

# 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:

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

- 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:

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

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!

