

Cruelties in Cosmetics and Household Products

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Every year, approximately 14 million animals suffer and die in painful tests in an attempt to determine the safety of cosmetics and household products. Nearly every major brand of cosmetic and household product, such as toothpaste, lipstick, dishwashing liquid, and furniture polish, are tested on animals such as rabbits and dogs. Additionally, every time a company changes its ingredients or advertises a "new" or "improved" product, the substance is then retested.

Two of the most common methods of testing are the Draize Eye Irritancy Test and the Lethal Dose 50 (or LD50) test. The Draize test is used to test substances that might get into the human eye. During this test, a certain amount of a concentrated solution is placed into the eyes of conscious albino rabbits. Their eyes are held open with clips, and many rabbits break their necks or backs as they struggle to escape. The damage to the rabbits' eyes is then recorded at intervals over a period of several. Reactions to the irritants include swelling of the eyelid, inflammation of the iris, ulceration, bleeding, and blindness. They usually receive no anesthesia or pain relieving drugs during the tests.

The LD50 test measures the amount of a toxic substance that will, in a single dose, kill half of the animals in a test group. Again, no painkillers are administered. During this test, the experimental substance is forced into the animals' throats or pumped into their stomachs by tube, sometimes causing death by stomach rupture or from the sheer bulk of the chemical dosage. Substances are also injected under the skin, into a vein, or into the lining of the abdomen. They are also often applied to the eyes, rectum, or vagina, or forcibly inhaled through a gas mask.

Many health professionals agree that both the Draize test and the LD50 test are crude and imprecise. Ophthalmologist Stephen Kaufman of New York University Medical Center argues that the rabbit eye is so different from the human eye that ophthalmologists have no use for Draize data. Similarly, Dallas Pratt, M.D. argues that LD50 test results can be affected by the age and sex of the animal, their housing and nutrition, temperature, time of day and year, and the exact method used.

Additionally, cosmetic and product tests on animals are NOT required by law. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) only requires that the ingredients be "adequately substantiated for safety" prior to marketing, or the product must carry a warning label saying that its safety has not been determined. The FDA does not require any particular sort of tests. Testing methods are determined by the cosmetic and household product manufacturers, and the test data are used only defend the companies against consumer lawsuits.

There are many non-animal testing methods available that have proven to be more reliable and less expensive than animal tests. Alternatives include use of cell cultures, corneal and skin tissue cultures, corneas from eye banks, and computer and mathematical models. Companies can also make products using the many ingredients and combinations of ingredients that have already been determined to be safe by the Cosmetics, Toiletry and Fragrance Association.

As caring and compassionate individuals, regardless of our religious background, why would we use any products whose creation has caused so much pain and suffering, when there are so many alternatives

available? Jiv Daya is currently in the process of compiling a list of companies who make cruelty free products. Also, there are many products available in common department stores and supermarkets, which are clearly labeled as "not tested on animals" and "contains no animal ingredients." Remember that every time you purchase or use a product that is cruelty free, you are doing your part in preventing the needless suffering of countless animals.