

Label Reading Advice



Reading and understanding labels on every day products, such as household cleaners, cosmetics, food, and clothing is an effective way for you to evaluate how green a product actually is.

Many companies have incorporated green terminology to attract consumers who care about the health and environmental impact of products. *Unfortunately, many of these labels can be confusing or misleading.* Here is some advice to help you navigate the store aisle while making the best choices for you and your family.

- Visit the Eco-Labels Center at Consumer Reports online at <http://www.greenerchoices.org/eco-labels/eco-home.cfm> for an extensive yet easy to search database of products, labels, and certifying organizations.

- Be aware of a attractive sounding terms that are overused and often meaningless, such as:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| × Green | × Natural | × Noncomedogenic |
| × Non toxic | × Environmentally friendly | × Dermatologist tested |
| × No additives | × Hypoallergenic | × Cruelty free |

- Instead, look for more specific terms, like “solvent-free,” “plant-based,” “no phosphates,” no petroleum-based ingredients.”

- Seek labels that carry third-party certification, which have defined standards and are regulated by a trustworthy organization. Some examples of third-party certifiers are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| ✓ Certified Humane Raised and Handled | ✓ Green Seal |
| ✓ Fair Trade Certified | ✓ Leaping Bunny |
| ✓ Forest Stewardship Council | ✓ USDA Organic |

More advice:

- Choose products with full ingredient disclosure. This includes the constituents of dyes, preservatives, and fragrances.

- Look for the shortest ingredient list, with words you can pronounce!

