A VISUAL GUIDE
25 INGREDIENTS TO THE UK’S #1 FACIAL WASH

Water
Universal solvent

Sodium laureth sulphate
Main surfactant. Stabilises oil-based ingredients in a water-based product.

Decyl glucoside
Surfactant. Made by combining the glucose sugar found in cornstarch with the fatty acid decanol found in coconut.

Cocamidopropyl betaine
Surfactant also derived mostly from coconut oil. Sometimes abbreviated CAPB, it is non-ionic, which minimises any risk of skin irritation.

PEG-55 propylene glycol oleate
Surfactant. The PEG stands for polyethylene glycol, and 55 is the number of ethylene glycol monomers in the PEG polymer.

Propylene glycol
E1220. Humectant. Its two hydroxyl groups attract water and prevent the product from drying out. It also has a low melting point and is sometimes sold individually as an anti-freeze for aircraft.

Sodium chloride
Common table salt. Thickens the face wash by lowering the charge on the surfactant micelles, allowing them to pack more closely together.

PEG-7 glyceryl cocoate
Emulsifier/surfactant derived from coconut oil and glycerin. Helps to form emulsions through reducing the surface tension of the other ingredients in water.

Polyquaternium-39
Large polymer that imparts a smooth, velvety feel. It lessens that ‘tight’ feeling after drying your skin. Also makes your hair shiny.

Tocopheryl acetate
Vitamin E acetate. It penetrates through the skin to the living cells, where about 5% is converted to vitamin E, which provides beneficial antioxidant effects.

Pantolactone
Degraded form of vitamin B5. Increases cell proliferation in hair follicle centres, and thus protects your hair.

Anthemis nobilis flower oil
Roman chamomile essential oil. Both types of chamomile have calming, soothing, relaxing properties. (This plant is shorter than the German one by half.)

Polyparaben
Not clear. But it’s a paraben, and is therefore probably an anti-microbial agent.

Cocamide MEA
Foaming agent derived partly from coconut oil. Currently being phased out and replaced with other coconut-based alternatives.

Pelargonium graveolens oil
This South African flower is sometimes called a geranium. Most popular cultivars have a rose-like scent. Gives fragrance.

PEG-55 propylene glycol oleate
Surfactant. The PEG stands for polyethylene glycol; and 55 is the number of ethylene glycol monomers in the PEG polymer.

Methylparaben
E218. Anti-microbial agent produced by blueberries and many other plants.

Disodium EDTA
Chelating agent. Binds and inactivates the metal ions in tap water to prevent them from being deposited onto the skin, hair and scalp.

Cocamidopropyl betaine
Surfactant also derived mostly from coconut oil. Sometimes abbreviated CAPB, it is non-ionic, which minimises any risk of skin irritation.

Laureth-10
Emulsifier/surfactant with anaesthetic and anti-itch properties. It relieves itching caused by dry skin conditions such as eczema.

Benzoic acid
E210. Used to treat fungal skin diseases. It’s one of two active ingredients in the fungal infection remedy, “Whitfield’s Ointment”.

Panthenol
A strong moisturiser also used to treat intense post-tattoo rashes and nappy rash. If ingested, it gets metabolised to vitamin B5!

Tocopherol
Vitamin E. It penetrates through the skin to the living cells, where about 5% is converted to vitamin E, which provides beneficial antioxidant effects.

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