



Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate – Is this ingredient in your products?

There is a great deal of awareness today about the ingredients that we do not want to see in our products that we use daily on our skin and on the skin of our children. However, consumers are still being misled by the terms 'natural' and 'organic', when the focus really needs to be on **safe** products. For a product to be able to use the word 'natural' or 'organic', it only needs to have one natural or organic ingredient and the rest of the ingredients can be harmful, toxic and certainly not safety-conscious!

There are many companies attempting to cash in on consumer awareness by advertising 'No Sodium Lauryl Sulphate', 'No Propylene Glycol', 'No Parabens', no this and no that. Consumers buy these products because they are truly interested in protecting their health, the health of their families and the health of the environment, which is great to see! However, they are still being misled. Just last year, the company Natural Instinct was ordered to change their labels, provide refunds to customers and place corrective full page notices in Sunday newspapers and major women's magazines, after the ACCC found them to be incorrectly listing the ingredient "Sodium Lauryl Sulphate" as something entirely different. This was in spite of their prominent advertising campaign claiming "NO Sodium Lauryl Sulphate" in their product range. Hmmm, misleading indeed!

More recently, an ingredient called **Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate** has been brought to our attention, as we are often asked about the ingredients in various brand products.

Suttocide is a trade name for **Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate**, which is a broad spectrum anti-microbial. It has become more widely used in personal care products, especially those claiming to be organic, as it's derived from glycine, which is an amino acid that occurs naturally. It is even claimed by some products to be a 'Natural preservative'. This practice of calling a synthetic chemical that is derived from natural materials is also known as 'greenwashing' and is a deceptive practice by companies wanting to cash in on the organic movement.

Testing of Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate has found it to be non-sensitizing, non-irritation, non-toxic by skin absorption and non-mutagenic. However, Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate has been shown to decompose in water to form formaldehyde and sodium glycinate. Formaldehyde is classified as a human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and for this reason it is recommended to avoid products that have it as a preservative. Fortunately the safety-conscious products we use, do not contain Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate or formaldehyde or formalin (another name for formaldehyde).

We were asked to check various product brands including **Akin, Alchemy, Gaia, Sukin, Natural Instinct** and **Tri-Nature**, that appeal to consumers as natural or organic choices and we found that they ALL used Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate. They list in brackets or after the ingredient "amino acid derived", "vegetable" or "a naturally occurring amino acid" which sounds harmless enough, unless you actually know what the ingredient is.

Is this ingredient in your products? You may want to check the labels!