

ELLESCA™

A natural gift of beauty from the Mediterranean

All-Natural Body Care? Depends Who You Ask

The International SPA Association called "going green" one of the top trends for 2008, with almost three-quarters of spas reporting eco-friendly policies.

The trend toward environmental consumerism goes hand in hand with clients' requests for all-natural, organic body care products.

But consumers frequently are not aware that a product's "natural" ingredients label has no industry definition or standard.

A recent story by The New York Times noted that the F.D.A., which oversees the cosmetic industry, "has never imposed standard definitions for marketing terms like *natural* and *organic* as they apply to grooming products." Thus body care manufacturers can call a product *organic* even if the product is synthetic-based with only one plant derivative.

According to the Organic Consumers Association, "The word *organic* is not as carefully regulated on personal care products... as it is on food products – unless you see the 'USDA Organic' seal. If the product does not have the seal and claims to be organic, it may have some organic ingredients, but it also likely has many nonorganic and synthetic ingredients."

MSNBC.com reports, "More and more products, especially cosmetics and household cleaners, are adopting a 'natural' look, eschewing the bright colors of old and replacing them with a cleaner, softer design." But that does not mean the ingredients are natural. Best advice, MSNBC says, is to read the labels.

The personal care industry is self-regulated, united in large part by the Personal Products Care Council, which approached the federal government with the idea in the early 1970s. The Council's 600+ members represent the biggest names in the personal care industry and unite the industry research and standards for the US market.

Ellesca
Spotlight:

Our Ingredients



What Ellesca Is:

ESSENTIAL OILS
HERB EXTRACTS
NATURAL SALTS

What Ellesca Is Not:

NO SODIUM LAURYL
SULFATE
NO PARABEN
NO MINERAL OIL
NO ANIMAL TESTING

[Our Ingredients...](#)

ELLESCA™

Our line of **body care** is created in Provence, where the winds of the Mediterranean blow over the lavender fields.

Under the self-regulation policy, member and nonmember companies voluntarily provide the FDA with information on their products and consumer complaints. But the FDA gets involved with labeling and marketing only if they determine that the label is false or misleading, does not contain all required information (such as a list of ingredients in descending order based on amount) or the required information is not adequately prominent and conspicuous.



Even if the labels meet FDA requirements, a recent survey proves that personal care labels are hard for consumers to understand. Spiezia Organics commissioned an independent survey of 100 customers, 87% of whom identified themselves as committed organic buyers and 53% reported they looked at labels before purchasing products.

Nearly half thought pure, organic and natural statements on packaging meant that these products did not contain any chemicals. More than 7 in 10 respondents thought "organic" products meant no chemicals, and 6 percent thought the term meant the product was handmade.

So how can a spa ensure that the products they use are truly natural? The experts agree: Read the fine print. Examine the ingredient list to determine what the true components are.



Dr. Christine H. Farlow, D.C. is "The Ingredients Investigator," and the author of three books, including *Dying to Look Good*. She provided five steps to make sure a personal care product is what it says it is.

1 Read the List of Ingredients

Most products are labeled to "sell" rather than provide accurate information about the product. You need to read the ingredients list rather than the label for more accurate information about the product.

2 Check the Ingredients for Safety

To make sure the products you're buying are safe, check the ingredients against a reliable safety list.

3 Beware of Words That Are Used to Sell Rather Than Provide Accurate Information

Many of the words manufacturers use on labels to promote their products do not have "official definitions" so they can be used to mean anything that the manufacturer wants.

Some words to watch:

- Natural - may contain all natural ingredients, a few or none at all
- Hypoallergenic - may be tested or based upon manufacturer belief; no proof is required
- Fragrance free - means no detectable odor; fragrance ingredients may still be added

4 More is Not Better

Choose products with fewer ingredients, not more.

5 Buy from Companies Truly Committed to Healthy Products

Choose companies dedicated to producing safe and natural personal care products. Many of these are small companies that were started because of the lack of availability of healthy products, and many of them use organic and food grade ingredients.