New York Times columnist Mark Bittman isn’t content just to scare people on food issues he’s now branched out into other topics. Today he writes in The Cosmetics Wars [1], about how American consumers are purportedly covering their faces, lips and hair with a long list of toxins.

Some 400 hair dyes and lipsticks contain lead – you might not want to kiss your kids if you’re wearing lead-tainted lipstick, Bittman warns.

ACSH’s Dr. Josh Bloom (who has a Ph.D. in chemistry) suggests, if Bittman doesn’t want to kiss anyone, perhaps he should kiss a freshman chemistry book instead. His ignorance is mind-boggling.

It goes on like that. Mark Bittman’s column is replete with nonsense and the oft-repeated, baseless pseudo-scientific scare tactics. His complete absence of knowledge, much less expertise in chemistry and toxicology, is exposed by referring to “known carcinogens” such as formaldehyde.

In fact, the federal panel which ascribed “carcinogen” status to formaldehyde has been roundly debunked; according to the panel’s own data, the exposure alleged to cause the minuscule cancer risk is derived from decades of exposure among people who worked daily with high exposures to the chemical.

Worst of all, he asserts that the questionable ingredients in cosmetic products haven’t been tested by any means at all, says ACSH’s Dr. Gilbert Ross. This is utterly false. The fact is, the cosmetics industry tests its products rigorously: The proof of which is that, despite all the alarms raised by know-nothings like Bittman, the EWG and similar alarmist groups, no one can point to anyone being harmed by these thousands of products, used by millions for decades.

The recent apparent increases in various diseases he insinuates have something to do with cosmetics do not correlate with a similar increase in cosmetic use nor any chemical exposures, so where is the logic in such innuendo? There is none his warnings are merely the sky is falling alarmism, designed to get attention but of no other use.

For a more science-based discussion on cosmetic safety please read the ACSH report [2] What’s the Story: Cosmetics, How Do They Look in the Light.