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# 5 Ingredients That Make Your Deodorant Dangerous

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## 5 Hazardous Deodorant and Antiperspirant Ingredients

Rubbing chemicals on your skin doesn't mean they will make it to your bloodstream. However, blood testing shows many of the chemicals used in deodorants are able to permeate your skin and are found in your blood.<sup>16</sup> Here are five common antiperspirant/deodorant ingredients that may pose a health risk.

✓ **Aluminum:** This product is used in antiperspirants to block your sweat glands and reduce the amount of sweat you secrete. It doesn't reduce the amount your body produces, only the amount that is secreted through your follicles. As mentioned, aluminum will also kill off some bacteria under your arms that don't produce strong body odor, allowing those bacteria that do produce a pungent odor to proliferate. Aluminum is a metal that may increase gene instability in breast tissue.<sup>18</sup> This instability may be related to changes promoting the growth of tumors. Although this is not proof that aluminum is a causative factor, those who use products containing aluminum tend to have higher rates of breast cancer.

✓ **Parabens:** Parabens are preservatives used in many different types of personal care products, including moisturizers, deodorants, sunscreens, shaving creams and gels, hair products and make up. Parabens are associated with changes to the production and regulation of estrogen and other hormones in your body as they penetrate your skin and act like a weak estrogen. Although the American Cancer Society (ACS) and National Cancer Institute (NCI) deny conclusive evidence of an increased risk to your health, laboratory data from the University of Reading demonstrates mixing different types of parabens, as you would by using different personal care products, may increase the estrogenic effect in your body.

✓ **Phthalates:** These compounds help your personal care products stick to your skin or hair. This means anything you use with fragrance that lingers has phthalates to improve the stability of the scent. Hair shampoo, lotions, perfumes, deodorants, body sprays, antiperspirants, body wash and soap all contain phthalates that continue to build up in your body over time. The compound appears to disrupt the androgen functions in your body. You may think of androgen and testosterone as strictly male hormones, but the female body uses this hormone as well to build and maintain muscle, and it plays a role in energy maintenance. Phthalates are toxic to reproductive glands in both men and women.<sup>24</sup> Fetal development in pregnant women may be affected, and research has linked the compound to reduced IQs and asthma.

✓ **Triclosan:** This chemical is so commonly used in products that 75 percent of Americans have detectable triclosan levels in their bloodstream. Although a common ingredient in antibacterial soaps, cosmetic manufacturers use it to kill bacteria on the skin in products such as anti-acne creams, deodorants and antiperspirants. Animal studies have linked triclosan with unusual hormonal activity, and through transdermal absorption it can disrupt the bacterial growth in your gut. According to Patisaul: “There’s evidence from amphibians and fish ... that triclosan impairs thyroid function, which is crucial for brain development. To my knowledge, there aren’t any clear benefits associated with it when used in underarm products.”

✓ **Fragrances:** The chemical ingredients in scents are concealed and protected by trade law. You may experience allergic reactions or skin irritation from fragrances contained in deodorants and antiperspirants.

## Giving Up Deodorant and Antiperspirant

Giving up your chemical wash every morning is not as difficult as you might think. There are several natural options you may experiment with to find the combination that works for your unique bacterial colonization.

✓ **Nothing:** When you don’t add an antiperspirant or deodorant to your morning routine, your odor may increase for a week or two until the bacterial growth under your arms stabilizes. Just like reducing or eliminating daily showers may help balance the natural oils on your skin, eliminating all deodorants may help your body to balance your natural odor.

✓ **Lemon or Lime:** The citric acid in lemons and limes kill odor-producing bacteria. Simply cut a lemon or lime in half and rub it under your arms. You can seal the fruit in a glass container, refrigerate it and reuse it. Just be sure you label it so it’s not used in your next meal!

✓ **White or Apple Cider Vinegar:** Both white and apple cider vinegar will also kill bacteria. Neither product requires refrigeration. Fill a spray bottle with white or apple cider vinegar and keep it in the bathroom.

✓ **Baking Soda and Water:** Just like in your refrigerator, baking soda neutralizes odors on your body. Keep the container in the kitchen so it isn’t affected by the higher humidity in the bathroom. Sprinkle a little in the palm of your hand and dip a couple of wet fingers in the powder. Spread it under your arm.

✓ **Hydrogen Peroxide:** Hydrogen peroxide works by breaking the membranes of bacteria and reacting with catalase inside the cell. This causes the foaming you see. Mix a teaspoon of 3 percent solution with 8 ounces of water. You can increase the amount of hydrogen peroxide if needed. Dab on with a cloth or use a spray bottle.

✓ **Tea Tree and Coconut Oils:** Both oils are naturally antibacterial. Tea tree oil can be diluted — two to three drops in an ounce of water. Coconut oil may be used as a moisturizer under your arms, especially directly after shaving. You could also add a drop of tea tree oil to a small amount of coconut oil, and spread that under your arms.

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