

# PRODUCT SAFETY TESTING

Every year, tens of thousands of animals suffer and die in experiments to test the safety of new agricultural and industrial chemicals, household products and even food additives.

## Product testing

Animals are routinely used in experiments to test the safety of a wide range of products such as pesticide, toilet cleaner, washing-up liquid and food flavouring, as well as the chemical ingredients of these products. The animals may be force-fed these substances, or have them rubbed

into their skin or dripped into their eyes, or they may be made to inhale the fumes. The animals are studied to see how their bodies react. The purpose of these tests is to find out if the substances are safe for people to use and also to see if they will harm the environment.

## Household cleaning products

The five main producers of household cleaning products are Proctor & Gamble, Lever Brothers, S.C. Johnson, Reckitt & Colman and Colgate-Palmolive. To keep ahead of their competitors, these

companies continually develop 'new' and 'improved' versions of products, such as washing-up liquid, laundry conditioner, floor cleaner or air freshener. More new products means more animal testing.

## Cosmetics

In 2013, the European Union (EU) banned animal testing for cosmetics. This means that cosmetic products sold in the EU cannot be tested on animals and also

that companies cannot carry out animal tests on the chemical ingredients intended for use in cosmetics for sale in the EU. (See REACH opposite.)

## What kinds of tests are done?

### Toxicity tests

Animals (mainly rats, mice and dogs) are given a substance over and over again to see if it harms them. It may be put in their food, pumped into their stomach or injected into them, or the animals may be forced to inhale it.

**Acute tests**, which last for up to 14 days, are carried out to see if there are any short-term poisoning effects. **Chronic tests**, which can last for up to two years, are carried out to see if the animals suffer any longer-term poisoning symptoms.

The effects of each dose are recorded - including any diarrhoea, vomiting, convulsions, breathing difficulties, etc. At the end of the tests, the animals will be killed and their organs studied.

Animals are also used in **carcinogenicity tests** to see if the substances cause cancer. **Reproductive tests** are carried out to see if the chemicals cause birth defects (harm their unborn young).



### Skin & eye irritation tests

In **skin irritation tests**, the substance is applied to the shaved/scratched backs of rabbits or guinea pigs. Any swelling, redness, inflammation, cracking or ulceration over one to two weeks is recorded. Pain relief is almost never given.

During **eye irritation tests**, chemicals are dripped into rabbits' eyes. The animals' eyes are monitored for 21 days for reddening, swelling or ulceration. Rabbits have fewer tear ducts than our own, so they are unable to 'cry out' noxious substances as we do.



## REACH

The European Commission (EU) is currently safety testing thousands of chemicals in an attempt to find out if they are likely to harm people or damage the environment.

Under this programme, millions of animals are being used in experiments to test chemicals used in industrial and household cleaning products. Some of these same ingredients may also be used in toiletries and cosmetics.

To find out what 'REACH' stands for, see the glossary overleaf.

## Bad Science

The truth is that doing these tests on animals is unlikely to prove whether the products are safe for people to use. This is because the effects that the substances have on animals are often very different from the effects that they have on people. For example, bleach causes only mild irritation to rabbits' skin but severe irritation to human skin.



## Glossary

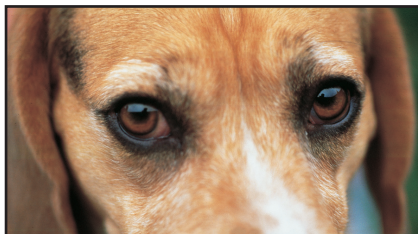
**Acute:** an illness or effect that lasts for a short period of time.

**Carcinogenicity:** whether a chemical or other substance causes cancer.

**Chronic:** an illness or effect that lasts a long time. Cancer is an example of a chronic disease.

**REACH:** Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals.

**Toxicity:** how poisonous a chemical or other substance is.



## Beware of animal ingredients

Watch out for these animal ingredients when you are shopping:

**Tallow** - animal fat

**Lanolin** - a grease extracted from wool

**Keratin** - from hair, horn, hoof and feathers

**Gelatine** - from animal bones, skin and hide

**Elastin** - from meat

**Shellac** - from crushed insects

**Cochineal** - from crushed beetles

## What are the humane tests?

Lots of humane methods exist that could be used to replace animal safety tests.

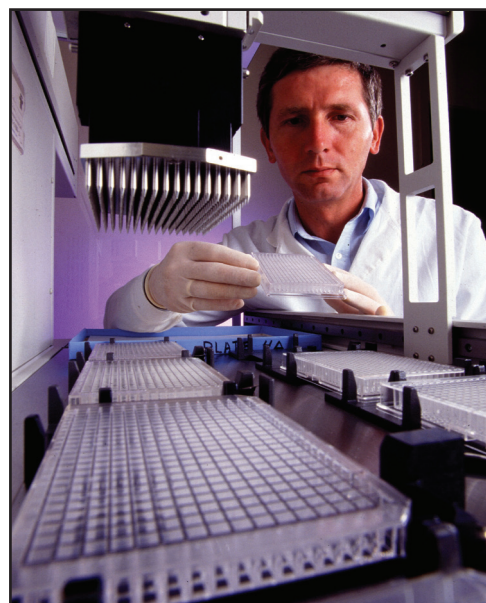
Scientists can study the effects of chemicals on human cells in the laboratory by doing test tube (in-vitro) studies. These tests use small samples of human tissue that have been grown in the laboratory.

Human skin cells, for example, can be used to replace animals in skin irritancy tests.

Artificial corneas and human eye cells grown in culture can be used instead of rabbits for eye irritancy tests.

These methods would give results that are relevant to people because they use human cells and human DNA.

Right: High-speed computerised robot system being used by a toxicologist to carry out toxicity tests on chemicals.



## Guide to cruelty-free shopping

The best way to encourage manufacturers to change their policies on animal testing is through your consumer power. You can choose to become an ethical consumer and

try to buy cosmetics, toiletries and household cleaning products that have been ethically produced. See below and visit our website to find out what you can do.

## Humane Cosmetics and Household Products Standard

Look out for the leaping bunny symbol on cosmetics, toiletries and household products. It indicates that the products have not been tested on animals. It also shows that the company does not manufacture cosmetics for sale in countries, such as China and the USA, that require animal testing to be carried out. It does not guarantee that the products are free from animal ingredients (see left). For an up-to-date list of companies that are allowed to use this symbol, see [www.gocrueltyfree.org](http://www.gocrueltyfree.org)



## What you can do:

- Join the Animal Aid Youth Group and help campaign against animal testing.
- Buy cruelty-free. Check the labels on products for the leaping bunny logo (see above).
- Visit our website to order a free **Against animal experiments info pack** and a free copy of our **Guide to animal-friendly high street shopping**.
- Ask your teacher if a representative from Animal Aid can give a talk to your class on animal testing.
- Write a protest letter or email to companies that test their products on animals (contact us for a list of companies). Tell them that you will boycott their products until they conform to the Humane Cosmetics/Household Products Standard.