

SLS Free

A Guide to SLS Free Products

www.slsfree.net



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What is Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS)?

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (commonly known as SLS) is an inexpensive detergent added to a huge number of personal care products such as shampoos, toothpastes, and soaps. Its purpose is to increase the lather that these products produce which assists with cleaning. SLS is produced by adding Sulfonic Acid and Dodecanol. This process is better known as Esterfication. Once this has taken place it is then neutralized with Sodium Carbonate which then results in Sodium Lauryl Sulfate.

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate is also known as:

Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate, Lauryl Sodium Sulphate, Sodium n-Dodecyl Sulphate, and Lauryl Sulphate Sodium Salt.

Technically, SLS is a surfactant (surface active agent). This essentially means that it breaks the surface tension between two liquids, or a liquid and a solid. In the case of shampoo this helps lift away oils and dirt from your hair more effectively.

While it does help cleaning products perform better, many are skeptical of using products that contain SLS because it is known to irritate the skin, gums, and scalp. But is it more than just a skin irritant? There are many who are concerned about the long term health risks that SLS containing products can pose.

Is SLS Dangerous?

In the late 80's a chain letter email was circulated claiming that SLS was a cause of cancer. While this has since been discredited by the American Cancer Council, rumors persist about the potential dangers of SLS.

SLS is not identified as a carcinogen, however it is known as a skin irritant. To combat its ability to irritate the skin, it can sometimes be ethoxylated. This means that Ethylene Oxide is added. Once Ethylene Oxide is added to SLS it becomes a compound known as Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES). During this process it can potentially be contaminated with 1,4 dioxane which is listed as a possible carcinogen by the U.S. Environment Protection Agency. Ethylene Oxide also has the potential to cause damage to the central nervous system, liver, and kidneys.

So while it's simple for manufacturers who produce SLS containing products to deny claims that they are dangerous, the truth is that it's reliant on the manufacturing process. This ultimately means that we are placing a lot of trust in the manufacturers of these products as there is no mandatory testing required before being released to the public.

This is what the International Journal of Toxicology has to say about SLS:

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate appears to be safe in formulations designed for discontinuous, brief use followed by thorough rinsing from the surface of the skin. In products intended for prolonged contact with skin, concentrations should not exceed 1%.

Unfortunately you won't find these percentages listed on most personal hygiene labels. However it is believed that the percentage of SLS found in many shampoos for instance can exceed these recommendations by a considerable amount. In some cases levels have been reported as high as 20%.

Long Term Effects of SLS

The most concerning aspect of Sodium Lauryl Sulfate is the long term effects, which are largely unknown. Testing of chemicals such as SLS is not performed over a long period where residual levels may build up over time, creating a compound effect. Chemicals such as SLES are known to take a very long time to break down organically.

We all wash our hair, brush our teeth, and clean our skin on a regular basis. Some of us may wash our hair every day. As the chemical becomes absorbed these levels build up over time, especially if used daily.

Toothpastes can also be absorbed and even swallowed. In fact if swallowed, SLS can be responsible for Nausea and Diarrhea. It is generally considered to be more of a health issue if absorbed by the skin, as enzymes in the mouth will break down the chemical more effectively than skin absorption.

Buying and Using SLS Free Products

In most cases you will notice a difference when using an SLS free product, particularly the amount of lather or foam produced. When it comes to toothpaste you may need to experiment with a few brands before you find the one that works for you.

This is especially true when it comes to taste. Some organic toothpastes can be a little difficult to get used to. Don't be surprised if your children aren't initially thrilled about the taste.

Switching to an SLS free shampoo may also take some adjustment. Most organic shampoos do not produce as much lather as shampoos that contain sulfates. This can give you the impression that your hair is less clean. Sulfates strip out natural oils thus leaving your hair and scalp feeling dried out. This is often mistakenly associated with 'feeling clean'.

In the following pages I will be listing the most popular SLS free personal hygiene products based on consumer feedback. While you are no doubt aware of SLS free toothpastes and shampoos, you may be surprised to know that there are a number of SLS free products that include: body wash, soap, and laundry detergents.

Please note that prices and sizes are current as of time of writing. To read more reviews and a full list of ingredients, simply click the product title.

SLS Free Shampoo

Listed below are 5 of the top SLS free shampoos available on Amazon. Simply click on the product name to be taken directly to the site.

*Prices are current as of publication

Product		Size	Price	Description	Rating /5
Sage Shampoo for Heavy Dandruff		8 oz.	\$17.95	If you have dandruff then there is no better option. This formula contains a mix of natural oils.	5
Paul Mitchell 2 in 1 Shampoo and Conditioner		8.5 oz.	\$18.00	A tremendous value. The product also has a great scent.	5
Pura d'or Anti-Hair Loss Shampoo		16 oz.	\$35.99	If you're looking to stop hair loss then this is the brand for you. Great reviews.	5
Paradise Island Shampoo		16 oz.	\$20.99	Spa quality without the sulfates.	4
Tea Tree Shampoo		8.8 oz.	\$15.95	This tea tree shampoo gets rid of dandruff and dead skin cells.	4

SLS Free Conditioner

Listed below are 3 of the top SLS free conditioners available on Amazon. Simply click on the product name to be taken directly to the site.

*Prices are current as of publication

Product		Size	Price	Description	Rating /5
Pura D'or Conditioner		16 oz.	\$19.99	Works especially well for weak, dry hair. Salon quality at a reasonable price.	5
Christina Moss Conditioner		3.2 oz.	\$18.99	A quality product that is great for those with sensitive skin.	4
WEN® Fig Cleansing Conditioner		32 oz.	\$35.00	This conditioner is great for replenishing damaged hair.	4

SLS Free Toothpaste

Listed below are 4 of the top SLS free toothpastes available on Amazon. Simply click on the product name to be taken directly to the site.

*Prices are current as of publication

Product		Size	Price	Description	Rating /5
Verve Ultra		4.5 oz.	\$25.00 (pack of 4)	Popular and well reviewed, this toothpaste leaves your mouth feeling fresh. Contains fluoride.	5
Tom's of Maine Clean and Gentle Care		5.9 oz.	\$37.00 (pack of 6)	A well-known brand, Tom's toothpaste tastes great.	4
Sensodyne Pronamel Gentle Whitening Toothpaste		4 oz.	\$9.89	A name brand whitening toothpaste that gets the job done.	4

SLS Free Body Wash

Listed below are 4 of the top SLS free body washes available on Amazon. Simply click on the product name to be taken directly to the site.

*Prices are current as of publication

Product		Size	Price	Description	Rating /5
Alaffia Everyday Shea Body Wash		32 oz.	\$13.00	This product uses natural oils to keep your skin fresh and moisturized.	5
Nurture My Body		8 oz.	\$21.95	Perfect for sensitive skin, it has a blend of botanicals and vitamins.	4
Beesential Body Wash		8 oz.	\$8.99	A unique honey formula that smells great.	4
Lavender Body Wash		14 oz.	\$17.30	Lavender is known to soothe the body and spirit. This product will make your skin feel soft and silky.	4

SLS Free Soap

Listed below are 4 of the top SLS free soaps available on Amazon. Simply click on the product name to be taken directly to the site.

*Prices are current as of publication

Product		Size	Price	Description	Rating /5
Dr. Bronner's Pure Castile Liquid Soap		32 oz.	\$16.19	A well-made soap that is perfect for everyday use. Contains lavender and hemp.	5
Out of AfricaBar Soap		8.5 oz.	\$9.96 (pack of 4)	This long lasting soap is made from shea butter and is known for its healing abilities.	5
Tom's of Maine Moisturizing Bar Soap		16 oz.	\$14.34 (pack of 6)	Tom's soap is made from all natural ingredients.	4
One With Nature Dead Sea Mud Soap		12 oz.	\$3.99	This soap is especially good for dry skin. It also has a pleasant aroma.	4

SLS Free Baby Products

Listed below are 5 of the top SLS free baby products available on Amazon. Simply click on the product name to be taken directly to the site.

*Prices are current as of publication

Product		Size	Price	Description	Rating /5
Sweet Baby Shampoo		8 oz.	\$10.99	A premium shampoo made specifically for babies. Salon quality.	5
Burt's Bees Baby Bee Bubble Bath		12 oz.	\$21.61	This product is tear-free so your baby will enjoy bathing without any problems.	4
Baia Baby Organics Shampoo and Body Wash		16 oz.	\$14.99	A 2-in-1 shampoo and body wash that will soothe and nourish your baby. Tear free.	4
Baby Ganics Baby Lotion		17 oz.	\$14.14 (pack of 2)	This formula was designed to protect your baby's skin by keeping it soft and moist.	4
Baby Banana Brush and Tooth Gel		4 oz.	\$10.39	An effective training tool for your baby. The gel is fluoride free.	4

SLS Free Detergent

Listed below are 3 of the top SLS free baby products available on Amazon. Simply click on the product name to be taken directly to the site.

*Prices are current as of publication

Product		Size	Price	Description	Rating /5
Molly Suds Natural Laundry Powder		120 loads	\$20.24	This is the absolute best detergent available. The reviews speak for themselves.	5
Eco Nuts Natural Laundry Soap		10 oz.	\$16.73	Made from soapberry extract, you only need to use one teaspoon per load.	4
Eco Sprout Laundry Detergent		96/192 loads	\$24.95	Eco-friendly with a great smell. You can't go wrong with this brand.	4