



Did you know . . .

Shelf life isn't just about safety, but also about product effectiveness.

For example, antioxidants in anti-aging or acne products are easily oxidized, so look out for any changes in color and throw them out after three months to a year.



Five Steps to Safer Cosmetic and Personal Care Products

A recent independent study conducted on behalf of NSF International found that 48 percent of consumers are concerned about the quality and safety of personal care products. Many [major retailers](#) are listening and taking steps to help ensure the safety and quality of the cosmetics and personal care products on their store shelves. There are also a few things you can do to avoid harmful products.

1. Purchase only from authorized retailers.

Cosmetic and personal care manufacturers are required by law to ensure the safety of their products and don't want to be responsible for fake or knock-off versions that could contain harmful levels of contaminants or heavy metals. To make sure you are purchasing an authentic product and not a fake, buy your cosmetics directly from the company or one of its authorized retailers or distributors.

2. If the price is too good to be true, it probably is.

If you see heavily discounted versions of brand name cosmetics from unlicensed retailers online or elsewhere, it's likely not the real product. Everyone likes a good deal, but if you see one that is too good to be true, it probably is.

3. Verify the authenticity of your cosmetics with the manufacturer if you have suspicions.

If you have purchased a product that you think may be a fake, there is only one way to know for sure — check with the manufacturer directly. Cosmetics and personal care products usually have some form of identification on the label like a lot number or bar code. Consumers can contact the customer care hotlines of brand name

cosmetic companies to verify the lot number or other identifying attributes of the product and packaging.

4. Look for credible certification marks or labels from third-party organizations.

Consumers seeking additional assurance can look for certification marks that substantiate label claims:



Products with this label must contain at least 70 percent certified organic ingredients and be produced using only those processes and methods outlined in NSF/ANSI 305, the only American National Standard for personal care products containing organic ingredients.



Products with this label must contain at least 95 percent organic content by weight and be produced in accordance with USDA National Organic Program (NOP) standards for agricultural/food products.

5. Throw out old cosmetics and personal care products.

Just like food, cosmetics and personal care products can expire. While some products like sunscreens have expiration dates, others do not. In addition to following [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) recommendations, consumers can also contact the manufacturer to obtain the recommended storage guidelines and shelf life of any products that they purchase.