

# THE CRUNCHY PREP

*Where we live a clean and natural lifestyle but still wear our gingham and pearls!*

Welcome to the very first edition of The Crunchy Prep. One could say this digital publication is a passion project of mine. My journey to chemical free and natural living has been an evolving process. At times, it has been overwhelming trying to keep up with what is good, bad, safe, and harmful. More than anything, it has been incredibly eye opening to see what really goes into our everyday products, food, clothes, etc.



Hi, I'm Anna!

The goal with the **The Crunchy Prep** newsletter is to help educate others on the good, the bad, and the ugly in the food and product realm. With each edition, you will be educated on at least one new buzzword that is common on labels and shown safer replacements.

As the name suggests, living a "crunchy" lifestyle doesn't mean you have to give up your lipstick and pearls and wear potato sacks! I'll show you that living naturally and staying preppy can go hand in hand! So, without further ado, I present you with the first edition of The Crunchy Prep.

# THE CRUNCHY PREP

With information abounding these days, it's hard to distinguish the legitimate sources from the wannabes. Here are a few trusted resources for learning about product ingredients, chemical free living, and food safety.

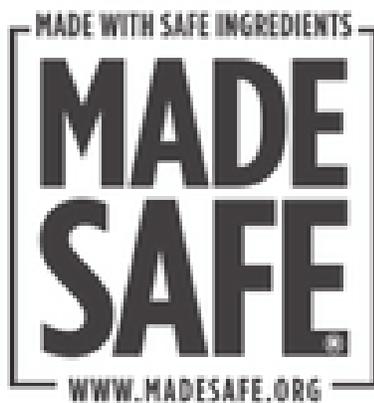


## EWG: ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP

EWG.org is an organization made up of activists, scientists, legal counsel, and a bunch of REALLY smart people who are committed to "keeping our environment safe and loved ones healthy. And we're proud to share the work we do with you." EWG is a highly regarded source for product and food safety. Their verified products ratings are extremely vetted and reliable!

## FORCE OF NATURE BLOG

Force Of Nature is a company that sells safe cleaning products but also helps educate consumers on the world of chemical free living. They do a great job of linking to studies and news articles. Their posts are really easy to read too!



## MADE SAFE

Made Safe is a fantastic resource for learning about ingredients in products. They are a non-profit group who "provide America's first comprehensive human health and ecosystem-focused certification for nontoxic products across store aisles, from baby to personal care to household and beyond." The MADE SAFE (Made With Safe Ingredients) seal literally means that a product is made with safe ingredients, without toxic chemicals known to harm our health.

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## Buzzword: GREENWASHING

Greenwashing is a clever marketing tactic that aims to convince a consumer they are purchasing a natural or high quality product or that the brand is sustainable and environmentally friendly. Here are 3 ways to identify greenwasher products.

### 1. BRAND COLORS

Brands will often use greens, yellows, tans, creams, and whites to signify that they are "green". Earthy color palettes can trick a consumer into thinking something is eco-friendly if it looks eco-friendly.

### 2. ALL NATURAL

Products will be labeled as "all natural" to try and convey that they are superior. This is a blanket statement that doesn't actually mean anything unless there is more information on the label to indicate that a product is truly natural.

### 3. HORMONE FREE

This claim is on almost all meat products now. It is illegal for chickens, pigs, and bison to be given hormones so when a product is labeled hormone free, they are doing nothing more than following the law.

### 4. NON-GMO

For truly non-genetically modified organisms (food), look for foods with independent labels. Such as the Non-GMO Verified Food project label.

### 5. NON-TOXIC

This phrase is meaningless when it is on product labels because it doesn't mean anything specific. Knowing ingredients and reading labels are how to identify truly non-toxic products.

### 6. IMAGERY

Products that want to appear natural will often use imagery to try and convey this message. Botanicals, animals, and nature are common on products that are greenwashing.

# THE CRUNCHY PREP

## Buzzword: GREENWASHING

Here is a list of independent labels to look for on products that are truly safe, natural, and not greenwashed.

### ECO-FRIENDLY LOGOS



**B-CORP**  
business meets high social and environmental performance standards



**GREEN GOOD HOUSEKEEPING SEAL**  
meets environmental impact and social responsibility standards



**BLUESIGN**  
no concerning chemicals in the supply chain or process



**GREEN-E**  
renewable energy that meets environmental standard



**CRADLE TO CRADLE**  
achievements across five sustainability categories



**GREENGUARD**  
low chemical emissions to improve air quality



**ECOCERT**  
meets environmental and social requirements



**LEED**  
globally recognized sustainability rating for buildings



**ENERGY STAR**  
ensures energy efficiency



**MADESAFE**  
made with safe ingredients and without known toxic chemicals



**EPA SAFER CHOICE**  
safe for human health and the environment



**MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**  
promotes sustainable fishing



**EPEAT**  
electronics that meet strict environmental criteria



**OEKO-TEX**  
tested to ensure no harmful levels of chemicals



**FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED**  
meets rigorous social, environmental, and economic standards



**SEAFOOD WATCH**  
promotes sustainable seafood



**FAIRTRADE**  
meets internationally agreed social, environmental, and economic standards



**USDA BIO BASED**  
made with ingredients derived from plants



**FSC**  
comes from responsibly managed forests



**USDA ORGANIC**  
certified organic product



**WATERSENSE**  
certified to use less water and save energy

Photo credit: [Good Housekeeping](#).

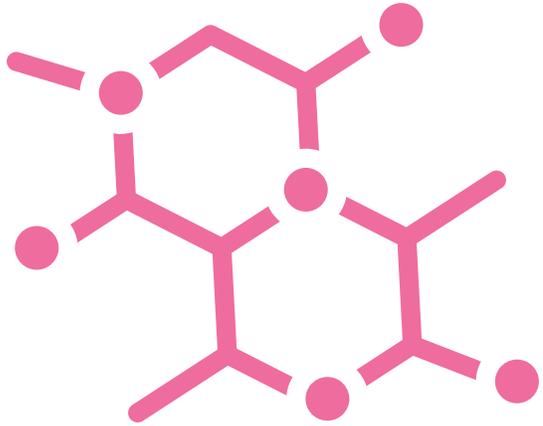
# THE CRUNCHY PREP

## Ingredients to recognize

Recognizing harmful ingredients is the key to safe product consumption.

Each month will feature 1 ingredient to watch for in household items.

Familiarize yourself with these ingredients so that you may shop smarter and live safer!



### SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE (SLS)

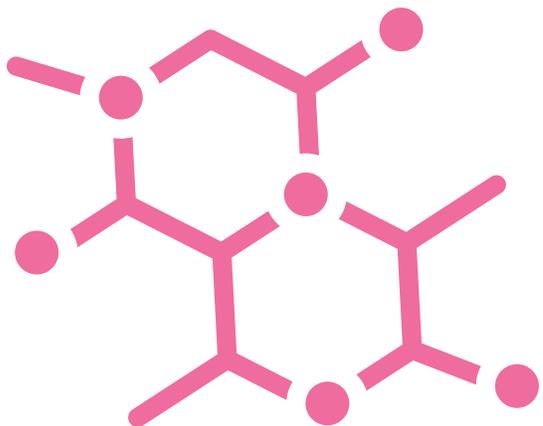
Sodium laureth sulfate (sis) is one of the most common ingredients in products. It's job is to make things extra **sudsy** so that you think you are getting a better wash. A **surfactant** or synthetic soap.

SLS is also often listed as

- sodium dodecyl sulfate,
- lauryl sodium sulphate,
- lauryl sulphate sodium salt, or,
- sodium n-dodecyl sulphate in some products.

SLS is known to cause skin irritation (like eczema) and respiratory issues. It may also cause **cancer** when it becomes chemically contaminated! It is also not easily biodegradable and stays in the environment for a long time!

Common in: Dawn dish soap, Tide detergent, baby shampoo,



### DIOXANE

Dioxane is a contaminate that presents itself when other chemicals combine, like SLS. It is harmful to the skin, eyes, lungs, liver, and kidneys. According to the CDC, it is **known to cause cancer**.

Dioxane is often found in products that are sudsy like soap, detergent, and even toothpaste because the SLS becomes contaminated!

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## Brands to Avoid

These brands may seem like a better alternative but they're really just an example of greenwashing!



### MRS. MEYER'S

Mrs. Meyer's uses language like aromatherapeutic, cruelty free, and made with essential oils to greenwash consumers.

While there may be some essential oils used in their products, they also use SLS, synthetic fragrance, and methylisothiazolinone.



### DAWN

Free and clear might mean there are no added colors but this soap still uses SLS and fragrance. They don't even show you the ingredients list on their website!

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## Safer Brands to Try



### DR. BRONNER'S

Dr. Bronner's is one of the most common safe cleaning agents on the market. It is readily available at places like Target, Wal-Mart, and grocery stores. It comes in various scents that are only scented with essential oils.

### BRANCH BASICS

I've been singing Branch Basics praises for a few weeks now on the blog and social media. It is by far one of the most cost effective safe brands on the market. It also has the MadeSafe seal! [Click here to read my blog posts about Branch Basics!](#)



### BAD, BETTER, BEST

Sometimes it's not possible to buy the best option all of the time. That's why being a wise consumer is so important! If you're every in a situation where you need something quickly or inexpensively, EverySpring is a better choice (still has SLS) and ECOS is a best choice!

# THE CRUNCHY PREP

## Buzzword: Naturally Flavored

What does it mean when a food says it is "naturally flavored"? If a brand doesn't specify, it can mean a lot of different things. The answers might surprise you!



### WHAT IS CONSIDERED A NATURAL FLAVOR

- spice
- fruit or fruit juice
- vegetable or vegetable juice
- edible yeast
- herb
- bark
- bud
- root
- leaf or similar plant material
- meat, fish
- poultry
- eggs
- dairy products
- fermentation products

### WHY IS IT BAD?



While the primary flavor might come from a truly natural source, natural flavors as a whole are often combined with other things, like preservatives, to keep them fresh.

Think about fresh strawberry extract. Does that last forever before going bad? Of course not! So what about those "naturally flavored organic strawberry pop tarts"?

Also, the **FDA does not regulate** brands to disclose what exactly is in these natural flavors! There could be gluten, animal product, etc. This is why you'll see ingredients like fresh or freeze dried strawberries in my recipes instead of extracts, flavorings, etc.

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## Resources used in this edition:

- [Madesafe.org/science/hazard-list/14-dioxane](https://Madesafe.org/science/hazard-list/14-dioxane)
- <https://greenandthistle.com/what-is-greenwashing/>
- <https://goodhousekeeping.com/home/a32191077/what-is-greenwashing/>
- <https://thegoodhuman.com/a-guide-to-sodium-laureth-sulfate-is-it-safe/>
- <https://www.realmomnutrition.com/natural-flavors/>