

Natural Bar Soaps for the Kitchen and Bathroom

Good natural bar soaps that contain only substances that are good for your skin are available, although most people pay little attention to them. Many people might be unaware of the fact but the skin is the largest organ of the body. As such, the skin needs taken care of just as much as any other major organ, yet few people pay much attention to what they bring into contact with it. Although a lot of money is spent on body products, do you really know what your skin needs for optimum health and what substances can do it harm?

Your skin carries out many functions other than keeping the bits inside that should be kept inside. It is a natural thermostat, containing the sweat glands that dampens it and allows evaporation to cool you down. It contains hairs and subcutaneous fat, both of which help you to remain warm when the external temperature is low. Your skin is designed to remain supple, and so allow free movement of the various parts of your body.

It is an ideal waterproof covering for your body that also protects you from infection. Although infection can set in if the skin is ruptured through cuts or grazes, the skin itself rarely suffers from surface infections when related to the number of infectious agents it is constantly in contact with.

The health of your skin is very important, especially in view of the fact that it regularly comes into contact with some very hazardous substances. What may not have occurred to you is that one of the many functions of your skin is to eliminate some of the body's waste products. It does this when you sweat and the toxins that are emitted can harm it. Although not often infected, it does suffer from complaints such as psoriasis, eczema and acne that are not primarily caused by bacterial agents or viruses, and hence not true infections.

These conditions, however, are caused largely through the emission of toxic agents through the sweat glands. Acne for instance is caused by excessive emission of sebum that combines with dead skin cells to form acne which can also become infected with bacteria. Psoriasis is the excessive formation of skin cells at too rapid a rate, the true causes of which are as yet unknown. Skin cells can become cancerous due to excessive exposure to sunlight or ultra violet radiation, and skin cancer is the most common type of cancer that your doctor is liable to come across.

If you suffer from any specific skin condition, such as acne, or even dry skin that can be caused through excessive exposure to degreasing agents or dry winds, then your skin will need special care. The soap you use is very important in the way you care for your skin, and many people will use soaps that contain many ingredients that they cannot pronounce let alone understand.

Your skin needs cleansed regularly since it comes into contact with many dangerous and toxic substances. Apart from the everyday pollution of traffic fumes and factory emissions, there are also the substances that contaminate your skin at work and at home. At home specially, domestic cleaners can be very harsh on your skin, consisting of substances that are intended to clean away greases and oils, the very types of substance that protect your skin from the elements. When you clean your oven or your sink without gloves, you also clean off the protective oily layer on your skin and leave it open to bacterial attack.

Your skin can also become sensitized to many substances, so that whenever it comes into contact with them it promotes an allergic reaction that can cause irritations so severe that your life can become very miserable. Many people are allergic to various types of soap or detergent because they have become sensitized to them, and are unable to use that type of cleanser after sensitization.

Many soaps contain active ingredients that are intended to carry out specific functions. Thus, some contain antibacterial agents to inhibit the growth of specific types of bacteria on your skin, while others contain detergents to improve their cleaning power. However, some detergents can be very harsh on your skin, and try to avoid bar soaps containing PEG-6 methyl ether or butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT). These can be harmful to your skin. There are others, and if your skin is sensitive try to avoid soaps containing animal products or petroleum derivatives.

Take tetrasodium EDTA, which is present in common bar soaps. It enhances the penetration of substances through your skin, which means that it can also enhance the penetration of the less welcome ingredients in the soap as well as the moisturizers. Substances as sodium etidronate that is a synthetic preservative that might cause irritation to your skin and mucus membranes. There are several other synthetic detergents that are ingredients in bar soaps, and many kitchen soaps contain the same ingredients as personal or bathroom soaps, the difference between them being only in their moisturizer and perfume content.

Other ingredients than can cause potential problems are limonene, linalool and camphor, all of which can give rise to unwelcome conditions such as irritation or respiratory problems. The first two of these are common in bar soaps, as are benzaldehyde and benzyl alcohol which are irritants. Alpha-pinene, found in some bar soaps, is a sensitizer than can damage your immune system. Unless you know what a specific ingredient is, don't use the soap. Instead you should use pure natural bar soaps containing antioxidants that are good for your skin.

A pure soap should contain the fat or oil that it is made from, good examples being coconut or palm oils, water, a water softener to enable the soap to cleanse the skin properly, an example being one of the penetrates, a moisturizer such as glycerine or lanolin and possibly a perfume derived from natural sources. Salt is also frequently used, and is a good bactericide.

Wherever possibly, you should choose a natural soap containing antioxidants. Citrus soaps, for example, contain vitamin C although many soaps contain antioxidants such as beta carotenes, vitamin A and vitamin E. Since soap consists of both oils and water, you can have both oil and water soluble antioxidants in your soap. The antioxidants help to protect your skin from the ravages of pollution and the effects of the sun's rays, both of which generate free radicals that can accelerate the aging and wrinkling of your skin.

A good antioxidant, moisturizer and wetting agent in your bar soap will help to protect your skin from the effects of atmospheric pollutants, the drying effect of the sun and wind and also effectively cleanse the skin surface and pores of everyday dirt. If this is associated with an absence of synthetic chemicals that can cause irritation then you will be giving your skin the best protection that you can. This is true of soaps intended either for the kitchen or the bathroom.

About the Author

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