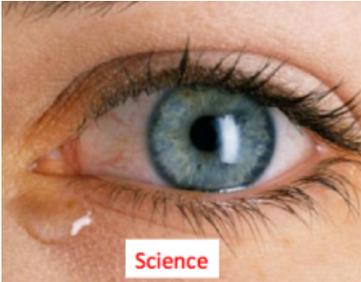


No More Tears shampoo, no more fears? Not so fast

By ACSH Staff — January 21, 2014



It's not just another day in the office of environmental group X. Big

decisions have to be made.

Have they milked a phony scare of chemical Y to the point of diminishing returns, or are there still enough people to terrify to keep this one going?

In the end it doesn't really matter, because chemical Y will eventually be replaced by chemical Z, and the scientific extortion process will start again.

Well, it looks like it may be time to dust off chemical Z, because environmental and consumer groups have [finally bullied](#) [1] Johnson and Johnson into removing a preservative called quaternium-15 from its No More Tears baby shampoo. The chemical acts by slowly decomposing to give miniscule amounts of formaldehyde the actual preservative.

How minuscule? According to J&J scientists, the amount of formaldehyde (which is naturally produced in your body anyhow) is about one-fifteenth the amount found in an apple. OMG!

But you can't be too careful says Heather White, executive director of the Environmental Working Group (EWG), the parent organization of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. She then added, Will a kid get cancer because there's formaldehyde in their shampoo? We don't know the answer to that. But why is there a carcinogen in their shampoo? When in doubt, take it out.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom, who is quite familiar with these tactics notes, Same old. Take a chemical that does something or other at a ridiculously high exposure level in the case of formaldehyde there is a slight increase in nose and throat cancer in embalmers, who just about bathe in the stuff over a lifetime and intentionally correlate this with what happens at exposures that are millions of times lower. The answer is nothing. And these guys know it. But it sure is good for business. It would be difficult to come up with a better example of a more effective activist group campaign than this?

Speaking of safety, is the new formula really any safer?

Dr. Bloom says, Let s look at some chemicals in the new formula, cause some of them sure look mighty worrisome to me.

New chemicals added:

Sodium benzoate (aka benzoic acid): A soda preservative that has falsely been claimed to break down to benzene, a known carcinogen. But maybe it does anyhow.

Sodium hydroxide: The active component of Drano.

Sodium Trideceth Sulfate: A detergent. Oh oh.

Two different artificial dyes: Harmful? Who knows? But when in doubt take them out.

Cocamidopropyl betaine: The EWG says that it has been associated with irritation and allergic contact dermatitis, reactions that could be due to the ingredient itself or to impurities present.

Ethylhexylglycerin: It s slippery. Be careful!

Phenoxyethanol: From the EWG website Other HIGH concerns: Irritation (skin, eyes, or lungs), Occupational hazards; Other MODERATE concerns: Organ system toxicity (non-reproductive)

Citric acid Watch out!. You could get hit by a truck delivering it.

If this sounds ridiculous to you, it is. And so are the claims about the original formula. But J&J was forced to make these changes because of falsely perpetuated claims, not science. But it has accomplished nothing, and has cost them millions of dollars - and who do you think will wind up paying this increased cost?

Dr. Bloom concludes, There isn t a single chemical around that won t be toxic at some dose. But by cynically taking advantage of the public s ignorance of science and a general fear of all chemicals, these groups get funding, publicity, and recognition. In this case they made Johnson and Johnson fold up like a three dollar lawn chair. Others will inevitably follow.

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