# **Lube** Ingredients to Watch Out For



Every body is different and may have sensitivities or allergies to a variety of ingredients in personal lubricants, so it's always important to read the ingredients list before putting a lube on your body! There are a few ingredients, however, that are bad news for most bodies and should generally be avoided.



Glycerin(e) - a sugar alcohol that has anecdotally been linked with yeast overgrowth and directly corresponds with increased osmolality. Any water based lubricant that has glycerine in its first three ingredients is more likely to be significantly hyperosmotic.

Propylene Glycol - a chemical derived from petroleum (aka "petrochemical") which has been linked with BV and is a sensitizer, meaning the more you're exposed to it the more likely you are to have allergic reactions to it. Any water based lubricant that has propylene glycol in its first three ingredients is more likely to be significantly hyperosmotic.

Nonoxynol 9 & Chlorhexidine Gluconate - both of these ingredients are surface acting agents (aka "surfactants"), which change the surface tension and permeability of cell membranes. Both are designed to kill microbes in an effort to make them sterile or antiseptic, but this also kills healthy bacteria and compromises epithelial cell integrity. These ingredients, as used in lubricants, can lead to a burning or stinging sensation, and leave the body more susceptible to STI and pathogen transmission for 24-27 hours.

Petroleum Oils - these oils are ideal breeding grounds for bacteria and take a long time to be cleared from inside of the body, so they're never recommended for use as a personal lubricant.

Polyquaternium-15 - used as a preservative and skin adherent in a limited number of water based lubricants and spermicides. It can enhance viral activity and infectivity of HIV and potentially similar viruses, so it's not advisable to use in situations where STI contraction or transmission is possible.

Benzocaine - a numbing ingredient that is a potential skin irritant. Numbing lubes can be used responsibly, but it's important to remember to listen to the body's pain responses. If penetration or friction is painful, numbing ingredients will not solve the problem, and the body will continue to react to pain or irritation even if the sensation has been dulled. Continuing painful activities, with or without numbing products, can actually lead to increased or chronic pain.

Sugars - some lubricants use sugars, like glucose, honey, or maltodextrin, for flavor. However, all of these ingredients can feed yeast, dry sticky or tacky, and throw off the natural balance of the vulvovaginal environment; therefore, they're not recommended for internal use.

From Smitten Kitten at badvibes.org