



# Green Living Fact Kit

## Understanding Claims for Personal Care Products Containing Organic Ingredients

NSF International is an independent, not-for-profit public health organization that writes public health standards for food, water and consumer products. NSF also tests and certifies products to make sure they meet these standards. NSF has a 65-year history of protecting public health, safety and environment worldwide and is a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Food and Water Safety and Indoor Environment. NSF's sustainable services include, standards development and certification for green furnishings, cleaning product and organic food and personal care.

While many personal care products today claim to use organic ingredients in their formulations, until early 2009 there were no independent national standards to verify such claims. Now there is a new standard to help consumers looking to purchase such products.

Known as NSF/ANSI 305: Personal Care Products Containing Organic Ingredients, this standard is the first to define both production and labeling requirements for personal care products containing organic ingredients. The new NSF "contains organic ingredients" standard covers a variety of products intended for external use on any part of the body, including:

- Cosmetics, i.e., foundation and lipstick
- Rinse-off and leave-on personal care products, including moisturizers and lotions
- Personal hygiene products, such as soaps, shower gels and bath beads

While other standards are available, the NSF "contains organic ingredients" standard is the only American National Standard for personal care products that make organic ingredient claims. In order to become certified to this standard, products must undergo a thorough review by an independent organic certification organization to verify that a manufacturer's product formulation contains at least 70 percent organic content by weight. Personal care products that wish to make other organic claims, including "100% Organic," "Organic" and "Made with Organic," would still be reviewed under the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) and bear the appropriate organic label.

Similar to the NOP regulations for other organic products, the NSF "contains organic ingredients" standard has very specific requirements for organic ingredient, material, process and production specifications. One major difference is that this standard allows for some limited chemical processing necessary to create personal care products. For example, soaps containing organic ingredients are permitted to undergo chemical processing known as saponification, without which these products would not be able to lather. However, such processing would not normally be permitted under traditional organic regulations.

The NSF "contains organic ingredients" standard also contains labeling requirements, including a mandate that certified products state the exact percentage of organic content on the label.

The next time you are shopping for cosmetics or other personal care products, check to see if the products you are purchasing have been certified to the NSF "contains organic ingredients" standard. Certification to this standard is your verification that the product labeling information is accurate and that the product truly contains at least 70% organic ingredients.

For additional information, please visit [www.nsf.org/consumer/green\\_living](http://www.nsf.org/consumer/green_living).

