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How to Remove Hair Dye From Your Skin, According to the Experts

BY SARAH KINONEN | JULY 5, 2017



Let's be real here: dyeing your hair is a process. (Both literally and figuratively.) Whether you opt to recolor your roots in the salon or DIY at home, painting, rinsing, and toning takes time — and all the patience.

Along with time, changing the hue of your hair comes with the added risk of mess and dangerous dye exposure to your skin, says Elizabeth Tanzi, founder and director of Capital Laser & Skin Care and associate clinical professor, department of dermatology at the George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. "Although not common, hair dye can cause severe allergic reactions on the face (i.e. with eyes swelling shut), and the reaction will get worse each time the skin is exposed," says Tanzi. "So, if you had a reaction in the past, even if it was mild, be very careful because the next time could be severe." Here, a comprehensive guide to avoiding unexpected stains and allergic reactions — once and for all.

Always Do a Patch Test

No matter how many times you've put your hair through the boxed dye ringer, it's important to always patch-test your latest color on your hand before applying it to your hair. This helps to avoid unwarranted allergic reactions, says Beverly Hills-based dermatologist [Ava Shamban](#).

"There's a common allergen, known as Paraphenylenediamine (PPD), in hair dye that a small percentage of people will react to," she explains. Unfortunately, when that happens, your entire head becomes itchy and inflamed, which, according to Shamban, is a "true hair dye disaster."

Prep Before You Begin

"Like in any other situation, the best defense is a good offense," says Shamban. So, in the case of dyeing your hair, Shamban recommends lining the hairline with medical-grade tape before

applying color to your hair. Along with tape, she recommends creating a pseudo barrier in between the hair and the skin, using oil or petroleum jelly, to amp up the protection factor.

Protect During the Process

If you're DIY-ing at home, Rita Hazan, celebrity hair colorist whose clients include Beyoncé and Jennifer Lopez, recommends wrapping yourself in dark-colored towels to shield your skin and your clothes from any rogue dye.

Use the Right Tools

A great way to avoid added mess, says Shamban, is to switch up your tools mid-application. She recommends using a smaller brush for a more precise paint job, and then using a magnifying mirror to better see the color (and where it's going) along the hairline.

Clean Up Your Mess — Quickly

Although in general, hair dye is relatively safe on the skin for short periods of time, if it does happen to fall onto your face, hands, or any other body part during the coloring process, Tanzi recommends gently rubbing it away with soap and water. "Baking soda is also effective [in removing dye], but it can be abrasive to the skin," says Shamban. "Alcohol can help, but it's also very drying. No matter what, always be careful not to rub your skin raw."

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