1. Toxic Chemicals are in Our Beauty Products and in Our Bodies
Every day we use multiple personal care products—from baby shampoo to deodorant, lotion to mascara—that contain chemical ingredients we absorb through our skin, inhale and ingest. Some of these chemicals are linked to cancer, birth defects, learning disabilities and other health problems epidemic in our society.

2. Small Exposures can Add up To Harm
The cosmetics industry says it’s safe to put toxic chemicals linked to cancer, infertility or other health problems into personal care products because the amount in each product is so small. But none of us use just one product, and we’re exposed to hazardous chemicals through many non-cosmetic sources too.

3. The Government Should be Protecting Us, but It’s Not
The federal law that governs the cosmetics industry is more than 70 years old. And because of major loopholes in this weak law, the FDA doesn’t even have the authority to assess the safety of cosmetic ingredients before they’re put into products we all use. The European Union now bans more than 1,100 chemicals from personal care products because they may cause cancer, birth defects or reproductive harm. In stark contrast, just 10 ingredients are banned from cosmetics in the United States.

4. You Can’t Believe Industry Safety Claims
Manufacturers say their products are safe. But what do those claims really mean? It may mean that the company has tested ingredients it uses only to see if they cause rashes, swelling or other acute reactions. Companies are not required to assess the safety of their products, or to take into account long-term health effects, such as cancer or infertility.

5. The $50-Billion U.S. Cosmetics Industry Routinely Opposes Laws that Would Protect Consumers and the Environment
The cosmetics industry trade association has lobbied against laws that would control pollution at cosmetics manufacturing plants, require recycled content in packaging and add more consumer safety information on labels. The industry says it can regulate itself. An industry-funded panel—not the FDA or any other government agency—currently reviews the “safety” of cosmetics.

6. We Have to Protect Ourselves Until We Convince the Government to Protect Us
The highest-concern products categories are:
- Hair color and bleach
- Hair relaxer
- Nail polish
- Skin lightener
- Nail treatment

7. Two of the Highest-Concern Cosmetics are Marketed to Women of Color
Products promising lighter skin and straighter hair are problematic because of their message about what is considered beautiful. But the Skin Deep Report shows that some hair relaxers and skin lighteners share a second problem: they contain ingredients such as hydroquinone, placenta, and petroleum byproducts that are linked to cancer, reproductive and hormonal problems and some of them sensitize the skin, which means that dangerous ingredients are more likely to penetrate the body.

8. Even Ingredients that are Known to Cause Harm can be Put into Personal Care Products
Few ingredients have been assessed for long-term health impacts, but those that have and are known or suspected to be toxic are still allowed in cosmetics. Some of the most problematic are FRAGRANCE, PLACENTA, LEAD ACETATE, PHThALATES, HYDRO-QUINONE, NANOPARTICLES and PETROCHEMICALS.

9. Men and Children are not Immune to these Problems
It is perfectly legal for companies to use carcinogens in bubble bath and unidentified fragrance ingredients in baby shampoo. During each bath time, babies may be exposed to dozens of chemicals that have never been assessed for safety. And men’s after-shave lotions, anti-dandruff shampoos, teeth whiteners, sunless tanning products, hair-removal products and colognes may contain ingredients linked to cancer and other adverse health impacts.

10. The Word ‘Natural’ on a Product Label Doesn’t Mean It’s Safe or Natural
Laws do not regulate the use of words like “natural” and “organic” on cosmetics and personal care products. While seals like “USDA Certified Organic” do have standards, some products with organic ingredients can still contain harmful chemicals.

Fact: The skin is the largest organ of the body; over 70% of what is placed on the skin manages to seep into the body and our bloodstreams.
Fact: Women, on average, apply over 5 pounds of lotions and creams to their skin annually.
Fact: There are over 10,500 chemicals used to manufacture cosmetic products in the U.S.

Tell Your Cosmetics Companies You Want Safe Products!!
L’Oreal (Garnier, Maybelline, Lancome, Redkin): 1.800.322.2036
Estee Lauder (MAC, Prescriptives, Origins, Aveda, Clinique): 1.877.311.3883
Procter and Gamble (Clairol, Cover Girl, Max Factor, Olay, Noxema): 1.800.725.3926
Revlon (ColorStat, Almay, Flex): 1.800.473.8566
Avon: 1.800.455.AVON

References and Further Resources:
The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics: www.safecosmetics.org
Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow: www.healthytomorrow.org
Women’s Voices for the Earth: www.womensvoices.org
National Black Environmental Justice Network: www.nbejn.org
Environmental Working Group: www.ewg.org