

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE

The Think Dirty App

Our response to questions about the Think Dirty app.

Think Dirty is an app with the stated aim of helping consumers learn more about the potential hazards of product ingredients and compare brands. The app allows users to scan UPC codes and take photos of cosmetic products to get a hazard score for products based on the individual ingredient scores.

Beautycounter believes wholeheartedly in providing consumers with more information about ingredient hazards. However, at this time, we do not think that Think Dirty is fulfilling its mission. We believe the app's users do not get access to accurate information and true comparisons because of the current scoring methodology, the lack of context about company policies, and the fact that brands who fully disclose ingredients are compared with some companies that are not disclosing all of their ingredients.

Some of the ingredients in Think Dirty score high (the range is 0-10, 10 being a "high hazard") because of one or more studies indicating that they may be allergens. While individuals with allergies may have reactions to certain ingredients, that doesn't mean those ingredients present hazards to the general population. Other ingredients score high because they may contain impurities. But companies can obtain certificates of purity from suppliers to ensure that ingredients are not contaminated. Preservatives also score high, and to some extent this is understandable, as preservatives are meant to kill microorganisms. But companies that use water in their products have to use preservatives, usually in very small amounts (about 1% of each total product). We feel that tools meant to help consumers understand a cosmetic's potential hazard need to take this very small percentage as well as the functional need for these ingredients into account. After all, not using preservatives poses a health risk. And unintentionally incentivizing cosmetic companies to hide the high-scoring ingredients from ingredient lists does not protect consumers' health or move the market toward safer, more transparent ingredient choices.

Beautycounter screens every single ingredient for safety, and we take the concentration and route of exposure into account when selecting ingredients. We are confident that our products are some of the safest, highest-performing on the market.

In short, we believe Think Dirty does not allow for an apples-to-apples comparison of products or brands, or an accurate view of the real-life use of cosmetics chemicals.

Beautycounter wants to help improve access to information and to move the market toward greater transparency and safer ingredients and products. To that end, we are committed to working with Think Dirty and our mutual friends at the Breast Cancer Fund to try to improve the methodology, data sources, and company information and therefore the user experience. We believe this tool has potential and will keep you posted on the evolution of the app.