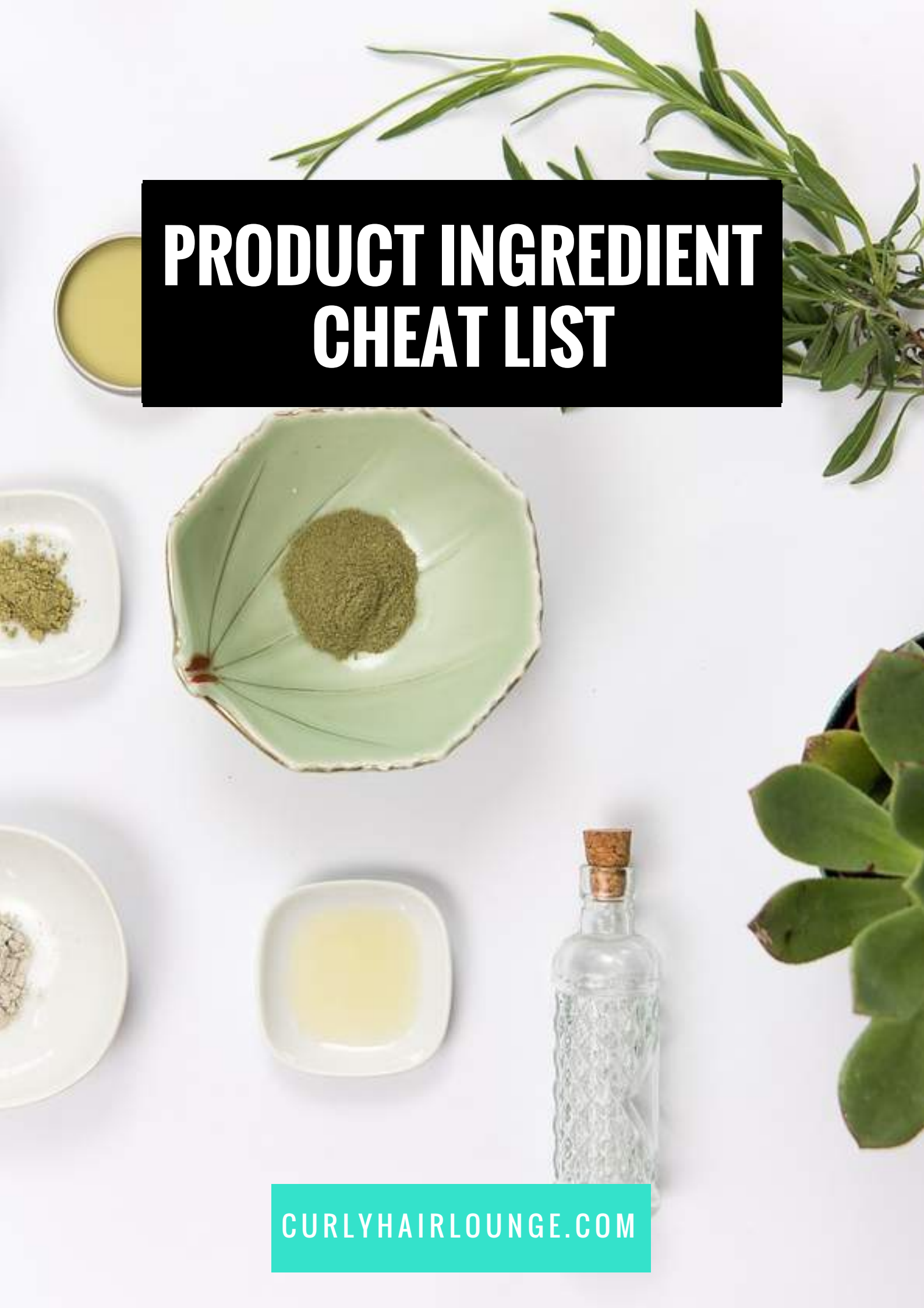
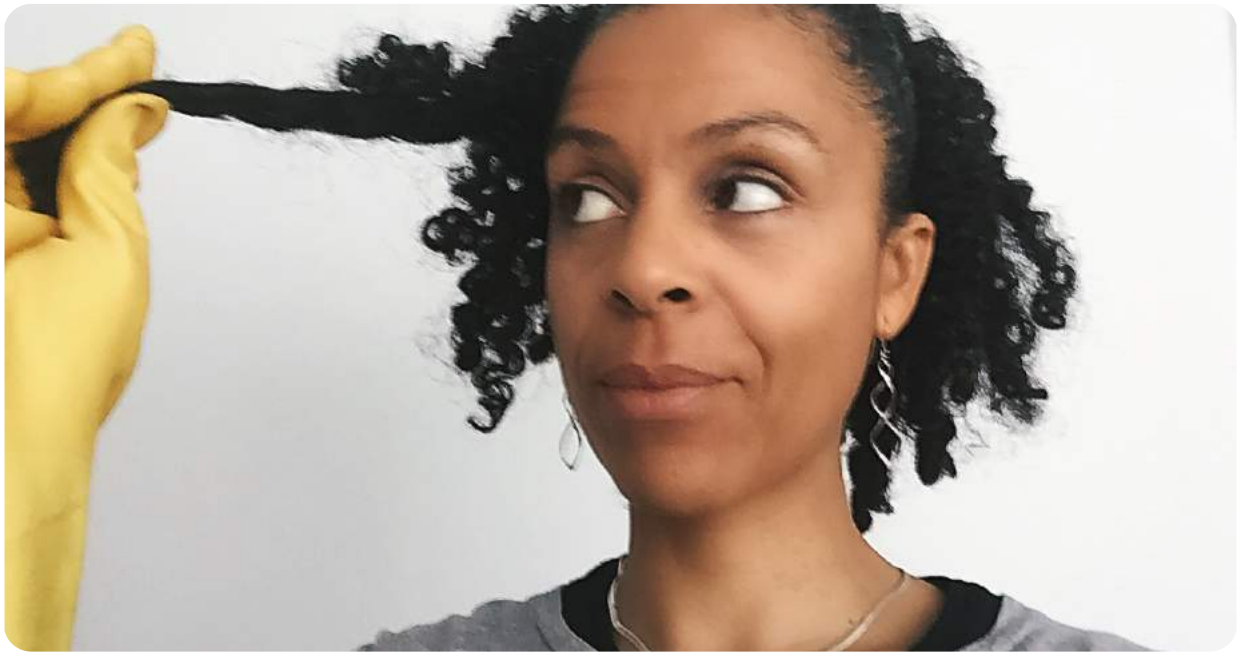


PRODUCT INGREDIENT CHEAT LIST

CURLYHAIRLOUNGE.COM

HELLO!...



I'm Mónica! But I guess you already know that... Anyway, I just want to say 'Hi!' and let you know I'm thrilled you finally decided to invest in yourself.

Back in 2013, when I started my transition to natural hair I was overwhelmed, confused and alarmed by all the information related to hair product ingredients. All of a sudden I was supposed to give preference to certain ingredients while also being told the products I used all my life had ingredients that were damaging to my hair, and some were potentially life-threatening.

I wanted to do something about it, but I thought there was no way I could memorise such a long list of ingredients, especially when they amounted to a small dictionary and most looked like chemical gibberish to me. Hard to read. Hard to pronounce.

If this is something you're also concerned about, I got your back curly sista! The truth is, as you're starting your hair journey, and as with any important situation you have to address, you must focus on what needs your attention first (something with the potential to cause damage) and move on from there. That's what I did!

Now I know what ingredients to stay away from, what to keep an eye on and what to look for in my hair products, and even in beauty products. My hair is healthy, strong, moisturised and growing well! So, if figuring out hair product ingredients is at the top of your must-do list, then make sure you read through this information and keep it close for future reference.

Mónica

INGREDIENTS

Natural, Derived & Synthetic

I know you're all about action and getting down to the nitty-gritty, but before you get familiar with the ingredients there is something I want you to understand about them.

Among the natural hair community, natural ingredients are seen as 'the good guys' and synthetic ingredients as 'the villains'. You'll find there's an active debate on this topic. People take their stance and ferociously defend their arguments, often without much thought or research. However, there is a lot of misinformation on the internet.

Ingredients aren't all equal, they can be natural, naturally derived or synthetic. I love picking up a product and seeing only natural ingredients. I delight in it! But, while we'd all like to say “I only use natural ingredients" we also have to be aware that most of these products contain some form of a synthetic or naturally derived ingredient. Let's check what are these exactly.

NATURAL

A raw material from a plant, mineral or animal source, a substance that ***naturally occurs in nature*** and is not tainted with synthetic materials.

NATURALLY DERIVED

Natural ingredients that ***require or suffer some form of human intervention***. Usually, preceded by the word “from”, “derived” or “based”.

SYNTHETIC

A chemical substance that doesn’t follow a natural process found in nature, it is the result of something that is ***made by men*** in a lab through chemical reactions.

As you can see, the difference between naturally derived and synthetic ingredients is that the latter doesn't use any natural material from nature, but both require human intervention. So are naturally derived ingredients closer to “natural” or “synthetic” ingredients?

Consider this...

Flour and wine are the product of natural ingredients and they both suffer human intervention, even though wine can occur in natural conditions. When it comes to natural ingredients for hair products, *Cocamidopropyl Betaine* screams synthetic ingredient but it's not, it derives from coconut.

The lauric acid in coconut is used in a chemical process that results in this naturally derived ingredient. So do these ingredients lean more towards the 'natural' or the 'synthetic'? I guess it all depends on whether they're the result of a chemical reaction that drastically changed the original structure of the raw ingredient. But unless stated, this is very hard to know.

As you can see, ingredients are not a black and white discussion.

Does Synthetic Mean Toxic?

The current concern for health and people’s easy access to information doesn’t always mean they are making the right choices, especially when there’s so much misinformation out there. Generally, people tend to equate something synthetic with something that causes allergies or that has some toxic element to it, and the major concern here is avoiding carcinogenic ingredients. (Yes, please, let’s do that!)

Yes, studies have found ingredients whose use is correlated with harmful effects in men. However, this is not to say that all, or most, synthetic or naturally derived ingredients are bad. Take titanium dioxide, for instance, a natural sun protector that is found in nature but can’t be used in its pure form because it may be contaminated with harmful heavy metals (lead and iron). Thus, it goes under a synthetic process to be purified and used by us. In this case, a natural ingredient is not better, it is actually harmful to us.

INGREDIENTS

Take Propylene Glycol. It is another suspiciously-named ingredient that screams synthetic all over, doesn't it? Well, it's actually obtained from petroleum. As you know, petroleum or crude oil is the result of fossilised animals and plants and it is, by all means, a natural ingredient.

Although we don't like petroleum-derived ingredients, because they're drying to curly hair, propylene glycol is different. This is a man-modified ingredient that can act as an humectant and is water soluble, contrary to mineral oil. So this man-made, naturally derived ingredient isn't all that bad, is it?

Even fully synthetic ingredients are not the "evil". Taking this choice can also mean natural resources are being spared and products can be sold at a more affordable price. However, I also have to say that manufacturing some of these chemical ingredients creates a problem to the environment. Their production can create waste and pollute water banks. (It keeps your neurones working, right?!)

The key here is to find a balance. Get familiar with ingredients and take each one on a case-by-case basis, especially because new studies are being made that support or disprove various arguments. My personal opinion is that natural or naturally derived ingredients are always better because our body will accept and respond to them much better than synthetic ones (our bodies absorb 80% of what we put on them).

Take for instance vitamin E in supplements, it can be fully natural (d-alpha tocopherol, d-alpha tocopheryl acetate, or d-alpha tocopheryl succinate) or fully synthetic (dl-alpha-tocopherol or any variation starting with dl-), but the latter is not as efficient and well absorbed by our bodies as the former. Still, they both work…

Ready to take a closer look at what ingredients to look for and what to avoid?

Great! Enough lecturing already....

Disclaimer!
This cheat list of ingredients is not a comprehensive one, and will never be because new ingredients are being developed all the time, and frankly, having them all here would turn this list into an encyclopaedia. In here, you'll find a list of commonly used ingredients in hair products.

Know Your Ingredients

Ingredients have different functions, in hair products, they can clean, colour, strengthen, moisturise or make your hair feel soft and shiny among other things. They can also be used alone, in conjunction with other ingredients or for more that one purpose to bring about a specific result on your hair, that is why they can fall within more than one specific category of ingredients.

Here are some of the categories of ingredients you'll hear most about and their functions.

Emollients

They make hair (or skin) softer and slow down water evaporation to prevent hair from becoming dry. An emulsion is created by mixing water with an oil, a humectant or some lubricant (with the help of an emulsifier).

Emulsifiers

An emulsifier is an ingredient that has the ability to blend two or more ingredients that don't blend together to form a stable emulsion (like water and oil).

Humectants

Humectants are hygroscopic ingredients, substances that have the ability to attract and retain moisture by delaying its evaporation. They can help to keep the hair moist and hydrated for longer.

Surfactants

Ingredients that when in contact with a liquid will create a foam that lifts dirt and grease. They can act as detergents, emulsifiers or foaming agents. You will mostly find them in your cleansers and shampoos, but you can also find them in your conditioners. Strong surfactants (a.k.a. sulphates) will dry out curly hair.

CATEGORY OF INGREDIENTS

Preservatives

They are used to protect hair products from developing bacteria and fungi and extend their shelf life. Many are commonly known as parabens.

Proteins

They are long chains of amino acids connected by peptide bonds that strengthen and provide flexibility to your hair. Because regular proteins are too big to be used, the long chain amino acids are cut at the peptide bonds through hydrolyzation. These proteins are very useful to damaged, coloured and high porosity hair because they fill in cracks and holes, strengthening the hair's structure and softening it. This ability of proteins also makes them good humectants, as they keep your hair hydrated for longer. They can be found in any product like shampoos, conditioners or deep conditioners. If after a treatment the hair is hair, a moisturising one should be applied.

Alcohols

Ingredients used in a formula to help the product on the hair dry faster or to condition the hair.

pH Adjusters

Used to keep the pH level of products as close as possible to hair's pH (4.5-5), this will maintain hair health and avoid scalp conditions such as dandruff, flaky scalp or itchiness.

Fatty Acids

Work as emulsifiers. They help to maintain the hair's hydro-lipid barrier, which protects and keeps hair hydrated. They are also responsible for hair's elasticity.

The Hype

In this Product Ingredient Cheat List, all ingredients commonly considered bad for curly hair are marked with the symbol **(A)**. They either dry out curly hair and/or prevent moisture intake.

Please consider that there is a lot of misinformation and scare tactics among the product ingredients debate. Do your own research and by all means, avoid any and all ingredients you believe are not good for you.

For those following the Curly Girl (CG) Method, all ingredients marked with **(A)** are also to be avoided in this hair regimen. There is also a separate list of soluble and insoluble silicones to help you identify them. When used well, they can aid in a hair regimen that incorporates heat. Discover more about this on the blog, curlyhairlounge.com.

When you're choosing your products please consider that many brands introduce their products as containing natural, organic or unrefined ingredients, however, under close inspection, these same ingredients have little influence on the formula and how they act on your hair.

Remember, the first five (5) ingredients in a formula represent 80%-90% of the entire formula, and many of these so called natural ingredients come way down the ingredients list. Here's how you should approach a product ingredient list when considering whether to buy it or not:

1. Extracts represent 1% (or less) of the product's content. - **exclude all extracts**, powders, juices from (or water infused with) plants, herbs, flowers, roots or fruit. If they represented a big component in your products their colour would change dramatically.

2. Disregard all advertising words like infused, organic, unrefined, derived or raw. Consider only the ingredient.

3. Search for any ingredient you may be **allergic** to or trying to avoid.

4. After this, consider only the **first 5 ingredients**, they're the active ones in the formula.

Happy shopping!

PRODUCT INGREDIENTS

Emollients

Natural

- Plant/Vegetable Oils (Jojoba, Olive, Argan, Coconut, Castor, etc.)
- Butters (Shea, Cocoa, Mango. Muru Muru, Cupuacu, etc.)
- Squalene (From Olive oil or Shark)
- Lanolin (sheep sebum)

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Mineral Oil, Petrolatum **(A)**
- Paraffin **(A)**
- Silicone **(check list)**
- Behenyl Alcohol
- Butyl Myristate
- Butyl Stearate
- C12-15 Alkyl Benzoate
- Caprylic/Capric Triglyceride
- Caprylic/Capric/Succinic Triglyceride
- Caprylic/Capric Diglyceryl Succinate
- Cetyl Octanoate
- Cetyl Stearate
- Cetearyl Stearate
- Cetearyl Alcohol
- Cetyl Alcohol
- Ethylhexyl Myristate
- Ethyl Myristate
- Glyceryl Caprate
- Glyceryl Caprylate
- Glyceryl Caprylate/Caprate
- Glyceryl Dimyristate
- Glyceryl Behenate

Emollients/Moisturisers (Cont.)

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Glyceryl Distearate
- Glyceryl Erucate
- Glyceryl Isostearate/Myristate
- Glyceryl Myristate
- Glyceryl Stearate
- Glycol Stearate
- Isobutyl Myristate
- Isocetyl Alcohol
- Isodecyl Myristate
- Isopropyl Myristate
- Isostearyl Alcohol
- Isostearyl Myristate
- Lauryl Alcohol
- Myristyl Alcohol
- Stearyl Alcohol
- C30-50 Alcohols
- Lanolin Alcohol
- Methyl Myristate
- Propylene Glycol Myristate
- Isocetyl Stearate
- Isopropyl Myristate
- Isopropyl Palmitate
- Isopropyl Stearate
- Isostearyl Stearate
- Octyl Palmitate
- Octyl Stearate
- Propylene Glycol
- Propylene Glycol Dicaprylate/Dicaprate Dicaprylate/Dicaprate
- Propylene Glycol Myristate
- Sorbitan Benzoate
- Tocopheryl Linoleate

PRODUCT INGREDIENTS

Emulsifiers

Natural

- Plant Waxes (Candelilla, Carnauba, Jojoba, Rice Bran)
- Xanthan Gum
- Quince Seed

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Alkoxylated Amides (eg TEA, DEA, MEA, MIPA compounds)
- C18-20 Glycol Isostearate
- Caprylic/Capric/Succinic Triglyceride
- Caprylic/Capric Diglyceryl Succinate
- Ceresin
- Ceteareth-(4-60)
- Cetearyl Glucoside
- Cocamidopropyl Lauryl Ether
- Deceth-(3-10)
- PEG Compounds (also used as **Humectants**)
- Isopropyl Stearate
- Laurate
- Octoxynol-(1-70)
- Octyldodeceth-(2,5,16,20,25)
- Palmitate
- Palm Kernel Glycerides
- Polysorbate Ingredients

Humectants

Natural

- Aloe Vera
- Flax Seed Gel (Linseed)
- Glycerin
- Guar Gum
- Lecithin
- Marshmallow Root
- Nettle Leaf or Extract
- Okra gel (made from okra seed pods)
- Panthenol (Pro-vitamin B5)
- Pectin
- Slippery Elm
- Xanthan Gum

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Amino Acids (Wheat, Oat, Soy) or Glycine, Alanine, Proline, Etc.
- Cocodimonium Hydroxypropyl Hydrolysed + Source of Protein (Eg. - Elastin, Kollagen, Heratin, Silk, Rice, Soy)
- Cocoyl Hydrolysed + Source of Protein
- Hexanediol Beeswax
- Hexanetriol Beeswax
- Hydrogenated Honey
- Hydrolysed + Source Of Protein
- Hydrolysed Oat Flour
- Isoceteth-(3-10,20,30)
- Isolaureth-(3-10, 20, 30)
- Laneth-(5-50)
- Laureth-(1-30)
-Peptides (Wheat, Oat, Soy...)
- Polydextrose
- Potassium Cocoyl Hydrolysed + Source of Protein
- Potassium PCA
- Steareth-(4-20)
- Trideceth-(5-50)
- Urea

PRODUCT INGREDIENTS

Surfactants

Natural

- Castile Soap
- Ginseng or Red Ginseng (Ginsenosides)
- Quillaja Saponaria (Soap Bark) Extract
- Soapberry
- Soapnuts
- Soapwort
- Yucca Extract

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Alkylbenzene Sulfonates **(A)**
- Ammonium Laureth Sulfate **(A)**
- Ammonium Lauryl Sulfate **(A)**
- Ammonium Xylenesulfonate **(A)**
- Behentrimonium Chloride
- Behentrimonium Methosulfate
- Benzalkonium Chloride
- Caprylyl/Capryl Glucoside
- Cetrimonium Chloride
- Cetearyl Glucoside
- Cinnamidopropyltrimonium Chloride
- Cocamidopropyl Betaine
- Coco Betaine
- Coco Glucoside
- Cocoamphoacetate
- Cocoamphodipropionate
- Cocotrimonium Chloride
- DEA (Diethanolamine) Compounds
- Decyl Glucoside
- Dicetyldimonium Chloride
- Dicocodimonium Chloride
- Dihydrogenated Tallow Dimethylammonium Chloride

Surfactants (Cont.)

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Disodium Cocoamphodiacetate
- Disodium Cocoamphodipropionate
- Disodium Oleamide
- Dioctyl Sodium Sulfosuccinate **(A)**
- Ethyl Peg-15 Cocamine Sulfate **(A)**
- Hydrogenated Palm Trimethylammonium Chloride
- Lauroamphoacetate
- Laurtrimonium Chloride
- Lauryl Glucoside
- MEA (Monethanolamine) Compounds
- PEG (Polyethylene Glycol) Compounds
- Polisorbate 60
- Quaternium-7, 15, 22, 31, 60
- Quaternium-18 Bentonite
- Quaternium-18 Hectonite
- Sodium C14-16 Olefin Sulfonate **(A)**
- Sodium Cocoyl Isethionate
- Sodium Cocoyl Sarcosinate **(A)**
- Sodium Laureth Sulfate **(A)**
- Sodium Lauryl Sulfate **(A)**
- Sodium Cocoyl Glutamate
- Sodium Lauryl Sulfoacetate **(A)**
- Sodium Methyl Cocoyl Taurate
- Sodium Myreth Sulfate **(A)**
- Sodium Xylenesulfonate **(A)**
- Stearalkonium Chloride
- Stearamidopropyl Dimethylamine
- Tallowtrimonium Chloride
- TEA (Triethanolamine) Compounds **(A)**
- Tricetyldimonium Chloride

All surfactants marked with an **(A)** are also to be avoided in the **Curly Girl Method**.

PRODUCT INGREDIENTS

Preservatives

Natural

- Tea Tree Essential Oil
- Thyme Essential Oil
- Grapefruit Seed Extract
- Bitter Orange Extract
- Antioxidants (Vitamin E, Rosemary Oil Extract)

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Butyl Paraben
- Butylated Hudroxyanisole (BHA)
- Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT)
- Chloromethylisothiazolinone
- Isothiazolinone
- Diazolidinyl Urea
- DMDM Hydantoin
- Ethyl Paraben
- Imidazolidinyl Urea
- Iodopropynyl Butylcarbamate
- Isobutyl Paraben
- Methyl Paraben
- Methylchloroisothiazolinone
- Methylisothiazolinone
- Phenoxyethanol
- Propyl Paraben
- Sodium Benzoate

Note. Many people avoid parabens as they have been claims that they linked to breast cancer, however, there is no definitive proof as there are many studies supporting an argument for or against this claim. Additionally, parabens are easily found in food to avoid them in hair products also consider avoiding them in your diet.

Proteins

Natural

- Avocado
- Coconut Oil/Milk/Butter
- Egg
- Gelatin
- Mayonnaise
- Yoghurt

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Cocodimonium hydroxypropyl hydrolyzed + Source of Protein (eg. Casein, Collagen, Keratin, Rice, Silk, Soy)
- Cocodimonium hydroxypropyl silk amino acids
- Cocoyl hydrolyzed collagen
- Cocoyl hydrolyzed keratin
- Hydrolyzed + Source of Protein (eg. Keratin, Oat Flours, Soy, Wheat)
- Hydroxypropyltrimonium hydrolyzed collagen
- Keratin
- Potassium cocoyl hydrolyzed collagen
- Silk Amino Acid Powder (or Saricin)
- TEA-cocoyl hydrolyzed collagen
- TEA-cocoyl hydrolyzed soy protein

PRODUCT INGREDIENTS

Alcohols

Natural

Ethanol (from sugar and yeast) **(A)**

Witch Hazel **(A - in CG Method)**

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Behenyl Alcohol
- Denatured Alcohol **(A)**
- C30-50 Alcohols
- Cetearyl Alcohol
- Cetyl Alcohol
- Isocetyl Alcohol
- Isopropanol **(A)**
- Isostearyl Alcohol
- Isopropyl Alcohol **(A)**
- Lanolin Alcohol
- Lauryl Alcohol
- Myristyl Alcohol
- Propanol **(A)**
- Propyl Alcohol **(A)**
- SD Alcohol **(A)**
- SD Alcohol 40 **(A)**
- Stearyl Alcohol

All alcohols marked with an **(A)** are also to be avoided in the **Curly Girl (CG) Method**.

pH Adjusters

Natural

- Apple Cider Vinegar
- Aloe Vera Juice
- Lemon

Don't use these ingredients to adjust pH of your hair products, only to make spray-like DIY solutions.

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Ascorbic acid
- Citric acid
- Glycolic Acid
- Lactic Acid
- Sodium Gluconate
- Sodium hydroxide
- Triethanolamine

PRODUCT INGREDIENTS

Fatty Acids

Natural

- Vegetable Oils (eg. Flaxseed, Rapeseed, Sunflower, Safflower, Corn, Soybean or Walnut oil)

Naturally Derived/Synthetic

- Alpha-Linolenic Acid
- Arachidonic Acid
- Capric Acid
- Caproic Acid
- Capryleth-(4, 6, 9) Carboxylic Acid
- Coconut Fatty Acid
- Eicosapentaenoic Acid & Docosahexaenoic Acid
- Isostearic Acid
- Lauric Acid
- Linoleic Acid
- Linolenic Acid
- Myristic Acid
- Palmitic Acid
- Pantothenic Acid
- Stearic Acid

Soluble Silicones

- Amodimethicone (and) Trideceth-12 (and) Cetrimonium Chloride
- Amodimethicone
- Any PEG, PG or PPG In Name (Eg. PEG-Dimethicone)
- Behenoxy Dimethicone
- Cetyl Triethylmonium Dimethicone PEG-8 Succinate
- Ciclomethicone
- DEA PG-Propyl PEG/PPG-18/21 Dimethicone
- Dimethicone Copolyol
- Dimethicone Hydroxypropyl Trimonium Chloride
- Dimethicone PEG-8 Phosphate
- Dimethicone-PG Diethylmonium Chloride
- Hydrolyzed Silk PG-Propyl Methylsilanediol Crosspolymer
- Hydrolyzed Wheat Protein (Hydroxypropyl Polysiloxane)
- Hydrolyzed Wheat Protein PG-Propyl Silanetrio
- Hydrolyzed Wheat Protein/Hydroxypropyl Polysiloxane and Cystine/Silicone Co-Polymers
- Hydroxyethyl Acetomonium PG-Dimethicone
- Lauryl Methicone Copoloyl
- PEG-40/PPG-8 Methylaminopropyl/Hydropropyl Dimethicone - Copolymer
- PEG-8 Distearmonium Chloride PG-Dimethicone
- Quaternium-80

SILICONE LIST

Soluble Silicones

- Quaternium-86
- Silicone Quaternium-1 to 22
- Silicone Quaternium-16/Glycidoxy Dimethicone Crosspolymer
- Silicone Quaternium-16/Glycidoxy Dimethicone Crosspolymer
- Silicone Quaternium-2 Panthenol Succinate
- Stearalkonium Dimethicone PEG-8 Phthalate
- Stearamidopropyl Dimethylamine
- Steardimonium Hydroxypropyl Panthenyl PEG-7 Dimethicone Phosphate Chloride
- Stearoxy Dimethicone

All soluble silicones are **CG** (Curly Girl) approved and can be removed with a sulphate free shampoo. They can still create build up over time.

Insoluble Silicones

- Aminedimethicone
- Aminodimethicone
- Amodimethicone (not supposed to accumulate on top of itself)
- Behenoxy Dimethicone Cetearyl Methicone
- Bis-Amino Peg/Ppg-41/3 Aminoethyl Pg-Propyl Dimethicone (not supposed to accumulate on top of itself)
- Bis-Aminopropyl Dimethicone (not supposed to accumulate on top of itself)

Insoluble Silicones

- Bis-Cetearyl Amodimethicone
-Bis-Hydroxy/Methoxy Amodimethicone
- Bis-Phenylpropyl Dimethicone
- Cetearyl Methicone
- Cetyl Dimethicone
- Cetyl Peg/Ppg-15/15 Butyl Ether Dimethicone
- Cyclohexasiloxane
- Cyclomethicone
- Cyclopentasiloxane
- Cyclopentasiloxane And C30-45 Alkyl Cetearyl Dimethicone Crosspolymer
- Di-Isostearoyl Trimethylolpropane Siloxy Silicate
- Dimethicone
- Dimethicone Propyl Pg-Betaine
- Dimethicone/Vinyldimethicone Crosspolymer
- Dimethiconol
- Dimethiconol Meadowfoamate
- Diphenyl Dimethicone
- Disiloxane
- Divynildimethicone/Dimethicone Copolymer
- Hexamethyldisiloxane

SILICONE LIST

Insoluble Silicones

- PCA Dimethicone
- Phenyl Trimethicone
- Phenylpropyldimethylsiloxysilicate
- Polysilicone-18 Cetyl Phosphate
- Silicone Resin Spheres
- Simethicone Stearoxy (Or Stearyl) Dimethicone
- Stearyl Dimethicone
- Trimethyl Silylamodimethicone (not supposed to accumulate on top of itself)
- Trimethylsiloxyamodimethicone
- Trimethylsiloxysilicate
- Trimethylsilylamodimethicone
- Trisiloxane

All insoluble silicones create build up and need a sulphate shampoo to be removed.

Enjoy!

Good information leads to better-informed decisions.