

BGG'S GUIDE TO GREENWASHING

BEACHES GO GREEN 2.0



HEALTHY PLANET
HEALTHY YOU



GREENWASHING: THE MISLEADING LABELS, TOXIC INGREDIENTS, AND FALSE CLAIMS THAT CAN HARM BOTH YOUR HEALTH AND OUR PLANET.

LEARN HOW TO DECODE PACKAGING, SPOT THE RED FLAGS, AND CHOOSE PRODUCTS THAT ARE SAFE FOR YOUR SKIN, HONEST ABOUT WHAT'S INSIDE, AND RESPECTFUL TO THE EARTH.

VAUGE OR UNDEFINED MARKETING CLAIMS

01

“All-natural”

→ There’s no regulatory standard for “natural,” so companies use this even if only a few ingredients qualify. Can still contain synthetic ingredients.

02

“Non-toxic”

→ Everything is technically toxic at a certain dose. This term is unregulated and used loosely. “The dose makes the poison.”

03

“Clean beauty”

→ A trendy label with no legal definition; companies define “clean” however they choose. Clean does not mean safe in marketing .

04

“Chemical-free”

→ Scientifically meaningless. Everything is made of chemicals—even water and plant extracts.



ECO-SOUNDING LANGUAGE WITHOUT PROOF

01

“Eco-friendly” or “Earth-friendly”

→ Often used without evidence of actual environmental benefit or certifications.

02

“Green”

→ A blanket term with no standard—used as a feel-good marketing buzzword.

03

“Biodegradable”

→ May only apply to a portion of the product (e.g., the box, not the formula) and doesn’t account for how long it takes to break down or under what conditions.

04

“Sustainable”

→ Another undefined term unless backed by specific practices, lifecycle analyses, or third-party certifications.



MISLEADING LABELS AND BADGES

01

“Cruelty-free” or bunny logos

→ Some certs are legit (like Leaping Bunny), but others use fake icons or say “not tested on animals” while outsourcing to third parties who do.

02

“Dermatologist-tested”

→ Doesn’t mean the product is effective or safe—only that a dermatologist may have tested it.

03

“Hypoallergenic”

→ Not regulated; companies can use it even if allergic reactions are possible.

04

“No parabens / sulfates / phthalates”

→ This can imply the product is safer or greener, but the substituted ingredients may not be any better or safer—and “free from” claims can sometimes be misleading.



PACKAGING TRICKS

01

Green-colored packaging and plants/leaves imagery

→ Visual cues trick consumers into associating the product with nature or health, regardless of the ingredients.

02

“Recyclable”

→ Often only technically recyclable, meaning few actual facilities accept it, or consumers rarely do it properly.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR INSTEAD

01

→ Third-party certifications: USDA Organic, Ecocert, COSMOS, Leaping Bunny, EWG Verified & more.

02

→ Full ingredient lists: With INCI names (international standard).

03

→ Company transparency: Explaining materials sourcing, labor, and environmental practices—not just ingredient claims.



TOOLS FOR FINDING CLEAN BEAUTY PRODUCTS

01

EWG's Skin Deep Database

ewg.org/skindeep

- Rates products and individual ingredients on a scale of 1–10 (1 = safest).
 - Lists health concerns: cancer, allergies, endocrine disruption, etc.
 - Has an app for quick scanning in stores.
- Great for: Ingredient safety, product comparisons.

02

“Think Dirty App”

thinkdirtyapp.com

- Scan product barcodes to get a safety rating and see harmful ingredients.
 - Offers clean alternatives for dirty-rated products.
 - Simple, user-friendly, and very popular among conscious consumers.
- Great for: Fast, in-store decisions.



03

“Clearya (Browser Extension & App)”

clearya.com

- Automatically flags toxic ingredients while shopping online (works on Amazon, Target, Ulta, etc.).
- Gives alerts for ingredients linked to hormone disruption, cancer, and more.

→ Great for: Online shopping protection and transparency.

04

“Yuka App”

yuka.io

- Scans cosmetics and food items, providing a health score.
- Breaks down ingredients and health risks with simple visuals.
- Popular in Europe, gaining traction globally.

→ Great for: Visual learners and international product users.

05

“Good Face Project”

goodfaceproject.com

- Focuses on ingredient transparency and formulation science.
- Has a rating system for clean, safe, and sustainable products.
- Features a "Clean Beauty Coach" tool.

→ Great for: Deep dives and ethical beauty choices.

