CLAIMS

1. A personal wash composition which provides an effective antimicrobial benefit against fungi, gram positive and gram negative bacteria, which composition comprises:

a) from 0.1% to 10wt% betaine surfactant,

b) from 0.1% to 5.0wt% lactic acid,

c) from 0.1% to 20wt% polyhydric C_2-C_6 alcohol,

d) from 0% to 10wt% alkyl polyethoxy carboxylate of the formula $RO(CH_2CH_2O)_kCH_2COO^-M^+$ wherein R is a C_8-C_{22} alkyl, k is an integer from 0 to 20, and M is a soluble salt-forming cation,

e) from 0.1% to 10wt% alkyl polyethoxy amides of the formula $RO(CH_2CH_2O)_kCH_2CONH_2$ wherein R is a C_8-C_{22} alkyl, k is an integer from 0 to 20,

f) >8wt% alkyl ether sulphate,

g) water,

h) a pH of 3.8 – 4.5,

i) 10-20wt% total surfactant,

j) from 0.1 to 10wt% metal salt.

2. A composition according to claim 1, wherein the alkyl polyethoxy carboxylate is present in an amount of from 2-7wt%, most preferably about 4.8wt%

3. A composition according to claim 1 or 2, wherein in the alkyl polyethoxy carboxylate R comprises is a C_{12} alkyl; K is 11 and M is Na.

4. A composition according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the betaine surfactant is present in an amount of from 1-3wt%, and most preferably about 1.3wt%.

5. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the betaine comprises cocoamidopropyl betaine.

6. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the lactic acid is present in an amount of from 0.2-8wt%, more preferably 0.3-7wt%, more preferably 0.4-5wt% and most preferably from 2-5wt%, e.g. about 2.25wt%.

7. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the polyhydric C_2-C_6 alcohol is present in an amount of 2-18wt%, more preferably 6-17wt%, more preferably 8-16wt%, and most preferably from 10-15wt%.

8. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the polyhydric C_2-C_6 alcohol comprises glycerol.

9. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the alkyl polyethoxy amide comprises PEG 4 rapeseed amide.

10. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the metal salt is present in an amount of 0.1-5wt%, more preferably 0.2-3wt%, and most preferably about 2wt%.

11. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the metal salt comprises an alkali and / or alkaline metal halide.

12. A composition according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the alkyl ether sulphate comprises sodium laureth sulphate.

13. A method for providing a germicidal benefit to a topical surface, especially a dermal surface, such as an intimate dermal / external surface; the method comprising the step of: contacting a topical surface upon which the presence of one or more undesired pathogens, preferably bacteria, are known or suspected, with a composition according to any one of claims 1-12.

14. A method for providing a germicidal benefit to a topical surface, especially a dermal surface, such as an intimate dermal / external surface without upsetting or disrupting the natural balance of the microflora or microbiome on the dermal surface; the method comprising the step of: contacting a topical surface upon which the presence of one or more undesired pathogens, preferably bacteria, are known or suspected, with a composition according to any one of claims 1-12.

15. A method for stabilizing the pH of a surface, especially a dermal surface, such as an intimate dermal / external surface; the method comprising the step of contacting a topical surface upon which the presence of one or more undesired pathogens, preferably bacteria, are known or suspected, with a composition according to any one of claims 1-12.

16. A method for stabilizing the microbiome or microflora of a surface, especially a dermal surface, such as an intimate dermal / external surface; the method comprising the step of contacting a topical surface upon which the presence of one or more undesired pathogens, preferably bacteria, are known or suspected, with a composition according to any one of claims 1-12.

17. A method of moisturizing a surface, especially a dermal surface, such as an intimate dermal / external surface; the method comprising the step of contacting a topical surface upon which the presence of one or more undesired pathogens, preferably bacteria, are known or suspected, with a composition according to any one of claims 1-12.