

# Three helpful “on-the-spot” shopping tips to finding healthy hair care products!

With all the choices out there, buying beauty products at a drugstore or department store can leave your head spinning in confusion and frustration. If you rely solely on the look and smell of the product and the descriptions located on the package, you're most likely going to be misled.

Manufacturer's of hair care products often toss around words and phrases on their packaging such as *natural, botanical, organic, hypoallergenic, and chemical free* to sucker you into buying their products without proof of their claims. They will often try to distract you with their glamorous advertising, fancy packaging, bright product colors and enticing chemical fragrances, in hopes of making you overlook the fact that these products will probably do you more harm than good.

Most of the time it's all a bunch of smoke and mirrors! So how can you really be sure that what's said on the label is truthful and what's in the bottle is actually safe to use?

The answer is to look for **Certified Organic** products. You will most likely find a better selection of organic products at your local health food and vitamin store than you would in the larger department or drug stores.

However, as consumers are becoming more aware of what they're putting in and on their bodies, retailers are starting to feel the pressure and need to accommodate the more health conscious consumer with a better selection of cleaner, greener and safer products. You can already see the changes in the produce departments of your local grocery stores. The “certified organic” fruit and vegetable sections are becoming larger with more product selections to choose from.

So, here's what you should know when you go shopping for certified organic hair care products.

**First**, look for the words ORGANIC or CERTIFIED ORGANIC on the label. If it's on there, chances are you're on the right track. In order for a product to be truthfully recognized as ORGANIC, at least 70% of it's formula must be made with certified organic ingredients. Anything below 70% is no longer legally recognized as being ORGANIC. So basically, the higher the percentage, the more pure and healthier the product.

Be aware of misleading words and phrases or a “play on words” such as NATURAL, MADE WITH ORGANIC INGREDIENTS or CONTAINS ORGANIC INGREDIENTS, GROWN IN ACCORDANCE WITH. These are tactful phrases that unscrupulous manufactures will use to entice you to believe that what they're selling is ORGANIC. Most of the time, it's further from the truth.

You see, the phrases above pertain only to some of the individual ingredients, not the finished product as a “WHOLE”. What the manufacture is really saying, for example, is that only three of the 12 ingredients used to make their product are ORGANIC, the other nine ingredients are not. But their not going to willingly tell you this. Their formulations are not up to the recognized CERTIFIED ORGANIC standards, so up until now, they could avoid having to apply for an actual CERTIFIED ORGANIC Certificate of compliance.

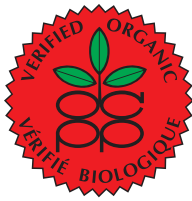
As more hair care product manufacturers get on this “Organic Band Wagon”, they will soon realize that the standards in which they have to follow have gotten stricter. Good thing, too because just like the exploitation of the word “NATURAL”, many manufacturer's were finding it so easier to pawn off their formulas as organic, thus misleading the consumers with false product claims.

So, you've found a product that claims to be at least 70% CERTIFIED ORGANIC. But how can you be sure it's the real thing?

**The second shopping tip to know is CHECK BY WHOM THE PRODUCT IS CERTIFIED.**

When a hair care product meets or exceeds all the standards necessary to be recognized as CERTIFIED ORGANIC, the certifying agency will grant the manufacture permission to use the agency's “certified organic” corporate seal or logo right on the product label. The manufacture would be foolish not to use it. This logo provides the consumer with proof that the product's claims and credentials are truthful.

The following corporate seals and logos are currently recognized throughout North America, Europe and parts of Asia:



OCPP/Pro-Cert  
Canada

In addition to the agency's logo, the manufacturer is also issued actual CERTIFICATES of organic compliance, that show beyond a shadow of a doubt that the product in question is authentic and truly certified.

These certificates are issued annually and are only renewed if the manufacturer can prove that they have maintained a Good Manufacturer's Practice (GMP), a proper Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), and up-to-date records of paperwork from all of the certified organic raw material suppliers. Only after a satisfactory annual audit of this paper trail, will the certifying agency re-issue these "sought-after" certificates.

The **third** and final shopping tip is to READ THE INGREDIENTS. It's important to know what's in the bottle. Ingredients will be listed in descending order, with the largest amount of a particular ingredient listed first.

By law, hair care products sold in the United States must have their ingredients listed on the label. In Canada, however this is not so. Although, organic products of this nature are mostly sold through health and vitamin stores, most health food store owners won't even sell a product without the ingredients listed on them. This is reassuring, because it forces the manufacture to list what the product is made of.

If an ingredient is unrecognizable or unpronounceable, chances are its synthetic. However, this is not always the case. But with CERTIFIED ORGANIC products that are higher than 90%, you'll be able to recognize and pronounce more of the ingredients than you would with a product that is only 70%. Higher certified organic percentages simply prove that the product contains fewer unnecessary ingredients like synthetic foaming agents, thickening agents, fillers, and colors.

When reviewing the ingredients, take the SALAD TEST. It sounds silly, but think of the ingredients list as the items you're going to use to make a salad. If you had the raw ingredient in front of you, could you eat it? Not would you eat, but could you eat it? If the answer is 'yes', that's good. If your results show that you could indeed eat most of the ingredients, then it passes the SALAD TEST.

Finally, check to make sure that you or anyone in your family is not allergic to any of the listed ingredients. In fact, it's estimated that, in a single year, more than 200,000 visits to the emergency room are related to allergic reactions from cosmetic use. And that as much as 20% of the American population suffers from some type of skin allergy or product sensitivity.

So, by this point, if the product in question has met all these criteria, then you've got yourself a great product. Let's review:

- **Look for the words ORGANIC or CERTIFIED ORGANIC on the label.**
- **Check by whom the product is certified. Look for the agency's logo.**
- **Read the ingredients.**

You may find it challenging at first to locate a store nearest you that offers truly certified organic products. A great place to start is with your local health food and vitamin shop. The staff members here are usually better informed about the organic industry and will be more than happy to answer any specific product questions or preferences that you may have.

Wishing you good health and happiness!

Sincerely,

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