

Published Date:	Monday 7th October, 2019	Publication:	Deccan Chronicle Bangalore
Journalist:	Nivi Shrivastava	Page No:	22
MAVCCM:	481.867/110.52	Circulation:	1,25,200

Lather up in suds

NIVI SHRIVASTAVA

While taking a shower, how often do you wonder what's best for your skin — soap or shower gel? While both products are designed to cleanse, they have different usage and effects. Soaps are made with either animal or vegetable fats, and they can be unscented, contain essential oils, or have synthetic fragrance. Whereas, shower gels have a liquid consistency and they are generally foam when applied to the skin. Most gels contain foaming agents such as Sodium Lauryl Sulphate (SLS) and Sodium Coco Sulphate (SCS) that help create the lather.

The skin benefits of shower gels and soap bars vary depending on the formulation. Seema Nanda, a cosmetologist, says, "Traditional soap

Soap or shower gel — that is the question. Either work as the answer, but it depends on what you are looking for.



should avoid using it. On the other hand, shower gels have a liquid format. Their quick-foaming formulations are highly effective at cleaning the body, without stripping the skin of its protective barrier. SLS has a small molecule size, so it can aggravate delicate skin and skin prone to dryness, eczema, and psoriasis. SCS is coconut-based and has a large molecular structure, or a gentler interaction with the skin, as it cannot penetrate so deeply. Care for sensitive skin with an SLS-free shower gel that will gently cleanse the skin. Products that are pH balanced and have a pH level that between 4 and 6, depending on the area the product is designed for, are usually preferred."

bars tend to be made with harsh, skin-drying ingredients, and while plant-based formulations are available,

soap bars usually have a high pH. It is drying in nature; people who are prone to eczema or those with slightly acidic skin

SUPER SOAPS

As chemical bars are passé, experts predict that the organic bathing bar is slowly gaining back momentum. Rahul Agarwal, CEO of Organic Harvest, mentions that quality organic soaps made with



organic skin-nourishing ingredients such as plant-based essential oils, saffron, mint and other flower extracts like jasmine, rose, and gardenia, etc., are good for the skin. He adds, "Bathing bars do not create excessive foams and bubbles that

de-moisturise and harm the sensitive skin on a long-term basis. They do not require extensive preservatives to stay fresh, safe, and effective. Hence, they need the least amount of chemicals, perhaps nil in case of organic soap, to last long. Choosing a bar soap that is made from 100 per cent organic vegetable oils, with no colouring and chemical additives, contributes to protecting our environment. Bathing bars are often plastic-free. In terms of quantity you can take four times more showers with a bathing bar than with classic shower gel at an equivalent price. Bars which are based on synthetics, sulphates, acid and petroleum products should be avoided from the bathing routine."

While both soaps and gels are designed to cleanse, they have different usage and effects

GEL WELL

Those who prefer shower gel consider it more hydrating than soaps as the moisture in gel makes it soft and easily breakable. Rajni Ohri, founder of Ohria Ayurveda, says, "If one needs thorough cleansing, then use soaps but if one wants to retain moisture, then shower gels are the best option."

Cleansing bars that are laden with moisture are in the category of syndets (synthetic + detergent) and not soap. The hand-made soaps overcome the problem of dryness by combining glycerine, cold-pressed oil with lye (sodium hydroxide) and gentle coconut-derived cleansing agents. Although, water-



based shower gels, especially the natural versions, are infused with moisturising extracts and herbs. An exception could be the natural and handmade soaps that protect skin against moisture loss. A soap's ingredients like natural clays, essential oils, natural butter, make them ideal choice for various skin types. Soaps are ideal for removing dirt and excessive secretions during hot or humid weather, while gels and foaming washes are gentle during colder days and for the face. Soaps use saponified vegetable oils, while shower gels are surfactants derived from petroleum or plant-based sources. Check the TFM value (total fatty matter) — higher the TFM, better is the soap quality. Minimum TFM should be 75 per cent for a good soap."