

body wash

<https://www.agoramores.com/cosmetics/bath-and-body/body-wash>

Tags: cosmetics · bath-and-body

Related

bath-and-body

- [bath salts](#)
- [bubble bath](#)
- [bath milk](#)
- [body powder](#)
- [deodorant](#)
- [bath and body](#)

cosmetics

- [lash primer](#)
- [facial oil](#)
- [cosmetics](#)
- [skincare](#)
- [makeup](#)
- [nails](#)

Body Wash

A liquid surfactant cleanser for the body, generally creamier and more emollient than a [Shower Gel](#). Unlike [Bar Soap](#), it is unambiguously a **cosmetic** in the US — it is a synthetic detergent system, not saponified fat, and the soap exemption does not reach it.

What is in it

Class	Doing what	Names
Primary surfactant	Removes sebum and soil	Sodium laureth sulfate, sodium C14-16 olefin sulfonate, sodium cocoyl isethionate
Secondary / amphoteric	Softens the primary, builds foam	Cocamidopropyl betaine, coco-glucoside, lauryl glucoside
Emollient	The "moisturising" claim	Glycerin, shea butter, oils, dimethicone
Cationic polymer	Deposits emollient onto skin as it rinses	Polyquaternium-7, guar hydroxypropyltrimonium chloride
Thickener	Body and pour	Sodium chloride, carbomer, xanthan gum

Chelator	Prevents hard-water scum	Disodium EDTA, tetrasodium glutamate diacetate
Preservative	Essential	Sodium benzoate, phenoxyethanol, methylisothiazolinone (rinse-off only in the EU)

The "moisturising body wash" question

A rinse-off product has seconds of contact and is then washed away, so how can it moisturise?

The mechanism is real but small: **deposition**. Cationic polymers form a complex with the surfactant and the emollient, and as dilution rises during rinsing that complex **precipitates onto the skin** rather than washing away. It leaves a thin conditioning film — the same coacervation chemistry that makes 2-in-1 shampoo work.

What that achieves is **less stripping**, not moisturisation. The measurable benefit of a "moisturising" body wash is a milder surfactant system and a small deposited film. **Applying a [Body Lotion](#) to damp skin afterwards does far more**, and takes thirty seconds.

The sensitivity notes

- **pH**. A body wash can be built at skin pH, and most are around 5–5.5. That is a genuine advantage over true soap, which cannot exist below pH 9.
- **Fragrance** is the leading cause of contact dermatitis in this category, applied over the whole body, daily, on skin that hot water has just stripped.
- **Methylisothiazolinone** is a significant contact allergen. The EU **limits it to 15 ppm in rinse-off products and prohibits it in leave-on**; the US has no equivalent restriction, so a US body wash may contain more.
- **Antibacterial claims**: FDA's 2016 rule **banned nineteen ingredients, including triclosan, from consumer antiseptic washes**, on the basis that manufacturers had not shown them safe for long-term daily use or more effective than plain soap and water.

Washing well

Lukewarm rather than hot — heat strips lipids faster than any surfactant. Less product than the bottle implies. A **washcloth or a hand** rather than a plastic pouf, which holds moisture and skin cells and grows bacteria; if a pouf is used, it needs regular replacing and drying. **Lotion within three minutes of getting out**, on skin patted rather than rubbed dry.

Where it sits in the rules

Cosmetic in the US — FDA primary categories **(12) personal cleanliness** and **(02) bath preparations**. It becomes an **OTC drug** with an antibacterial or acne claim.

In the EU, preservatives must come from the **Annex V closed positive list** of 60 entries, with the MI restriction above; and **Annex II** prohibits 1,766 substances.

Shelf life

Two to three years unopened, 12–18 months after opening. High-surfactant products are among the more robust in a bathroom.

The two things that end a bottle: **separation or thinning**, and **water dilution** — topping up a nearly-empty bottle with water is common, and it contaminates the remainder from that moment.

Related

- [Bath and Body](#) — the shelf this sits on, and the rest of it.
- [Cosmetics](#) — what the label is legally allowed to say, and the full catalogue.
- The rest of *Washing* — [Bar Soap](#) · [Shower Gel](#) · [Shower Oil](#) · [Hand Soap](#).
- [Body Lotion](#) — the step that does the moisturising.
- Regulatory statements here follow the FDA and EU sources listed on [Cosmetics](#), read 16 August 2026.