



Lip Talk

By: Kara Lynch

I couldn't tell you exactly when or where it started, but for as long as I can remember, I've been obsessed with lipstick. My mother calls me the Lipstick Queen and my friends know that my favorite look is a bold, red lip. Yet even with my "royal status" I went years wearing lipstick without a clue what was in it. After hearing that women allegedly consume 7 pounds of lipstick annually, I began researching the exact ingredients in lipstick. Once I learned, let's just say I had mixed emotions. Before we get into what's in lipstick let's see how far lipstick dates back.

Lipstick is possibly the first makeup to have ever been used. Mesopotamian women started the trend in 3000 BC by creating lipstick with crushed up gemstones. Eventually, the Egyptians, including Cleopatra, followed, attaining a bold lip by crushing ants and beetles to create carmine for the perfect shade. Fast forward to the mid-1500s, lipstick was only for prostitutes and its popularity among the upper class died. Thank goodness for Queen Elizabeth I who reintroduced lipstick for the upper class by donning her look of a pale white face and bright crimson lips. In the 1800s, women were wearing red lipstick to darken their natural lip and have it stand out in black and white film. By the 1950s, 98 percent of women in America were wearing red lipstick with

stars like Marilyn Monroe popularizing the classic red. In the 1960s and 1970s pastels and nudes became popular. Once the 90s hit, the classic red lip was brought back by Madonna.

The process of making lipstick happens in 3 steps. First comes melting and mixing, then pouring the mixture in a tube, and lastly, packaging. Lipsticks are typically made with a wax, oil, pigment, preservatives/antioxidants and a fragrance. It's important to know exactly what's in lipstick and all cosmetic products. Your skin is your largest organ and what goes on it goes in it. Unfortunately many corporate companies use harmful ingredients and don't disclose these ingredients to consumers. This includes but is not limited to, methylparaben, propylparaben and retinyl palmitate. These ingredients have been listed as a moderate to high hazard on the Environmental Working Group's Cosmetic Database. This database is a great resource that gives products a score to rate their toxicity. Lead has been detected in lipstick as well as harmful pigments from coal tar and carmine. I mentioned carmine before as something Egyptians used to create lipstick. This ingredient has been known to cause irritation.

Lipstick has been around for hundreds of years and thankfully, it isn't going away anytime soon. Sadly, it seems like harmful chemicals in lipstick are also here to stay. Until stricter cosmetic laws are made in the U.S. the best way to protect you from harmful ingredients is to use the EWG's Cosmetic Database and seek lipsticks with low toxicity scores.

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/beauty/makeup/advice/a485/lipstick-ingredients-020410/>

<http://www.lipstickhistory.com/making-lipstick/lipstick-ingredients/>

<http://www.madehow.com/Volume-1/Lipstick.html>

<https://www.marieclaire.com/beauty/makeup/a9742/history-of-red-lipstick/>