
ALUMINIUM SALTS

JUNE 2014

WHAT ARE ALUMINUM SALTS? WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

Aluminum is a chemical element, the most abundant metal in the earth's crust and the third most abundant element after oxygen and silicon. The various aluminum salts are very widely used as adjuvants in vaccines, as coagulants in water processing, and in gastric antacid medications. Aluminum salts are also present in food and water. Some aluminum salts are very widely used in cosmetic products, in particular antiperspirant products. Aluminum salts very effectively reduce sweating and do not prevent the skin from breathing. Alum stone, which contains an aluminum salt, has long been recognized to have antiperspirant properties. Non-soluble forms of aluminum are also used in the colored pigments of lipsticks and toothpastes.

IS THERE A RISK ASSOCIATED WITH INCLUDING ALUMINUM SALTS IN COSMETIC PRODUCTS?

The safety of antiperspirant products containing aluminum salts is a subject of controversy. The salts have been suspected of playing a role in the emergence of breast cancer and Alzheimer's disease. The potential risks have been evaluated by numerous international expert groups over the last 10 years (World Health Organization, US Food and Drug Administration, American Cancer Society, French Health Products Safety Agency (Afssaps)). All the expert groups confirmed that current knowledge does not provide any grounds for the involvement of aluminum salts used in cosmetic products in the emergence of breast cancer or Alzheimer's disease. These conclusions are perfectly consistent with the very limited ability of aluminum salts to penetrate the skin.

In 2011, Afssaps forwarded a report to the European Commission recommending limitation of the concentrations of aluminum salts used in antiperspirant products. The European Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety is preparing to review all the scientific data with a view to indicating the conditions under which aluminum may be used in cosmetic products. We are actively contributing to the process under the auspices of our European professional association (Cosmetics Europe) by making all our pertinent data available.

WHY ARE L'ORÉAL ANTIPERSPIRANT PRODUCTS CONTAINING ALUMINUM SALTS SAFE?

We never compromise on the quality and safety of our products. To date, there is no proven link between the use of aluminum salts in antiperspirant products and any risk for human health. This has been confirmed many times by international scientific expert groups. Aluminum salts have been used in our antiperspirant products for many years in strict compliance with the highest safety standards and the current international regulations. The safety of the products has also been confirmed by the data collected in the context of our cosmetic safety monitoring program for marketed products.

L'ORÉAL