

# Sodium Lauryl Sulfate vs Sodium Laureth Sulfate

## **What are Sodium Lauryl Sulfate and Sodium Laureth Sulfate?**

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS), also known as Sodium dodecyl sulfate and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES) are both surfactants.

## **Why are they used in cosmetics and personal care products?**

Both SLS and SLES are very effective ingredients used in cleansing products and as creams and lotions. In this function, surfactants wet body surfaces, emulsify or solubilize oils, and suspend soil. These ingredients contribute foaming and lathering properties to cleansing products and bubble baths.

## **Is there any truth to the Internet reports about Sodium Lauryl Sulfate?**

There is an [e-mail](#) that has been circulating on the Internet for several years which falsely states that Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) and Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES), ingredients used primarily in some cosmetic "rinse off" products, can cause cancer. [This allegation](#) is unsubstantiated and false, and typical for Internet rumors notorious for publishing inaccurate and untrue information.

## **Are SLS and SLES safe for use in cosmetics and personal care products?**

Both SLS and SLES are safe for use in cosmetic products. Both ingredients were reviewed in 1983 and re-reviewed in 2002 by the [Cosmetic Ingredient Review \(CIR\)](#) Expert Panel and found to be safe for use in cosmetic and personal care products. SLS and SLES can cause skin irritation in some persons, which is one reason why it is important to follow the label instructions when using a cosmetic product. Complete reports on both ingredients are available from CIR. Substances known to be carcinogenic have been classified and registered by several international organizations, such as the World Health Organization or the International Agency for the Research of Cancer as well as the US Environment Protection Agency and the European Union. None of these organizations have classified SLES and SLS as carcinogens. There is no direct or circumstantial evidence that these two ingredients have any carcinogenic potential. The studies that have been conducted on SLS and SLES indicate that both are safe under proper conditions of use.

## **How can I determine when an e-mail is an Internet Hoax?**

It can sometimes be difficult to tell if an e-mail, or other information we see on the Internet, is true or false. [Misinformation](#) can be dangerous and it is important to [be sure that the information](#) you have is true and factual. Some people seeking to use misinformation for their own purposes may represent the e-mail as being factual. It is very important to get the facts.