

THE GREEN GUY'S GROOMING GUIDE

A MOUTHFUL

Our roving reporter puts five natural toothpastes to the test



By **Kevin Raub**

Switching to natural toothpastes was one of the first moves I made in my slow transition to ousting chemicals from my grooming lifestyle, though natural or organic wasn't my original goal. I read several years ago that sodium lauryl sulfate, an evil detergent and surfactant that is used in nearly all toothpastes as a foaming agent, was a possible contributor to the frequency of canker sores. Canker sores run in my family, and I was tired of getting them, so I didn't need much more convincing! But then I thought about it some more: A detergent? In my mouth? Seriously? No thanks! That was three years ago, when ditching Crest wasn't so easy. Thankfully, nowadays, there are numerous options that are relatively cost-friendly, making toothpaste one of the easiest and cheapest grooming areas in which to spit out the petrochemicals.

I can't imagine a more polarizing toothpaste than that of **The Green People's Organic Fennel & Propolis**—I love it. It tastes like I'm brushing my teeth with absinthe and, after rinsing, like I just ate a whole package of black licorice. But since black licorice is a love-it-or-hate-it affair, so then is this toothpaste. The fennel, cinnamon, and clove oils are organically grown, as is the propolis. Consistency-wise, I'm not a fan, though—too chalky. www.greenpeople.co.uk

Another winner is **Kiss My Face's Aloe Vera Oral Care Whitening Toothpaste**, which offers the best consistency of all toothpastes here. It's a gel, but slightly more viscous in texture, making it more pleasing to the palette and closer to...well...Close-Up. Certified organic aloe vera is the backbone, a natural healer and soother that's easy on the gums, complimented by olive leaf extract (a natural antibacterial), Icelandic moss (a natural whitener) and tea tree oil (a natural antiseptic and cleanser). It's all packaged in a lovely

tasting cool mint concoction. As with all options here, there's no sodium lauryl sulfate, one of the most important Dirty Thirty chemicals to avoid in cosmetics. www.kissmyface.com

One of Quebec's most interesting eco-companies, **Druide**—kudos to them for their ecological hairspray, I'd do a column on it if I could find four others!—offers a wealth of interesting but subtle certified-organic toothpastes, including **Menthe Citron**. Clocking in at 99.8 percent natural and one of the few waving a coveted Ecocert banner, I want to love this toothpaste. It's rich in bamboo silica for natural whitening, mint and eucalyptus oil for flavoring, and stevia for sweetening, but it's just a little too runny. That's fine at first, but by the time I reach the second half of brushing, it's all but dissipated in my mouth to the point that I feel the need to stop and reapply. I ain't got that kinda time. www.druide.ca

Jason's Sea Fresh Plus CoQ10 Gel Toothpaste had been my staple up to the point of stepping up to the sink to test products for this column (now I'm thinking of switching to Kiss My Face, after all, it's the point of fresh breath, isn't it?). Either way, this is a solid toothpaste that's free of cinnamon, another rumored culprit in the canker sore game, and mimics traditional toothpaste as closely as anything here. I have no idea if it works, but I love the idea of sea salts to fight tarter buildup, as well as the idea of "natural micronutrients harvested from the great waters of the world, including active Certified Organic Blue Green Algae." It's like I'm brushing my teeth with paradise. This toothpaste does contain fluoride, which I'm on the fence about. Additionally, it's anchored by CoQ10 (Coenzyme Q10), a vitamin-like substance, supplements

what the body produces naturally, and is known to be a fighter of several chronic diseases, including gum disease. This one ain't cheap, as far as toothpaste goes, but with today's healthcare prices, it's a helluva of a lot cheaper than those chronic diseases! www.jason-natural.com

Estrella Natural Toothpaste was actually developed by a surf crazy, biocompatible aesthetic dentist from California. For those that aren't familiar, biocompatible dentistry is a holistic approach that stresses the use of nontoxic restorative materials for dental treatment and focuses on the impact that dental toxins and hidden dental infections can have on overall health. Sounds right up my alley. This toothpaste is far and away the most interesting here. It wins points for consistency, a unique, herbal flavor, and a wealth of ingredients not normally seen across my grill. "Doc Wavos" (known out of the water as Dr. David Villareal, D.D.S.) calls it his HerbalBrite Complex. He talks up the curative powers of herbs and botanicals like licorice root, echinacea, witch hazel, green tea, yerba mate, grapefruit seed, golden seal, and a Brazilian tree called Pau d'Arco that I can't be bothered to Google. There's also tea tree, peppermint, red thyme, cinnamon bark, lavender, neem—well, you get the picture. This is a potent dental cocktail. The Doc claims it keeps your breath fresh for a full six hours. It's better at \$10 a tube! What's up with that, Doc? www.estrellabrite.com 

Kevin Raub is a travel and entertainment journalist and a contributing writer at Organic Spa. His work appears regularly in Travel+Leisure, Town & Country, Robb Report, American Way and Lonely Planet, among others.