day.

Anyway, I just wanted to give a shout out to some items that I think we should pay attention to — **things that have the potential to really mess with our hormones and bodies if we don't use safer options.** So here's

just a brief overview of our own safer product swaps and recommendations based on what we use in our home.

1) Hand Soap — The good news is that triclosan and other ingredients in antibacterial soaps were recently banned. These ingredients can be so damaging to our endocrine systems. However, companies have a period of time before they have to have those ingredients removed. I am a full up FREAK about hand soap! I won't use the stuff in public bathrooms, and I'm the weird mom who yells at her kids NOT to wash their hands. I literally carry my own hand soap. The same rules apply — avoid those harmful ingredients and select ones with good ratings on the EWG Skin Deep Database. I use [Beautycounter's Citrus Mimosa Hand Soap](#).

2) Nail Polish — Nail polish is full of a lot of junk, but that can't be a surprise to anyone! One whiff of a nail salon and you can smell the chemical buffet that nail products contain. But I love a pedicure just like the next girl, so I buy all of my nail polish from cote shop. All of [Côte's polishes](#) are created free of the major toxins and allergens that are often associated with nail polish: formaldehyde, dibutyl phthalate (DBP), toluene, camphor, formaldehyde resin, TPHP, xylene, ethyl tosylamide, parabens, and gluten. I bring my own cote nail polishes to the salon as well as [Beautycounter's Citrus Mimosa Body Butter](#) and [Lemongrass Sugar Body Scrub](#). I hand my products to the technician and enjoy a safer salon experience. **So we don't have to give up pedicures, yay!**

3) Dishwashing Liquid Soap — Think about it. You wash your dishes, then you eat food off of them. So you're basically eating the soap. We're talking triclosan, phosphates, fragrance, SLS, chlorine, formaldehyde, and ammonia. *No thank you.* Have you guys ever heard of [H2O At Home](#)? It is a French company committed to bringing safe and healthy products into the home. Because it is a European company, it is held to higher standards than the US in terms of ingredient selection (*the European Union bans 1400 potentially harmful and toxic ingredients*). But beyond that, H2O At Home submits to third-party testing, seeks to surpass requirements set by natural and organic charters, and voluntarily complies with strict environmental guidelines. The Dish Soap in Orange & Sweet Marjoram is my favorite! It smells so good. And it lasts forever. And the bottles are gorgeous. Ok, I'm done. [You can find the products here.](#)

4) Dishwashing Detergent — Same argument as above. We are pretty much-eating dishwashing detergent if you use a dishwasher. Don't you want a safer detergent for yourself and your family? I'm going to be straight with you guys — I have tried a ton of dishwashing detergents but none of them work as good as the toxic ones. I still buy safer ones, they just don't clean the dishes as well. So I can't bring myself to recommend one because I don't love any. ***Please let me know if you've found a winner!***

5) Laundry Detergent — Again, let's think about laundry detergent. We wash our clothes, towels, and bed linens with them, and then we have all those things on our skin ALL day long. If your detergent does not contain safe ingredients, every person in your family is being exposed to some pretty yucky chemicals day in and day out. I'm going back to [H2O At Home](#) for this one. The Liquid Laundry Soap in Lavandin & Orange is a great purchase! My other go-to is [BioKleen](#) which can be purchased in most natural groceries or on Amazon.

6) Dryer Sheets & Balls — I know it's crazy, but dryer sheets are one of the most toxic items people can use in their homes. These seemingly harmless sheets that get rid of static cling contain harmful chemicals to include include benzyl acetate (linked to pancreatic cancer), benzyl alcohol (an upper respiratory tract irritant), ethanol (linked to central nervous system disorders), limonene (a known carcinogen) and chloroform (a neurotoxin and carcinogen), among others. In addition, these chemicals get released into the air when they are heated up in the dryer and can cause respiratory issues. *It's just not worth it, you guys.* Use these [Organic Wool Dryer Balls](#) instead! These are crazy affordable and you can add a few drops of essential oil to the dryer ball before you toss it in with wet clothes.

7) Tampons - I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this one, but I do want to address it because many people completely forget about needing safer tampons. But let's face it — we get pretty up close and personal with tampons. And tampon chemicals are absorbed by the vaginal mucosa and then able to pass almost directly into your bloodstream. Many tampons contain fragrance, phthalates, and dioxins, and since they are considered medical devices there is no labeling requirement for ingredients. So do your lady parts and endocrine system a favor — choose tampons without fragrance and use 100% organic cotton. Look for companies who are

transparent and list all of their ingredients. I recommend [Organic Cotton Tampons by The Honest Co.](#) or [Seventh Generation](#).

8) Toothpaste — I know everyone won't agree with me, but I recommend a toothpaste that is free of fluoride. Fluoride is a known neurotoxin, so I make it a point to choose fluoride-free toothpaste. We have used [Earthpaste](#) for a while, but we are currently using [Apagard](#) Preemio and [Apagard Apa-Kids](#) which is formulated for the remineralization of teeth.

Just Remember

As always, just remember to make changes as you run out of your current products. **Don't feel the pressure to switch everything all at once.** All the small steps add up to significant change and improvement!

If you take anything away from this safer beauty series, just know that knowledge is power. We are responsible for our own health, and knowing how to choose safer makes such a HUGE difference.

About Amanda



Hi there! I'm Amanda.

I'm a Pilates Master Trainer, Nutritional Therapy Consultant, Director with Beautycounter, Air Force wife, and boy mom. I am a Texas born and raised girl (or 40-something woman) trying to survive in Alaska, where moose walking around in my backyard is no big thing. I LOVE really strong coffee with a splash of cream and maple syrup. My lifelong dream used to be hitting the stage as a back up dancer for Janet Jackson ... but I've learned to be a little more realistic in life these days.

Now it's Bruno Mars. Have you seen that boy dance???

Anyway, this whole blog and website thing is just me trying to keep the important stuff balanced and real. And it's always a work in progress. Because my life is crazy. Just like yours.

I am married to an amazing man who happens to be an Air Force fighter pilot, and that means that we pack up our lives and start over in a new place every 2-3 years. Uncle Sam tells us we have to move to fill-in-the-blank, and we go. Find a place to live, find new schools, find a new job, find a new hairdresser ... you get the point.

It's fun and exciting and overwhelming and tiring and never boring and pretty much any other adjective you can think of. As any military wife will tell you, we sacrifice because we love our husbands and are so proud to be a part of the United States military family. But it's tough, and I have to work really hard to find balance in my life for not just me but my family as well. I'm on my own a lot without any family around, so I just do my best to keep us all happy and healthy. And like I already told you, we are currently in Alaska. Land of bears and moose and either extreme daylight or nonstop darkness. This place is weird.

I have two beautiful boys, and that means I am constantly on the go and trying to keep up with their schedules, activities, and overall exhausting boy energy. It might be why I love coffee a tad too much. Having kids makes my life a little more hectic and forces me to be a lot less selfish, so I try to just focus on the big things and not sweat the small stuff. They are occasionally going to eat some processed junk, and that's okay. I can't do all the Pinterest things, and I've come to realize my boys don't care. But I can plan a boy's birthday party and decorate a themed cupcake like nobody's business. Star Wars, Indiana Jones, and Harry Potter are my specialties!

I am a Pilates Master Trainer, and that means I get to educate people about this amazing bodywork as well as train others to be instructors of the Pilates method. My Pilates career looks different everywhere I go, so you can find me teaching classes at studios or gyms, instructing private clients, leading instructor trainings and workshops, and always looking to further my own education. I have almost 15 years of teaching under my belt, but there is always more to learn. If you want specifics, I am a Master Trainer of Pilates and Barre for the Pilates Sports Center, I completed my original training with the PhysicalMind Institute, and I am a Pilates Method Alliance Certified Pilates Teacher (PMA-CPT). My most recent endeavor has been flying into the aerial world as an Aerial Fitness Trainer for AIR®.

I am a certified Nutritional Therapy Consultant, and that means I get to help people restore their bodies to health through nutrition and whole foods. As someone who has been through my own health journey which included years of infertility, miscarriages, anxiety, panic attacks, and chronic pain, I know firsthand the importance of learning how to bring your body to a healthy place. After dabbling in natural health for years, I finally took the plunge and completed my training with the Nutritional Therapy Association so I can counsel and educate people to find their own best health.

Along my journey of healing, I spent about three years switching over all of our personal care products to be as clean and toxic-free as possible. After so much trial and error (and a ton of money!), I finally found a company that has done most of the work for me. Beautycounter is a B Corps which has chosen to eliminate over 1500 possibly harmful chemicals, batch tests all their products for heavy metals, and is working hard to get safer products into the hands of everyone. Since the mission aligns so much with what I do as a nutritional therapist, I teamed up with Beautycounter so I can educate more people about the need for products which are not harmful and detrimental to the health our bodies. If I can help people understand the importance of choosing safer products for themselves and their families, I will consider it a huge success.

I believe that God created these bodies of ours and gave us every resource we need to be happy, healthy and well. I know that every hardship I've endured, every mountain I've climbed, and every river I've crossed has made me better in every single way. And through all that junk He has led me to this passion of mine — finding balance in our bodies through real food, healthy movement, and safer products.

I'm just like you. Crazy busy and trying to do the best I can for myself and my family. The only difference is I've completed many certifications and specialized trainings so I can make it work for real people like you and me. If you're looking for perfection, you're in the wrong place. But if you're looking to eat better, move better, and live better, let's hang out. Stick around and see if all that time and money I have invested into my education and training can help you find a well balanced life of your own. You deserve it!

What's next..

You will receive a few emails in regards to the same content that was covered in this ebook. If you have any questions about making a safer switch, just hit reply!



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