
ALLERGENS

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WHAT IS AN ALLERGEN?

Allergens are substances that are foreign to the body and that may induce, in certain subjects, after several contacts, an exaggerated response of the immune system known as an 'allergy'. Allergens are naturally present in our environment and diet. For example, pollen or the mites in dust may give rise to asthma; peanuts, shrimp and strawberries are known to induce allergic reactions that may potentially be very serious. Lastly, synthetic ingredients may have allergic potential. This is the case with certain medications, colorants, fragrances, etc.

Several types of allergy are to be distinguished, among which the best known are immediate allergies, mainly food allergies, which may be very severe, and delayed contact allergies, which gives rise to cutaneous symptoms (redness, itching, etc.) that may be extensive to a greater or lesser degree.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS WITH COSMETICS?

Cosmetic products may occasionally give rise to allergic reactions, mainly contact allergies. The reactions are due to the presence of ingredients such as certain hair colorants, preservatives and fragrances (cf. datasheets). The reactions are rare, generally confined to the product application site and totally reversible on discontinuation of product use. The reactions may necessitate dermatological consultation and an appropriate treatment.

WHY ARE L'OREAL PRODUCTS SAFE?

The ingredients that we use in our products have all undergone rigorous evaluation of their allergenic potential. When we evaluate cosmetic product safety prior to marketing, we verify that the ingredients constituting the product are used under conditions in which they will not induce allergies in consumers. Lastly, we verify the absence of allergic reactions by conducting appropriate clinical trials on our products.

This rigorous approach covers all the products that we develop.

In rare cases and for very specific products, when an allergic risk is known and cannot be totally eradicated with the current state of scientific and technical knowledge, we inform the consumers of the risk incurred via the product labeling and we propose a method of detecting allergic potential before product use. This is the case for hair color products, for which we recommend systematically conducting a cutaneous allergy test 48 hours before coloration (see hair colorants). It is to be noted that we pioneered the recommendation of this test.

In general, we recommend that consumers who know themselves to be allergic read the list of ingredients in the labeling of all cosmetic products attentively in order to avoid use of products that contain the ingredient(s) responsible.

L'ORÉAL