LANOLIN

also called... wool alcohol, lanolin alcohol, wool wax, wool grease, wool fat, or Adeps lanae anhydrous.

What is it?
Lanolin is a fat-like substance secreted by sheep oil glands to repel water from wool. Its content varies, but may include lanolin sterols, fatty alcohols, and fatty acids. It is often processed by acetylation, dewaxing, and hydrogenation, so that lanolin becomes a complex mixture. Thus, a person may tolerate one type of lanolin but react to another.

Where might it be found?
- Creams, lotions, moisturizers
- Lipstick, lip balm
- Makeup, blush, concealer
- Eye liner, eye shadow
- Mascara, eyebrow pencil
- Makeup remover
- Cuticle cream
- Shaving cream
- Hair removal cream
- Hair conditioner, hairspray
- Soap, body wash, cleanser
- Sunscreen
- Sunless tanning preparation
- Nipple cream, Bag Balm
- Massage cream, liniment
- Diaper rash ointment
- Hemorrhoid preparation
- Wound care product or plaster
- Healing ointment
- Anti-itch or Cortisone cream

How to avoid it:
Avoid using any product that contains lanolin. Inspect the label of each product you use to find the complete ingredient list. If lanolin is present, one of its names listed above should appear in the ingredients. If no ingredient list is present, go to the store and inspect the original box or package. Some products’ ingredient lists are available on the internet at the manufacturer’s website, the store’s website, or at websites such as http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov, http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com, or http://www.drugstore.com.

For possible workplace exposure, check the complete ingredient list of each product you encounter.

Ask your doctor to check the ingredients of the medications prescribed for use on your skin to be sure there is no lanolin present. Ask your hairdresser, barber, masseuse, and nurse to avoid using lanolin-containing products in your care. If you must come in contact with lanolin as you care for children, elders, or pets, wear protective gloves made of rubber, nitrile, or vinyl.

Rarely, lanolin sensitive persons will show cross-sensitivity to cetyl alcohol or stearyl alcohol also.

By reading ingredient labels, you should be able to avoid this allergen and find safe alternatives that are free of it. If you are uncertain about a particular skin product, ask your doctor about doing a Repeat Open Application Test with it.

Some other uses of lanolin:
- Pet shampoos, grooming aids
- Furniture polish, wax
- Shoe polish
- Ski wax, boat wax
- Fur and leather waterproofing
- Impregnation agent for textiles
- Printing ink
- Wax and polish
- Insulation for wiring
- Cooling fluids for metalworking
- Metal lubricant, sealant
- Rust or corrosion inhibitor